

**NH STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES Meeting Date: 5 DECEMBER 2023
Location: ECTC, 722 Riverwood Dr., Pembroke, NH**

OFFICERS and VOTING MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Chairman - Paul Loyd (P)
Vice Chair - Diane Dominicis (E)
Secretary - Denise DeBlois (P)
Treasurer - Kelly Dobens (E)
Chair Emeritus - David Kenney (P)
Chaplain - Armand Soucy (E)

Air & Space Force Association
Kevin Grady (prim) (P)

Air Force Sergeants Association
Richard Dolby (prim)
Martha Gladu (alt) (P)

American Legion
Mike Lopez (prim) (P)
Robert Blais (alt) (P)
Bill Roy (alt) (P)
Leo Paquin (alt) (P)

AUSA - Col. Cross Chapter
Greg d'Arbonne (prim) (P)
Ed Harrington (alt)

Catholic War Veterans
Denise DeBlois (prim) (P)
Robert Guldner (alt) (P)
Armand Soucy (alt) (E)

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association
Nate Smith (prim)

Disabled American Veterans
Rick Borrazas (prim) (P)
Robert Guldner (alt) (P)

Korean War Veterans

Mike Lopez (prim) (P)
Conrad Perreault (alt)

Marine Corps League

Shawn Carboni (prim) (P)
Gary Gahan (alt)
Chris Peirce (alt) (P)

Military Officers Association (MOAA)

Peter Burdett (prim) (P)
Laurence Miller (alt) (P)
William Luti (alt)

Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)

Tony Fowler (prim)

National Guard Association of NH

Peter Duffy (prim)
Steve Greco (alt)
Roy Hunter (alt)
Mike Horne (alt)

NH Army Retiree Council

Frank Musmanno (prim)
Mike Rice (alt) (P)

NH National Guard Enlisted Association

Michael Lestage (prim)
Mike Rice (alt) (P)
Jack Howley (alt)

NH Veterans Association

Kelly Dobens (prim) (E)
Mike Young (alt)
Doug Crooker (alt)

Patriot Resilient Leader Institute (Camp Resilience)

Kurt Webber (prim)
Ed Harrington (alt)
Steve Veinotte (alt) (P)

Reserve Officers Association of NH

David Kenney (prim) (P)
Mike Horne (alt)
BG John Pappas (alt)

Rolling Thunder

Bruce Garry (prim) (P)
Robert Brown (alt)
Diane Domenicis (alt) (E)

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Denis Querrard (prim) (P)
Andrew Corrow (alt) (P)
Paul Lloyd (alt) (P)

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA-41)

Raymond Goulet, Jr. (prim) (P)
Alan Grant (alt)
Robert Heichlinger (alt)

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS - non voting

Governor's Office - Trevor McAden
Senator Maggie Hassan - Justin Troiano
Senator Jeanne Shaheen - Chris Scott
Congressman Chris Pappas - Gage Wheeler
Congresswoman Annie Kuster - Molly Smith

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS

Rep. Terry Roy
Rep. Tim Lang
Sen. Regina Birdsell
Rep. Linda Massimilla

COMMITTEE ADVISORS/AGENCIES:

VAMC, Manchester, NH - Kevin Forrest, Director
NHNG - MG David Mikolaities, Adjutant General NHNG
Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General
NH Veterans Cemetery - Shawn Buck
NH Veterans Home - Kimberly MacKay
Margaret "Peggy" LaBrecque, Sage Emeritus
Bureau of Community Based Military - Brenton Fraser, Director
Martins Point - John Reed and Brenda Pennels
State Veterans Council - Jim Adams

GUESTS:

Brian Baker - Chief of Operations at the NH Veterans Home.

Pat Miller - MOAA-NH - SSL

Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman

Invocation:

Welcome - Remarks of the Chair: Paul welcomed our guests.

Secretary's Report:

Meeting has a quorum; attendance on file.

The minutes of the last meeting on 7 November 2023 were approved and placed in the record.

Treasurer's Report: Account balance is \$752.67.

No change.

Comments from Vice Chair: Diane Domenicis

Comments from Director Emeritus: David Kenney - None

Guest Speakers:

None.

SUPPORTING AGENCY REPORTS:

Manchester VA Update:

Director Kevin Forrest gave a brief report.
No report from White River Junction.

The VA in Connecticut did their Assumption of Duty. Becky Rhodes who was the Associate Director at the White River Junction VA did her Assumption of Duty down at the State Veterans Home in Connecticut.

The VA is continuing to do the Centenarian (100 year old) Awards. There are 5 in the queue. If you know of someone, get in touch with Stella Lareau.

The VA has done over 20,000 PACT Act toxic screens.

Personnel Updates: They are still figuring out the budget for fiscal year 2024. The fastest growth is in the VA New England healthcare system. They still have plenty of folks on board and have more in the queue coming in. Physicians are retiring and others are in line ready to come in.

Construction Update: The Eagle Entrance is open. It is a better drop off site for veterans and a safer one.

Ambulatory Surgery Center: The 9 month contract for surgery in Concord ends in March. The OR will be up and running.

