

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER #423

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: 11/12/2023 TIME START: 14:02 TIME END: 15:45 ATTENDANCE: 26

☒ G. DELOS SANTOS JR.-PRES. (GD) ☒ S. PENNINGTON-VP(SP) ☒ C. YOUNG-TREAS(CY) ☒ G.LACOMBE-SEC(JL)

☒ S. PENNINGTON-STATE DEL. CHAIR(SP) ☒ B. CORRELL-STATE DEL (BC) ☒ E. SHAFER-STATE DEL.(ES)

☒ F. IVARRA REGION 8 PRESIDENT(FI)

OFFICERS REPORT:

PRESIDENT REPORT-Greg Delos Santos Jr.

- GD Meeting Called to Order with citing of the Pledge of Allegiance
- GD Commended Chris Young for his tireless efforts at recruiting new members.
- GD Announced that VVA Chapter #423 Commemorative Coins are available for \$15.00.
- GD emphasized the importance of maintaining an accurate roster with current phone numbers, emails, and home addresses. PLEASE check your current roster information and update as appropriate.
 - Next year lists will be paired down and assigned to 6-7 members tasked with contacting people, welfare checks, and updating with current information. ACTION ITEM

SECRETARY REPORT-Jerry LaCombe

October Meeting Minutes were introduced Motion to accept, Seconded and Approved by Voice Vote.

Jerry LaCombe reported the following:

- Paperwork will be submitted to the National Purple Heart Society listing VVA#423 as a "Purple Heart Entity". The proclamation signed by our president and vice president will be submitted proclaiming our recognition of the sacrifices made by purple heart recipient.
- Requirements for getting VVA #423 listed as on the States "Charitable Fund Drive" (CFD) getting this final listing requires:
 - Get registered as a charitable organization-not just as a non-profit
 - Get registered as a member on the States CFD.
 - This final listing will allow state organizations such as State agencies, Universities and Colleges to make automatic payroll deductions that go to specific agencies listed on the CFD.
 - Questioned if this listing would violate any VVA requirements, Francisco Ivarra noted can proceed with no further considerations.

TREASURES REPORT-Chris Young

- **CHECKING**
 - Beginning Balance \$20,607.36
 - Donations and Poppy Sales \$12,515
 - Chapter Expenses (\$150.60)
 - Supplies \$19.95
 - Clover Fees (QR Code) \$39.66

- Vets W/Hammers \$90.99
 - Ending Balance **\$32,981.76**
- **SAVINGS**
 - Beginning Balance \$1,219.52
 - Deposit/Interest \$0.52
 - Ending Balance **\$1,220.04**
- **Vets W/Hammers Debit Card**
 - Beginning Balance \$857.00
 - Funds Used (\$0.00)
 - Quarterly Transfer \$90.99
 - Interest Earned \$0.07
 - Ending Balance **\$948.28**
- **TOTAL ASSETS** **\$35,150.08**
- **COMMENTS**
 - CY-Noted that Vets W/Hammers account is updated quarterly to bring the un-used balance up to \$1,000.00.
 - CY-Noted that our “total Assets” has increased ten-fold from what it was 3 years ago.
 - CY-Investigating other venues of investment with BECU to improve interest rates.
 - Larry Fisher asked if there will be another poppy drive for Memorial Day weekend, CY-YES. Noted if our yearly funds exceeded \$50 K would place us in a new tax bracket.
 - GD-Noted Board will be discussing adding a CD account as new Business.
 - CY- Noted Ron Clyborne had contributed \$250.00 two months ago and again donated an additional \$250.00 at this last poppy drive.
 - FI raised the question if our chapter had made its contribution of \$1,000.00 to Ande Mitchells 2023 welcome home BBQ event held annually in Sedro Wooley this past August. CY answered it had not.

DISCUSSION

- FI noted that at the State Council Conference it was voted that the State Chapters had approved donating \$1000.00 for the event. Several chapters however, including our chapter #423, noted they would need to take it back to their respective boards for approval.
 - CY indicated that review of past chapter meeting minutes should be done to clarify if a vote had been taken.
 - GD noted that he had a vague recollection of the topic but unsure if it had been presented to the board for a vote. GD advised he would investigate the past minutes and advise. ACTION ITEM.
 - SP-Noted that at the State Conference his recollection was that our delegates had approved the donation.
 - Confusion exists regarding if this proposal had ever been brought before the board for a vote.
 - FI noted he was raising the question because Ande had requested the status of the donation.
- **POPPY SALES NOV 3rd & 4th**
 - Safeway Store Lake Stevens reported ~\$4,200.00.
 - GD noted he had met one of the managers of the US bank and showed interest in supporting our efforts to support veterans. GD noted he would follow up with US Bank and discuss any mutual efforts.
 - Fred Meyer Store 196th reported ~\$2,567.00.

