



MEETING MINUTES
ADVISORY MILITARY and VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE
MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021 - 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 6:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jeff DeWitt.

2. **PUBLIC FORUM:**

a. None.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

a. Present (5): Jeff DeWitt, Chair; Bryan Rooney, Military Outreach and Deputy Chair; Irene Dixon, Mayor Rilling’s Staff; Leon Breault, Veteran At-large; Matt Seebeck, Veteran At-large; Fred Wilms, Financial Services Chair; Orlando Aquino, Community Health Center (called in).

b. Absent or excused (6): Larry Cafero, Legal Services Chair (*has stepped down from the committee*); Deanna D’Amore – Health Department; Brian Griffin, Norwalk Chamber of Commerce Howard Dixon, Veteran At-large.

4. **CHAIRMAN COMMENTS:**

a. See Section 5.

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. Would like to honor King Industries for the first quarter of 2021. Irene Dixon has the lead on that. **(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. (REPEAT) 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. We spoke about using a bulk mailing permit as an option. **(OPEN)**

e. (REPEAT) 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)**

f. (REPEAT) 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 who are quite busy these days. **(OPEN)**

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

h. (REPEAT) A database of veteran owned businesses in Norwalk 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)**

i. (REPEAT) Research into the 250+ veterans with ties to Norwalk who died during wartime service, is ongoing. 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. *UPDATE*: A list of 45 Norwalkers held POW was added. **(CLOSED)**

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. None

7. GOOD OF THE ORDER:

a. The event at the Shea – Magrath Memorial is scheduled for May 16th this year and has been approved by the Common Council. This is preceded by visits to cemeteries to replace flags, as needed. That starts at 10:00 a.m. in the City Hall parking lot.

b. The Memorial Day parade is scheduled for May 31st this year and has been approved by the Common Council. There is some uncertainty about what that will look like as far as size and scope. Suggestion for Grand Marshal, is co-Grand Marshalls honoring Andrew Mantlik, Nick Samodel and John Kozar, who will all be 100 years old and are WWII veterans.

c. The City of Norwalk will apply to have the mobile Vietnam Veterans Wall come to the city in 2022. The applications open up Memorial Day weekend.

8. MILITARY AND VETERAN RELATED EVENTS

MARCH 2021

- 15: American Legion birthday
- 25: National Medal of Honor Day
- 29: National Vietnam War Veterans Day

APRIL 2021

- 4: Easter Sunday; flag ceremony at the American Legion is postponed one week
- 6: MVLC's Ceremonies & Honors Committee meeting, American Legion, 7:00 p.m.
- 8: VFW Post 603 meeting, American Legion, 7:30 p.m.
- 11: Veteran of the Month / Flag Raising Ceremony, American Legion, 11:00 a.m.
- 20: American Legion meeting, 7:00 p.m.

MAY 2021

- 2: Veteran of the Month / Flag Raising Ceremony, American Legion, 11:00 a.m.
- 4: MVLC's Ceremonies & Honors Committee meeting, American Legion, 7:00 p.m.
- 13: VFW Post 603 meeting, American Legion, 7:30 p.m.
- 15: Peace Officer Memorial Day
- 16: Remembrance event at the Shea – Magrath Memorial; Calf Pasture Beach; 12:30 p.m.
- 18: American Legion meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 18: Armed Forces Day (honors those serving right now)
- 19: Constitution and Citizenship Day
- 31: Memorial Day

JUNE 2021

- 1: MVLC's Ceremonies & Honors Committee meeting, American Legion, 7:00 p.m.
- 6: Veteran of the Month / Flag Raising Ceremony, American Legion, 11:00 a.m.
- 10: VFW Post 603 meeting, American Legion, 7:30 p.m.
- 14: U.S. Army birthday
- 15: American Legion meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 27: PTSD Awareness Day

9. ADJOURNMENT: the meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

10. NEXT MEETING: June 14, 2021. Likely by Zoom web conferencing again.