



MEETING MINUTES
ADVISORY MILITARY and VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE
MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020 - 6:00 P.M.
ONLINE – ZOOM WEB CONFERENCING
NORWALK, CT 06851

1. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** the meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jeff DeWitt.

2. **PUBLIC FORUM:**

a. Orlando Aquino, Patient & Community Engagement Coordinator, Community Health Center (CHC), 120 Connecticut Avenue. Orlando is a 22 year Army veteran who spent 11 of those years as a recruiter. Orlando spoke about increasing awareness of services to the veteran community. CHC can be an option for veterans especially for those with transportation or mobility issues, instead of going to the VA in West Haven. Tricare is accepted.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

a. Present (6): Jeff DeWitt, Chair; Howard Dixon, Veteran At-large; Irene Dixon, Mayor Rilling's Staff; Matt Seebeck, Veteran At-large; Leon Breault, Veteran At-large; Fred Wilms, Financial Services Chair;

b. Absent or excused (6): Bryan Rooney, Military Outreach and Deputy Chair; Larry Cafero, Legal Services Chair; Bob King, Labor and Business Relations Chair; Deanna D'Amore – Health Department; Dan Caporale, Veteran At-large; Brian Griffin, Norwalk Chamber of Commerce.

4. **CHAIRMAN COMMENTS:**

a. The Bridgeport office of the Connecticut VA is still interested in moving to Norwalk. Space in the Health Department is being remodeled at this time to host them. This committee hopes that project moves forward soon. Irene Dixon updated the committee on the progress (**OPEN**)

5. **OLD BUSINESS:**

a. (REPEAT) Guidelines for a “Veterans Advocate Award” have been drafted. Design and criteria for the award were sent to the mayor's staff. Still in need of a nominee for 2nd Quarter (Apr, May, Jun). (**OPEN**)

b. (REPEAT) Physical binder of veterans' resources in the City of Norwalk is being finalized. There is a collection site for documentation online until a resource document can be built or published online. UPDATE: The Google Drive for the committee is the repository for much of



what has been collected to date and the shell of a physical binder was started months ago. Continuing to work on the content. Matt Seebeck and Fred Wilms both gave their thoughts on the way forward. This is now the #1 priority for the committee. **(OPEN)**

c. Larry Cafero provided a list a few months ago of 1,800+ people in Norwalk receiving a tax credit due to their veteran status or a deceased family member who was a veteran. It is the goal of this committee and core to what we want to accomplish, to begin to introduce the committee to them and make sure they understand we are available to help or find help for them should they need it. The list has been provided to Bryan Rooney and Matt Seebeck to explore options on how best to contact everyone. **(OPEN)**

e. Jeff DeWitt asked Reverend Artie Kassimis from the Word Alive Bible Church to head a project to have Norwalk named a “Purple Heart City.” There are 117 veterans that we know of that were recipients of the Purple Heart. The goal would be to honor them and to host a gathering to honor any living Purple Heart recipient and/or the family of recipients to help the healing and to share their story with each other. **(OPEN)**

f. Creation of a veteran registry in Norwalk is being requested to the IT Department in City Hall. A link was sent to IT and they have been asked about the feasibility of duplicating what the State of Pennsylvania has already done. Irene Dixon will follow up with the IT Department. **(OPEN)**

<https://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/pages/outreach-and-reintegration/pennsylvaniaveteransregistry.aspx>

h. Veteran owned businesses in Norwalk is a database that would be great to have. Creating a veteran-owned business registry through the Chamber of Commerce is the recommendation. The goal would then be to create a Veterans Chamber as a subcommittee of the larger Chamber. This would give those business owners a chance to get together to share best practices and ways to market themselves in the city, as well as to participate in larger Chamber events throughout the year. **(OPEN)**

6. NEW BUSINESS:

None

7. GOOD OF THE ORDER:

a. Leon Breault mentioned the banners around Veterans Park are too high off the ground. Jeff DeWitt will check with 3rd Taxing District on what their policy is as far as height.

b. Chairman DeWitt’s research into the 250+ veterans with ties to Norwalk who died during wartime service, is complete. Turned down by three publishers because the work was “too local”, there is a web page: <http://norwalkctheroes.org>. There are also some bonus pages for Norwalk Police and Fire Departments as well as a page in tribute of the 19 Connecticut residents who died as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

8. MILITARY AND VETERAN RELATED EVENTS AROUND NORWALK

AUGUST 2020

2: Veteran of the Month Flag Raising Ceremony, American Legion Post 12, 60 Country Street (11:00am with reception following)

7: [National Purple Heart Day](#)

13: Mulvoy-Tarlov-Aquino VFW Post 603 Monthly Membership Meeting, 60 County Street (7:30)

18: Frank C. Godfrey American Legion Post 12 and Auxiliary Unit 12 Monthly Membership Meetings, 60 County Street (7:00)

20: Sons of the American Legion Squadron 12 Membership Meeting, 60 County St (7:00)

SEPTEMBER 2020

1: A-MVLC Ceremonies & Honors Committee meeting; location TBD (7:00)

2: [V-J Day](#)

6: Veteran of the Month Flag Raising Ceremony, American Legion Post 12, 60 Country Street (11:00am with reception following)

10: Mulvoy-Tarlov-Aquino VFW Post 603 Monthly Membership Meeting, 60 County Street (7:30)

11: [Patriot Day](#)

15: Frank C. Godfrey American Legion Post 12 and Auxiliary Unit 12 Monthly Membership Meetings, 60 County Street (7:00)

17: Sons of the American Legion Squadron 12 Membership Meeting, 60 County St (7:00)

18: [National POW/MIA Recognition Day](#)

29: [Gold Star Mother's Day](#)

9. ADJOURNMENT: the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

10. NEXT MEETING: is **Tuesday**, September 8, 2020, 6:00 p.m., likely by Zoom web conferencing again.

Attachment 1

VETERAN ADVOCATE AWARD PROGRAM

PROGRAM

The Veteran Advocate Award (VAA) program is a method by which the Advisory Military and Veterans Liaison Committee (A-MVLC) identifies a local organization, business, or individual as being an advocate to veterans in Norwalk. The award will be presented quarterly.

PURPOSE

To identify organizations, businesses, and individuals who go above and beyond to foster a positive relationship with the veteran community through policy or service.

CRITERIA

Through partnership, good deeds, policy, etc., all organizations such as fraternal organizations, businesses who proudly put veterans at the front of their business model, or individuals who go above and beyond to help and promote veteran organizations, events, or outreach.

METHOD OF NOMINATION

In February, May, August, and November each year, the A-MVLC will bring nominations to the monthly meeting. Each nominating person will verbally present an argument in favor of their nomination. After each nomination is heard, a silent ballot will be held. The winning nomination will be forwarded to the Mayor's Office.

METHOD OF RECOGNITION

A formal presentation will be made with the Mayor present as his/her schedule allows. The presentation should take place at the location or meeting of the organization, business, or location of an individual's choosing that meets with the approval of the A-MVLC.

COST

This recognition program's cost is minimal and is solely the administrative cost to produce certificates and proclamations in the Mayor's Office. Rough estimates are \$5 per quarter or \$20 per year.