- Fred Meyer Shoreline reported ~\$2,034.00.
- Fred Meyer 164th reported ~\$2,200.00.
- QR code reported \$978.00.
- Discussion-The unique colors scheme for the Vietnam Poppy has led to questions about the typical red Poppies and the Vietnam Poppy colors of red, yellow, and green.
 - Suggested a small handout, credit card size, could be developed that would explain the color scheme used on the Vietnam Poppy. Additionally, it was noted that VVA contact information could also be added to the card.
 - CY noted he would take the lead on getting cards together -ACTION ITEM. Additionally, a brief on how the QR code is used should be available to members so they can assist donors in making contributions.
- CY gave special recognition to all the VVA members who participated at the various locations making an extremely successful poppy drive.

STATE DELEGATE CHAIRMAN-Steve Pennington, DELEGATES-Earl Shafer, Bob Correll

- SP, ES, BC Nothing New to report-noted FI would address items discussed at the recent delegate meeting.

REGION 8 PRESIDENT-Francisco Ivarra (FI)

- FI noted that during his travels throughout the state that the VVA membership is steadily growing, citing our brothers and sisters have a compelling need to belong.
- Noted Dick Southern-Calif, National Membership Chair reported at the last National Board Meeting our national membership had grown past 90,000 members and remains at a steady increase. The VVA is the top national organization assisting all Veterans.
- Noted the VVA has spearheaded more federal legislative reforms than any other veterans' organizations.
- Highlighted that over 10,000 nurses served, and some had died in Vietnam.
 - On Veterans Day the Nurses Memorial in Washington DC, across from the Vietnam Memorial, celebrated their 30th anniversary with a large crowd of Nurses in attendance.
- Noted the Vietnam Memorial Wall is the most visited memorial in Washington DC with between 5-6 million visitors to the wall yearly.
- Noted at the National Convention in Orlando FL the 1st item of discussion was about the VVA future and rumors of the VVA being dissolved by 2027?? The response was a resounding NO!!! The current VVA magazine has dispelled the 2027 date and notes TBD "to be determined". The resounding sentiment of VVA leadership is VVA is going to be a last man standing organization.
- HYPOTHETICALLY if the National Organization were to close, which is very unlikely, then the plan would be that all VVA remaining assets would flow down to all ACTIVE remaining local VVA chapters.
- FI gave special recognition to our state Veteran Service Organization (VSO) as the top group in the nation supporting our veterans with their claims. Our local VVA VSO representative, Jeanie Ebbert, is still ranked as the No. 1 VSO helping veterans with their claims.
- FI noted that Republic of Korea (ROK) veterans who heroically fought alongside our veterans and have since relocated to the USA and obtained citizenship had been denied VA benefits. It was the VVA who partitioned our congress and senate to pass the necessary legislation providing the well-deserved support for our ROK veterans.
- Noted the POW/MIA National Chair currently lists 1,078 veterans as POW/MIA. Efforts continue to identify and bring home all POW/MIA veterans.
- The upcoming Events
 - Leadership Conference - Reno Nevada, August 20-24.
 - Next National Convention-New Orleans Louisiana Date TBD.

- CY noted that rumors were that the Associate Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) would likely take over the role of the VVA. FI responded that the AVVA are valued partners but will not assume the role of the VVA. Both the AVVA and VVA have separate funding and the VVA funding will not be passed onto the AVVA.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE-Chris Young
 - CY noted current membership as of October 31 counting VVA (112) and AVVA (7) total 119.
 - JL questioned what is the membership threshold for adding an additional state delegate? CY responded was thought to be 125 VVA members.
 - GD Introduced two new Prospective Members
 - Ken, (wife Helen) Moerer – US Marine
 - Vietnam 1969-1970
 - Stationed around Da Nang, Marble Mountain.
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 - Paperwork has been submitted to VVA.
 - Ken noted he had not previously been affiliated with any veterans' organizations. He became aware of our organization after making contact with members Chris Young and Jerry LaCombe during the past Poppy Sales at the Fred Meyer on 164th and thought he would check us out.
 - Bob Doran-US Coast Guard
 - Barbers Point Hawaii 1966 – 1970
 - Learned about the VVA through NW Mustang Club-Ron Foster.
 - Paperwork pending submittal wanted to attend meeting to get a better understanding of our organization is all about.
 - Was part of the filming of the movie Tora Tora Tora. Bob was also part of the rescue party for the Enterprise when it had an incident just outside of Peral Harbor. Father was a printer during WWII, he printed the final copy of Japanese surrender papers signed on the USS Missouri.
 - Has several significant documents surrounding WWII which Bob would like to share with the group.
 - GD noted that George Kaufman is listed on the VVA national register as pending member subject to receiving his DD214.
 - JL and other VVA members have observed that many outlying Vietnam Veterans are not aware of the VVA organization but for the personal contact made by one of our members. Noted we should give some thought on how we market our organization making other Viet Nam Veterans aware of our organization.
 - JL also noted that efforts are needed to improve our internal communication with our current membership.
 - Currently approximately 40% of our members, as listed on the National Register, do not receive our internal communication as listed on our Active Roster. Discussion around emails listed on the "National Register" not being accurate and needed verification before being added on the "Active Roster". JL suggested that when new members are added to the "National Register" we send out a welcome aboard notice as a way of confirming the accuracy of their email.
 - CY-Noted that pending receipt of the National Register he has no way of knowing how many prospective members are in the Que. Previously he would receive notification whenever a prospective member had made an application so he could "bird dog" the

