



Vietnam Veterans Of America Chapter One

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JUNE 2017



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING JUNE 14, 2017

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors took place. Directors present included President Andy Megrath, Vice President David Mathis, Treasurer Richard Reed, Dick Doyle and Bill Whitney.

Bill Ellwood also attended.

The minutes of the May meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported \$67,124 in the chapter's accounts.

Don Ramey of West Rutland was present with sketches and a clay model of the proposed new sculpture for the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which he has been hired to carve.

At right is the clay model Ramey has supplied, showing the figure wearing the "boonie hat" that was standard day-to-day headgear in Vietnam. At the May meeting, we discussed changing the headgear from the current statue's combat helmet to something else. Andy Megrath said those who responded to the newsletter and vets he queried at his 50th graduation reunion in West Rutland all opted for the boonie hat, so that looks like what we'll choose.

Don is expecting to work on the sculpture in July at his home in West Rutland. Suggestions to him based on a look at the clay model included one that the brim of the hat have a more wrinkled look, that the trousers be bloused above the top of the boots, and that the pockets and lapels be modified. (As the war progressed, the standard uniform changed somewhat.)

Don is waiting for the marble stone to be cut at Gawet Marble and Granite in Center Rutland.

Chapter 1 is still waiting to hear from the City of Rutland on establishing a trust fund for future maintenance of the memorial. The chapter has made an initial pledge of \$10,000 to support the fund.

Also appearing at the meeting was Ed Cleveland, representing the Vermont State Fair. The fair had requested a donation to provide free or reduced-price admission to veterans during the fair, scheduled this year for Aug. 15 to 19. The goal is to raise \$5,000. Half has already been contributed by the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington.

After Cleveland's presentation, Richard Reed moved to donate \$500 to the fair for the veterans admission program. The donation is given with a request by Chapter 1 that the fair seek matching donations from other veteran organizations. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Motion passed.



The VVA State Council meeting and picnic has been moved from Saturday, June 17, to Saturday, June 24, at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. Vets planning to attend and help at the picnic should arrive by 10 a.m.

Bill Ellwood had a question about the Chapter 1 history, feeling that some work needs to be done on it. The matter will be discussed at a future meeting. Chapter historian Jack Crowther was sick and did not attend the meeting.

We report with sadness the death of life member William Mullan of Rutland.

Joanne Reynolds has forwarded Andy Megrath information about a proposal in President Trump's budget to cut the Individual Unemployability benefit. The information Joanne sent suggested that the measure was "not going to move forward." However, members should be aware of the issue.

Under the Trump budget plan, the Individual Unemployability benefit would end for veterans who become eligible for Social Security. The budget would also "round down" the monthly benefit received by veterans and surviving spouses. The budget would expand the Choice Program, which allows veterans to find care in the community that the VA cannot provide. The Choice Program has the support of the VFW, but "is in need of administrative fixes before a large expansion can occur," according to the VFW.

The VFW also argues that the expansion of some benefits does not justify the loss of the IU benefit and other cuts. Veterans unable to work could lose tens of thousands of dollars, according to the VFW.

Andy Megrath reported the chapter has 139 regular members. New members include John Pisanelli and John Young.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, secretary,
Dick Doyle, note taker

**THE CHAPTER WILL HOLD ITS NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 13,
AT 6 P.M. AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND.
A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL PRECEDE THE REGULAR MEETING.**