

West Suburban Veterans District – September 22, 2015

Location: Wellesley Town Hall, Great Hall

Present: Hans Larsen, John Senchyshyn and Donna VanderClock

Also present: John MacGillivray and Sally Rose (Chris Coleman, Kate Fitzpatrick, and Stanley Spear were absent)

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 4:00 pm.

Business:

1. Citizen Speak

None

2. Minutes

The Board voted (3-0-0) to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2015 meeting.

3. Director's Update

Mr. Larsen introduced Mr. MacGillivray, Acting Director for the District. Mr. MacGillivray provided a brief description of his background. He worked as the Veterans Service Officer in Natick for 20 years and in Newton for 5 years. He retired in 2014 from his VSO position in Newton. Mr. MacGillivray, served in the Marines from 1968-1970 and is active in the Marine Corps League and is planning for the October 18th 40th Anniversary Parade honoring those who served in the Vietnam War. He is also a host on the radio show "Sound Off" that is broadcast Sundays from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. on WRKO AM 680. "Sound Off" is a show that is by, for and about veterans. Mr. MacGillivray hosts the show with Mr. Coleman Nee, the former Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and Mr. Kyle Toto who does marketing for the Veterans Administration (VA).

Mr. Larsen and Mrs. Rose provided a brief update on Mr. Spear's health. He is scheduled to have the first of a two part left hip replacement surgery on September 23rd at the Beth Israel Hospital. On September 16th, Mr. Spear, Mr. Larsen, Mr. Ching, Mr. MacGillivray and Mrs. Rose met to discuss the transition from Mr. Ching (previous Deputy Director) to Mr. MacGillivray. Mr. MacGillivray has visited each of the District offices with Mr. Ching. Mr. MacGillivray expressed appreciation for how helpful he has found everyone to be. The District is appreciative of his willingness to serve as Acting Director.

Mr. Larsen and Mrs. Rose reviewed the Chapter 115 benefit status of all member towns. \$1,794.86 remains in the WSVD FY15 budget. This amount will be allocated between the four communities. . All communities have paid their share of the FY16 annual assessment and have provided sufficient funding for their Chapter 115 benefits for the period July 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015.

The Board briefly discussed that Wayland, Needham and Wellesley have been designated Purple Heart Communities. Ms. VanderClock said she has every intention for Weston to become a Purple Heart Community before August 7, 2016, the next Purple Heart Day.

Ms. VanderClock said it was unnecessary for Mr. MacGillivray to have office hours on a weekly basis in Weston. It was determined that both Weston and Wayland would have office hours of 3 hours, once every two weeks. Mrs. Rose will distribute a revised schedule.

As she did last year, Mrs. Rose expressed her desire to attend the VSO Training in Leominster that deals with CH 115 benefits, which is scheduled for a day in October. Mr. Larsen asked Mr. MacGillivray if there was any need for him to attend the full four day conference. Mr. MacGillivray said it depended on how long he was going to be working for the District.

4. Old/New Business

Mrs. Rose mentioned that we continue to get occasional calls from Dover veterans who are seeking assistance. Last week, while at his Thursday Needham office hours, Mr. MacGillivray met with a Dover resident. He said that he had talked with Mr. Coleman Nee about Dover not being in compliance with regard to VSO coverage. When Mr. Nee was Secretary of DVS he was moving toward taking actions against Dover. He ran out of time, but Mr. MacGillivray feels that something will be done about this situation. Mr. MacGillivray met with Mr. Paul Carew, the Natick VSO, and learned that Dover pays Natick \$1,000 annually to handle VA claims. Meanwhile the Board suggested that when a Dover resident calls we instruct them to call Dover Town Administrator Dave Ramsay, or the Department of Veterans Services for the Commonwealth.

The Board briefly discussed the plans for Veteran's Day. Mr. MacGillivray has met with Mr. Richard Turner in Wayland and Mr. Rick Wohler in Weston to discuss the plans in those communities. Mr. MacGillivray will be contacting Mr. Bill Topham who coordinates Veteran's Day for Needham. Mr. Larsen said that Mr. Dick Dillon is handling Wellesley. Mrs. Rose will send out invitations and contact the media with regard to the Wellesley observance. Mr. Larsen told Mr. MacGillivray that he is under no obligation to attend the Veteran's Day services in any of the four communities. Mr. MacGillivray noted that last year he had attended the service at the Massachusetts State House, and may do so again this year.

The Board set Thursday, December 17th at 4:00 p.m. as the date for its next meeting.

5. Executive Session

At 4:30 the Board was polled all aye to go into executive session to discuss negotiations with non-union personnel.

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The Board discussed Mr. Spear's continued absence and the implications to the District's hiring plans. Mr. Spear has been on medical leave since March, and is no longer on the District's active payroll, i.e., he is now collecting Long-Term Disability benefits. There is ongoing uncertainty regarding Mr. Spear's medical situation and his ultimate ability to return to work in his former capacity. Following the recent departure of Deputy Director Matt Ching, the Board needs to decide whether to first recruit a new Director, or a new Deputy Director.

Given the ongoing uncertainty regarding Mr. Spear's return to work, and other concerns regarding the operation of the District, the Board concluded it would be best to recruit a new Director first. In the event Mr. Spear is eventually able to return to work in some capacity, this would leave open the possibility of him serving in the Deputy Director role. Thus, it was agreed that Mr. Larsen should proceed with recruitment of a new Director.

At 5:00 the meeting was adjourned.