The Under Secretary of Health's focus is getting new veterans in quick. There have been 4 weekend clinics. Primary Care Providers are adding new patients every week.

There was a ground breaking last week on Lincoln Avenue in Manchester where the old Police station was located. There will be 30 one to two bedroom units for veterans in the HUD-VASH program.

The 3 Adult Day Care programs in the state are closed. Fourteen veterans used the program.

The Radiology Department in Manchester is starting a new process. They have an upgraded imaging system that will be electronic sharing. It is called Medicom. This will share images with providers in the community.

There are 5600 travel claims right now.

World War II veterans are now eligible for care at the VA regardless of finances.

VA Secretary Denis McDonough will be visiting the Manchester VAMC on Thursday. They will be doing a roundtable at the medical center to talk about issues. He will meet with veterans and some of the staff. Then he is going to the Regional Office, the Vet Center and then to SVAC later in the afternoon.

There was a question on medical foster homes and how it is going. There are no takers for volunteers in the community accepting veterans in their home. This is more popular down south. It is not successful here. The code requirements of the home are stringent. The older homes here do not meet the requirements of the program.

Massage Therapy - there is a drop nationally in reimbursement rate.

DMAVS Update: William Goudreau gave an oral report.

NHOVS (Bill Gaudreau): OVS is down 1 service officer in the Portsmouth area. They are hiring now. They are getting about 25 voicemails per day. They have 4000 contacts per month due to the PACT Act.

NHSVC (Shawn Buck): Wreath Removal on Saturday, January 6, 2024 at 10:30 am. All are invited to attend.

Dept. of Military & Veterans Services (Warren Perry): They are reinvigorating the Ask the Question (ATQ) Campaign. They are working with various groups on Dental Care for veterans and discussing the need. The Pathfinder Series (formerly FRAGO series) will be on 13 December. Major General Greg Martin will share his personal experiences battling mental challenges in the military. The State Approving Agency made a selection for a position with DMAVS.

NH Veterans Home: Commandant Kimberly MacKay gave an oral report and provided a written report. She introduced Brian Baker, Chief of Operations at the NHVH. He will be covering for Kim while she is out for surgery.

Census: 127 veterans (115 men and 12 women) with 3 pending admissions before Christmas.

Average age: 83 years old.

Branches of service: Air Force - 31
Air National Guard - 1
Army - 49
Army National Guard - 1
Coast Guard - 2
Marines - 7
Navy - 36

Waiting list: 22 approved veterans waiting for a bed with 4 of these pending admission this month. We have 42 applications in process.

Your donations make a difference: With the support of the veterans service organizations, you have sponsored 122 of the 130 veterans for Christmas. The veterans are also looking forward to the many holiday parties that will be held at the Home. Thank you all!

Safety and Security at NHVH: We have 24 hour security on site. Ongoing drills for all types of emergent events. We have cameras throughout the facility and are in the process of upgrading them as well as add more within the facility. All Tilton police and fire have key cards to access the facility from any of our key coded doors. Tilton police

and firefighters also tour our facility as part of their orientation, so they are familiar with the Home. We have a Tilton Police Department radio that provides with direct contact with them if needed.

To Do's: Three of our key staff in security will become train the trainers to conduct active shooter training for all staff. We are going to conduct emergency preparedness trainings with the veterans. We will be bringing forth a capital budget project for key card lock expansion again.

Construction Update: We are continuing with the planning of our construction project of adding a new wing to the facility to be able to provide some private rooms with bathrooms. This will not add to our bed count but instead allow us to move veterans from shared to individual rooms.

Upcoming Ceremony: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony on 7 December 2023 at 11:00 am.

There is no Covid in the Home. They are doing really well.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

The DAV is still looking for a Hospital Service Coordinator for the DAV Transportation Program. It pays \$2,500 per month for 30 hours per week. A veteran is preferred.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

LEGISLATIVE BRIEFINGS:

Kevin Grady, Legislative Chair

The status of bills was distributed via email. Fifteen bills are being followed. He is hoping to get the language on these. He will have more information next month.

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS: Written reports attached or emailed separately if submitted to Chair.

Trevor McAden (Gov. Chris Sununu): not present.

Chris Scott (Senator Shaheen): not present.

Justin Troiano (Senator Hassan): brief report.

Molly Smith (Rep. Annie Kuster): brief report..

Gage Wheeler (Rep. Chris Pappas): brief report.

Upcoming Events:

1st Wednesday - Monthly POW/MIA Vigil - 1900 at Veteran's Park, Manchester, NH

4th Tuesday - Monthly POW/MIA Vigil - 1900 at Langdon Park, Portsmouth, NH

Every Thursday - Weekly POW/MIA vigil - 1900 at Hesky Park, Meredith, NH

1st Friday - Monthly POW/MIA vigil - 1900 at Pine Grove Cemetery, Salem, NH

Pearl Harbor Remembrance - Arms Park in Manchester, NH - Sunday December 10th
at 12:30 pm

The American Legion is having a rifle raffle.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, 2 January 2024

Adjourn Meeting: 1748 hours (5:48 pm)

A motion was made by Ray Goulet to adjourn, seconded. Unanimous. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise DeBlois, Secretary