

West Suburban Veterans District – April 2, 2015

Location: Wellesley Town Hall, Great Hall

Present: Donna VanderClock, Hans Larsen, John Senchyshyn

Also present: Chris Coleman, Matt Ching, Jean Leger and Sally Rose (Stanley Spear was 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 January 8, 2015 meeting.

3. Director's Update

Mr. Larsen and Ms. Rose provided a brief update on Mr. Spear's health. He is currently at the Clark House at Fox Hill Village in Westwood where he is working to regain strength in his legs. Those present expressed a desire to send him something, but it was decided to wait until he has returned home.

Mr. Larsen and Ms. Rose reviewed the Chapter 115 benefit status of all member towns. Mr. Senchyshyn confirmed that Wayland's Annual Town Meeting begins on Monday, April 6th, at which time funds will be appropriated for the remainder of FY15.

Mr. Larsen asked if there were any issues with the revised WSVD FY16 budget. There were none.

Mr. Ching spoke about the VSO training he attended in Yarmouth on February 2-5, 2015. He spoke with Mr. Francisco Urena, the new Secretary of Veterans' Services. They spent time discussing legislative initiatives and the upcoming recertification test that will be given in phases. The test will be administered in a similar fashion to the ethics test that everyone must take. The first part of the three part certification exam will be given sometime around September/October, 2015. The exam, done on the computer, includes M.G.L. Chapter 115 Benefits, CMR 108 and use of other resources, i.e., Shine, Medicare Parts B, D (Medigap), and Medicaid. A training guide for the recertification will be provided at the summer VSO training.

A draft letter requesting State recertification of the District was provided for the Board's review. Mr. Larsen requested that any comments on the draft be forwarded to him. The letter will be sent in the beginning of May, well before the current certification expires at the end of June.

Mr. Ching distributed a letter he had received from Eric Segundo, the VSO for the Town of Ludlow regarding their town's effort to be designated a Purple Heart Community. A designated Purple Heart Town would fly a Purple Heart Flag at Town Hall on August 7th in recognition of

Purple Heart Day. Mr. Ching will find out the cost of a Purple Heart Flag and apprise the member towns.

Ms. Leger, from Wellesley's IT Department, provided an overview of the tracking software that she and Mr. Spear have been discussing with salesforce.com. She said that Mr. Spear feels the software would meet the District's needs. The software is able to track information with respect to individual veterans. It is cloud-based and access is available from any computer. It has reminders; the system can track how long a meeting took, what follow-up is needed, etc. Mr. Spear and Ms. Leger were assured that the system is extremely secure, because personal information like SSN and medical information is included. Cost of the software package is a concern. There is a one-time Configuration/Build cost of \$11,500, and an annual maintenance fee of \$4,062. The consensus of the group is that the need for the software is evident, but that it should be developed at the State, rather than the local level. Mr. Ching agreed to contact Keith Jones, the Director of Operations, Mr. Urena and Evan Makrinakolas, the head of Compliance & Training at the Department of Veteran Services, to set up a time when Mr. Ching and Mr. Larsen can meet with them to push for statewide adoption of a CRM (customer relationship management) application. Mr. Ching will contact some of the larger veteran districts, such as the one on the Cape, to see if they would be willing to sign a petition advocating for DVS support for such a system.

Mr. Coleman commented that Needham applies for various grants, among them a Metrowest Health Department Grant. He wondered if WSVD could apply for a grant to help offset the cost of the tracking software. Mr. Larsen wondered if any regional grants existed that would be an option.

Regarding the Valor Act it was discussed whether the income needs to be treated as taxable thereby necessitating withholding taxes. Mr. Senchyshyn said that in Wayland they don't withhold taxes. Payments are made from overlay funds and are applied directly to the veteran's tax bill.

District Budget

See Director's Update above.

4. Other

Both Wayland and Weston will be having evening office hours, one evening a month for April, May and June. In Wayland the evening hours are on the following Mondays: April 27th, May 18th, and June 29th from 5:00 – 7:00 pm in the Wayland Town Hall. In Weston the evening hours are on the following Tuesdays: April 28th, May 26th, and June 30th from 5:00 – 7:00 pm in the Weston Town Hall. Mr. Ching will be covering the Tuesday evenings, but because of his class he is unable to cover the Monday evenings. In Mr. Spear's absence, Ms. Rose will temporarily cover the Wayland office hours. She will collect any information from those that come to the office hours, and pass it on to Mr. Ching and Mr. Spear.

5. Old/New Business

The Board briefly discussed the VA money that comes into the community. Mr. Ching sent town managers a revised spreadsheet with an explanation on Monday, April 6th.

The Board agreed the next meeting will be on **Wednesday**, June 10th, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. in the Great Hall at Wellesley Town Hall. Please note the change of day.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.