process. Suggested whenever an application is sent that a copy should be forwarded to Chris.

- GD noted he has received feedback from some members not receiving his mailings.
 - GD suggested issues arise when he sent a mass mailing with the members addresses grouped under the CC heading. GD noted he would try using the direct listing instead of a CC listing to see if that makes a difference.
- Chris Young update status on one of VVA Veteran in need of financial assistance
 - Noted went in for surgery on Oct 31st and is currently recovering and in a wheelchair.
 - Veterans' wife/caregiver recently had a heart attack and is unable to assist in their financial needs.
 - Veteran is currently working with Jeannie Ebert trying to resolve some issues involving claims and DD214's records.
 - The immediate needs for December Rent of \$2,400.00 has been satisfied with assistance from Heroes Café-Lynnwood several other church and veterans organizations contributions.
 - Noted that Tammi Stokke will be checking and coordinating upcoming needs.
 - Discussion followed on how we are going to fund future needs for this Veteran. Several motions were made and amended resulting in the final resolution that was adopted and approved by the membership.
 - The VVA Veteran was approved for future financial aid with the amount yet to be determined and approved by the board.
 - The board was given the authority to approve up to \$1,000.00 with consideration given to other helping entities.
 - Amounts above \$1,000.00 would require approval from the general membership.
- VETS WITH HAMMERS-Earl Shafer
 - Update on Trailer Project-Largest project to date.

BACKGROUND

- Veteran is living in a manufactured home that needed multiple repairs.
- The veteran has MS and has had recent multiple strokes making him bed ridden / wheelchair bound.
- The doorway was too narrow to pass a wheelchair, unable to leave home without extensive assistance.
- Roof leaking and ceiling sagging
- Kitchen not functional
- Internal electrical wiring/outlets not functional
- External wood decking and walkways rotting

UPDATEDATES

- Past month Repairs:
 - Replaced wing over the front porch.
 - Replaced front trailer door with a wider wheelchair accessible door.
 - Lots of volunteer changes inside of the trailer.
 - Installed Kitchen cabinets, new lights, and electrical outlets and switches.
 - Installed wheelchair lift donated by Bothell Bus Company.
 - Roof Repairs-noted VVA didn't have the expertise to tackle roof repair. However, the electrician doing some internal repairs, had contact with a former

roofer and his wife who made some patch repairs along with installing tarps to stop the leaking.

- Front entry access decking replaced.
- Up Coming Repairs
 - The back deck is rotting and falling apart.
 - Repairs/Replace back awning, like front awning repairs.
- Home Depot and Donors Closet are major contributors supplying materials to support the renovations. Home Depot will also be providing labor assistance on the yard renovations.
- Earl special recognition to Ron Foster, Richard Bianchin, Jim Cornwall for their unwavering support on the project.
- Special Recognition to John Henderson for initiating a request for adding a wheelchair or wheeled walker to our facility to assist some members who have mobility difficulty. Additionally, Recognition to Earl Shafer for contacting Donors Closet who provided a wheeled walker for our use.

