



Vietnam Veterans Of America Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

SEPTEMBER 2018



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors took place. Directors present included President Andy Megrath, Vice President Dave Mathis, Treasurer Richard Reed, Secretary Jack Crowther, and directors Dick Doyle, Jim Ficken and Bill Whitney. No Board of Directors business was conducted.

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

Treasurer Richard Reed reported a total of \$65,114.88 in the chapter's accounts. The report was approved unanimously.

Jack Crowther has not heard anything lately on the plan to remove the head and shoulders of the old Vietnam Veterans Memorial sculpture. The plan is to save that portion of it as a Chapter 1 historical memento. The sculpture was replaced on Memorial Day by a similar sculpture carved out of a better quality piece of marble. Cutting down the old sculpture to a piece weighing a manageable 150 pounds or so is expected to cost about \$500. The remainder of the sculpture will be discarded.

Andy Megrath will be going to Washington, D.C., for a meeting of the national VVA Board of Directors from Oct. 17 - 21. As vice president of the Vermont VVA State Council, Andy will attend with State Council President Perry Melvin, and they will be part of a meeting of state council presidents. Andy asked if the chapter would pay for a hotel room in Burlington that he has booked so he can catch the early-morning flight. Jim Ficken moved that the chapter pay the \$230.41 bill. Seconded by Dick Doyle. Approved unanimously.

Richard Reed, as treasurer, is now tracking sales of ripoff tickets at Tomasi's bar in Fair Haven, our main source of income. He reported June sales of \$3,770 and July sales of \$4,430, with \$1,644 paid for the tickets. That produced \$6,556 in net revenue for the two months. Richard brought to the office two boxes of unsold tickets for storage. Tomasi's practice, which some bars observe and others do not, is to stop selling tickets from a given box once the major payout tickets have been cashed in. This makes the game more attractive to purchasers, since the remaining losing and low-payout tickets are retired.

Richard undertook the bookkeeping and management of the tickets in response to state liquor control officers who spoke to the chapter and informed us we needed greater accountability for tickets sold and unsold. This involves a commitment of time by Richard and travel to Fair Haven. Consequently, Richard submitted a mileage expense claim of \$160.80, based on 50 cents a mile. Jim Ficken moved it be approved. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Approved unanimously.

Jack Crowther thanked Dave Mathis for watering the new plantings at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The chapter will present a certificate of appreciation to Isaiah Webb of Brandon, a landscaper and son of a Vietnam vet. Isaiah assisted Jack in putting in some new plantings at the memorial.

Andy Megrath asked whether, considering the healthy state of the chapter's bank accounts, we should make a further contribution to the trust fund we established for future care of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial once Chapter 1 ceases to exist. Long-term care of the memorial was a prominent issue over the last couple of years. Discussion culminated in

the establishment of a trust fund with the city treasurer's office to provide the care of the memorial that might be needed. (The City of Rutland owns the memorial, although Chapter 1 has been responsible for care and upkeep, with help from the Rutland Garden Club and the city Recreation and Parks Department). Chapter 1 made an initial contribution of \$10,000 to get the trust started.

Richard Reed then proposed that with its considerable income, the chapter consider where it might spend its money. Dave Mathis offered the suggestion of a scholarship, which the chapter has provided a couple of times in the past. Richard said that if the chapter folded, the money would go to the national organization, whose future at that point might also be limited. He said he'd rather see the money used locally. Andy Megrath mentioned local organizations we've supported in the past, including the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County and the Dodge House for Homeless Veterans. A new generation of veterans offers other possibilities for assistance.

Bringing the "Traveling Wall," a facsimile of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., to Rutland, as was done some years ago, was mentioned. Bringing the Traveling Wall back has been discussed in recent years but rejected as too big an undertaking. In particular, the 24-hour security required is particularly burdensome, along with costs for transporting the wall and putting up the staff that accompanies it.

Jack Crowther had two suggestions for Chapter 1 expenditures: 1) Approach the Rutland Historical Society with a request to create space for a Chapter 1 archive of materials, offering to contribute money to make that possible; and 2) Offering to support a concert at the Paramount Theatre like "Groovin' — the Summers of Love Experience," held last June. The program featured a group of singers and instrumentalists recreating the songs from the Vietnam era. Proceeds benefitted the Veterans Miracle Center, a charity serving needs of veterans in the northeastern U.S. Jack will follow up with the historical society and the Paramount Theatre.

Jim Ficken, who teaches at Vermont Technical College and substitutes at the Stafford Technical Center plumbing program, suggested financial help for grandchildren of Vietnam veterans or others with a veteran connection. He's especially interested in technical education. He felt that chapter money should be used for "something meaningful," and said he would put some specific suggestions together.

Andy Megrath announced that there will be a Veterans Town Hall in Rutland on Nov. 4 at 1 p.m. at American Legion Post 31 in Rutland. The event is described as "a community forum aiming to establish a greater understanding between local veterans and the friends and neighbors they fought for." More information can be found at www.vtvetstownhall.eventbrite.com. This website is an events listing, so look for **Rutland Veterans Town Hall 2018** with a picture of the Legion. There is button to press if you want to register.

Andy described his participation in a similar event in Burlington at which five or six veterans described their experiences, including sexual trauma experienced by female veterans.

Rutland's Chapter 1 offices are now the regular site for meetings of the VVA State Council because of Rutland's central location.

Among his many hats, Andy is a member of the committee that awards grants from the Vermont Veterans Fund, which receives money from voluntary donations on the Vermont state tax return. Among the recipients were the COTS program for the homeless in Burlington and Rutland's Dodge House for homeless veterans.

Andy had attended the Governor's Veterans Advisory Committee the day before in Montpelier. GVAC presents to the governor its legislative priorities, which the governor reviews and then endorses or not. "We can't say anything (about the latest recommendations) until he (Gov. Phil Scott) comes back and tells us," Andy said. He noted that Scott supported four of seven of the items put forward last year, including educational benefits for National Guard members and licensure for veterans seeking to transfer credentials from military to civilian jobs.

Andy noted that he had attended the interment ceremony for our former treasurer, John McLaughlin, at the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph in August. John's ashes have been placed in the columbarium at the cemetery. A brass plaque will be added later. A display of tall flags from the Patriot Guard Riders was present. Andy carried John's ashes in and out of the chapel.

Richard Reed reported on a financial matter regarding the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph. At our June meeting Richard had reported his plan to conduct a Go Fund Me online fundraising campaign to raise \$200,000 to build a memorial walkway at the cemetery. Now, however, alternative funding may be used. Richard's non-profit fundraising structure is still in place and could be used if needed. Richard sits on the cemetery's Advisory Board.

Dave Mathis won the \$50 among those who attended.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, secretary

THE CHAPTER WILL NOT MEET IN OCTOBER. THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, NOV. 14, 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.