

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
VETERANS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, June 4, 2023, 1:30 P.M.**

Present: Kathy Walsh, Barry Stearns, Al Dumas, Paul Toomey, Jim Clark, Ernie Richardson,  
Others present: Pam Sawyer, Bob Morra  
Not present: Greg Carini3rd

a. May 4, 2022 – Regular Meeting Minutes.

**Motion:** I move that the Veterans Commission approve the minutes.

By: A. Dumas

Seconded: P. Toomey

Voting (Y/N/A): 6/0/0

### **8. Other**

By consensus, we opened the agenda to have presentation by:

Terri Keesler, Secretary of the Army/Navy Club in Manchester

Clay Hence, Senior Vice Commander of the V. F. W. in Manchester.

The presentation started with all Bolton Veterans are WELCOME to the Manchester V.F.W. and Army/Navy Club. Bolton is in their jurisdiction. One of the main goals is that all Veterans know where to get help with VA claims, extra support and assure that all veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to. There is PACT legislation for Veterans that has come out in the last year related to Agent Orange and additional material on burn pits in Afghanistan and Iraq. There will be letters sent to all identified Bolton by the V.F.W. and Army/Navy Club once a list has been obtained from Town Hall. The National Motto for the V.F.W. states that every veteran counts. If you have not been on foreign soil you can still join the Army/Navy Club. Both organizations are looking for new members. VFW meets once per month.

Army/Navy Club has a Coffee House once a month on Thursday (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month) 10a.m.-1230pm. There are speakers and light refreshments. All Veterans welcome! The one in May was very well attended with over 55 people. There were multiple presentations and many people heard valuable information from the organizations that presented. Please join the V.F.W. and/or the Army Navy Club. A book of stories was handed out to all veterans. Excellent presentation on the services. Thank you to Clay and Terri.

### **3. Name and Dedication of Bench**

B. Stearns reported that the plaque has been sent out and he checked today and it has not yet been received by the ordering company. After it is received, Barry will notify P. Sawyer. We will have a private dedication for the family, most likely in September and a public one.

**Actions:** B. Stearns obtain and install plaque. Family dedication to be planned in September.

### **4. Tax Relief Update**

The update has been provided by Bob Morra. He reported that in review of the Grand List with Assessor, it does not appear that the increase in the Grand List will automatically increase the Veterans Exemption. It looks like the Selectmen will have to increase it and it may include a 5 year step plan to eventually have an exemption off the assessment of 9,500 dollars. It looks like the savings will increase to approximately around \$330. 00. The process has not been finalized yet and the beginning of the plan would start in 2024 since the budget is set for this year and it will phased in.

**Action:** More to follow as the plan unveils. Commission will be updated by Selectmen regarding the meeting and the process/plan for the increase and how it will be distributed. Anyone is welcome to the Board of Selectmen meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

## **5. Ct General Statutes**

There is no update currently from Selectman and it is still in process-this was going to be addressed after the parade.

**Action:** B. Morra will bring to Town Lawyer.

## **6. Flag Box and System**

K. Walsh spoke with C. Duffy at the Memorial Day Parade and with both Boy Scouts who are looking into developing the Flag Box. It was discussed to check with Town Hall for final approval. Depending on where the box will be placed and the material, they make it out, the location may be changed. It was also discussed that the Boy Scouts can do the Flag Ceremony to retire our American flags. There was a good discussion identifying concerns regarding an outside box that trash and other items could be thrown into and the durability of the box.

**Actions:** No action currently. K. Walsh will contact C. Duffy before the September meeting. .

## **7. Cemetery Update**

E. Richardson had received a list from C. Preuss and there were additional Veterans listed. Most of these Veterans were not on the Boy Scouts list. We can assume that the graves are not marked as veterans and the list is clearly identifying Bolton's oldest Veterans. We now have over 214 veterans identified in the cemeteries. This additional list was provided to C. Duffy by K. Walsh.

We will revisit pursuing obtaining medallions for the Veterans graves in the fall. Each medallion will be 25.00 for plastic so we will be at 5-7 thousand for all graves. Many of the metal medallions are brass and those are much more expensive. American flags were placed on the graves this year and the Town of Bolton placed them in the front of the cemetery.

There was a positive comment regarding the cemetery looks the best it has looked in years. It looks wonderful. Residents are grateful for the improvement. The cemetery was taken over by the town recently at a cost savings. There was discussion about putting a well at the cemetery. It was suggested by P. Sawyer. This could be money raised. This is a very expensive proposal for the Commission as the discussion identified several obstacles.

Action: None at this point. Revisit in the fall regarding the medallions.

## **8. Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony Coordination**

The sequence of the ceremony went well and the parade went well also. A few comments to improve for next year were:. Make it clear on the list for the directions for the Veterans call up and salute to the fallen Veterans. Podium needs to be placed on the left side as you are facing the flag and monument. Tape the Agenda for the ceremony on the podium.. Walsh will change this and larger font would be appreciated on the program.

The High School Speaker was wonderful tying in her family with honoring veterans. It was beautifully written. All the student participation was great with the Bolton Band and Chorus, Taps, and all the rest of the participants. The Bolton Fire Department for helping with everything from placing the flags and all the parade participation. We passed out over 150 flags to the children in Bolton.

There was a Task list was passed out on how to simplify the parade. A review of the parade/ceremony book for the Town of Bolton and the Committee.

We can focus on expanding the parade.

Fly over did occur.

**Action:** All members to review the Parade task list. K. Walsh will update the parade book and make a second one for the meeting in September. A computerized copy will be sent to the Town for safe keeping.

**8.Other**

**Coffee House on June 15th at Army Navy Club.**

**Summer Meetings-**

**Motion: Motion to cancel meetings in July and August.**

By: B. Stearns

Seconded: J. Clark

Voting (Y/N/A): 6/0/0

Start meetings back up in the fall . September will be the first meeting after the summer.

**Review of Monuments on the Green for recommendations.**

P. Sawyer would like us to visit having monuments placed on the town green for the other wars. Can we have volunteers for a small sub committee to review this. It was discussed to place 2 small monuments on the Green for the other wars not yet recognized. It appears that the Revolutionnary War, War of 1812 and the Civil War are not listed. Have it say in honor of those that have served. J. Clark brought up that there is a notification/stone at the cemetery honoring all veterans. We have the stones at the cemetery . B. Stearns and J. Clark have volunteered for this.

Action:This will be on the agenda in September for sub committee to report.

**11.Adjournment.**

The Veterans Commission was adjourned at 2:30 pm by consensus.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kathleen Walsh*

Please see minutes of subsequent meetings for corrections to these minutes and any corrections hereto.