GOING FORWARD

- Home Depot is currently involved with another wheelchair ramp project, and they have additional projects with veterans looking for our assistance.
- LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL VETERAN SUPPORT, our only project limitations are the labor force necessary to support needy Veterans. PLEASE SIGN UP OR CALL IF YOU CAN ASSIST.
- Also noted members who have wheelchairs or like devices should give them to Donors Closet. They will ensure these devices are up to code and ready for distribution.
- ES noted that in the past with limited funding was very frugal with materials. With new funding and systems being developed we can expand and expedite our efforts to make repairs for needy Veterans.
- WEB PAGE & FACE BOOK-Bob Correll
 - GD noted given Bob's recent accident resulting with his difficulty speaking he would pass on Bobs request seeking assistance with the Web/Face Book Page duties or of someone would be interested in assuming the duties of the Web Page & Face Book administrator.
 - Those interested can contact either Greg Delos Santos or Bob Correll directly.
- COMMUNITY AFFAIRS-John Henderson
 - Annual end of Year Dinner will be held Saturday January 6th from 16:00 to 20:00
 - Invitation cards will be sent out in a couple of days to all members. Requesting RSVP if planning on attending. Currently have 115 invitations sent out.
 - NOTE: sign-up sheets will be available. NO NEED TO RSVP IF YOU HAVE NOTED YOU ARE ATTENDING ON THE SIGN-UP SHEET. IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE A COMMITMENT NOTED ON THE SIGNUP SHEET YOU CAN USE THE RSVP TO MAKE CHANGES.
 - THE DEADLINE FOR THE SIGN-UP SHEET WILL BE OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING ON DEC 10th.
 - The committee meeting met to discuss some preliminary planning. Members included John and Kathleen Henderson, Jann and Jerry LaCombe, Deb, and Chris Young, Terry Quick, and Richie Richter.
 - 3 different caterers were reviewed each with a different cuisine: Asian, Italian, and traditional American.

- Discussion made to go with the traditional American cuisine. 3 different menu selections were offered, and the selection was again a more traditional beef option.
- The caterer selected was Erwing Beecher, Executive Chef for Mario Andretti racing team, Everett Yacht Club, Des Moines Yacht Club. Details being finalized, more to follow.
- Dinner set-up will start at ~14:00 for volunteers, indicate on sign-up sheet if available.
- Under review is consideration for providing entertainment, same musician that provided entertainment at our summer BBQ. Requirements, Cost and Availability being considered, final disposition PENDING.
- Larry Fischer indicated that US Bank had expressed interest in participating in the event supporting either the cost of meal, entertainment, or both. Suggested that invitations be sent to US Bank inviting them to attend the festivities. Will be considered at next committee meeting on 12-04-23. ACTION ITEM
- Emphasis made on getting as accurate as possible information on who is attending as cost are allocated based on head count. There is some flexibility but need to push for accurate accounting.
- GD-Raised the topic will we be providing Sebastian Place with dinners for Thanksgiving and Christmas as was done in the past.
 - SP noted in the past we paid Chef Dane to prepare the meals for both Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner events. The VVA volunteers would pick up and deliver the meals to Sebastian Place.
 - Questions- What is Sebastian Place and how many meals are required and estimated cost.
 - SP-Sebastian place is a domicile run by Catholic Community Services for chronic homeless/previously homeless veterans that have some source of funding and have an assigned case worker assisting in their recovery.
 - Estimate from the past we provided meals for from between 14-20 recipients. Estimate approx. cost \pm \$600.00 for each event. Noted to get an accurate estimate of how many meals, including attending staff will be needed.
 - Motion made, 2nd and Voice approval to fund Chef Dane for supplying Sebastian Place with Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. Steve Pennington to coordinate events. ACTION ITEM

OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS:

08-13-23 Meeting

- Chris Young follow-up on BECU funding assist for 2024 BBQ

09-10-23 Meeting

- J LaCombe Status update on "Capital Improvement Procedure"

10-08-23 Meeting

- ~~• C Young Update 4th Qtr. funding for Debit Card to \$1,000.00~~

- ~~• J. LaCombe-Follow up on Implications of the VVA being listed as a Charitable Organization on the States Charitable Fund Drive.~~
- ~~• E. Shafer-Follow up with Donors Closet providing a Wheelchair/Walker for our VVA facility.~~

11-16-23

- Greg Delos Santos/Jerry LaCombe- Investigate previous meeting minutes if a motion had been made to endorse payment of \$1,000.00 to the 2023 Ande Mitchell BBQ.
- Greg Delos Santo-Follow-up with Lake Steven US Bank Manager on offer to support our efforts.
- Chris Young-help develop a card size information guide describing the Vietnam Poppy color scheme along with contact information for our VVA chapter.
- Dinner Planning Committee-Discuss inviting US Bank to end of year dinner.
- Steve Pennington-Coordinate holiday dinner, Thanksgiving and Christmas, between Chef Dane and Sebastian House.
- Greg Delos Santos-Provide lists of members to be contacted for updates on status, phone numbers, emails, addresses and welfare.