



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

JUNE 2023



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING JUNE 14, 2023

At Chapter 1's June meeting, held on the Zoom app, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Richard Doyle, Michael Murphy, Cliff Adams, and Carl Baldwin. Also attending were members Larry Gold and Doug MacPhee. A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

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

Treasurer Richard Reed's report was approved unanimously.

President Bill Ellwood reported the chapter has 130 regular members. We also have about five associate members. About 50 receive the newsletter by U.S. Mail. Other members receive the newsletter via email, saving us postage.

Richard Reed said the next State Council meeting will be at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington on June 24. VVA members from around the state prepare a cookout for the residents.

Dick Doyle has acquired a contact number from VVA national for resolving problems with bad addresses of members.

Mike Murphy reported on his inquiries with the Rutland Open Door Mission, a homeless shelter and soup kitchen that makes special efforts on behalf of veterans. Mike proposed a contribution of \$2,000, based on estimates, to supply the mission with 800-900 bedspreads and 8-10 folding chairs, specifically designated for the veterans residents.

After some discussion about mechanics of paying for the items needed, Richard Reed moved to approve up to \$2,000 for the bedspreads and chairs and work out the details of paying invoices directly or reimbursing the Mission after the purchase. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed without dissent.

Bill Ellwood reported that the Rev. Pete Hults, Chapter 1 chaplain and recently retired pastor of the United Church of West Rutland, will continue his ministry with Chapter 1. Bill recruited him to visit with local veterans as the need arises.

The National Convention of VVA national will take place in Orlando, Fla., during the first part of August. Chapter 1 is entitled to three representatives, and Bill invited officers and board members who might be interested to say so.

Jack Crowther reported on a conversation with a Rutland Herald reporter about the Dodge House, which has provided transitional housing for homeless vets until its recent closing. Jack said his conversation indicated the Dodge House might be reopening soon. Larry Gold said he had heard the same thing. Following our meeting, Mayor Mike Doenges was quoted in the Herald as saying there were about 10 homeless vets in the Rutland area. Based on that statement and support from a couple of officers, Jack contacted the mayor by email and informed him the Chapter might be able to help financially with the issue. As of this writing, he had not heard back from the mayor.

Richard Doyle shared information on the Leatherstocking Honor Flight program. It is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization affiliated with the National Honor Flight Network. The program recognizes American veterans “by flying them to Washington, D.C., for a day to experience their memorial at no cost. Top priority is given to WW II veterans and a terminally ill veteran from any war.” Two Honor Flights from Albany, N.Y., will be held, on Saturday, Sept. 16, and Saturday, Oct. 14. Application forms and further information may be found at leatherstockinghonorflightny.org. Disabled vets can bring someone to assist them.

Bill renewed the topic of the chapter holding a Veterans Recognition Dinner to bring Chapter 1 members together and recognize special contributions. To allow for planning, fall would be a likely time for such an event, and Bill suggested the Rutland Country Club as a possible location.

Dick Doyle suggested the chapter might pay for members’ dinners, with guests being asked to pay for their dinners. Bill Ellwood said he would seek a venue for the dinner. Richard Reed said we may be able to obtain a resolution when the Vermont Legislature convenes the next time. Larry Gold volunteered to help with whatever was necessary.

Chapter 1 held a 25th Anniversary dinner in April 2005 attended by national VVA President Tom Corey, Gov. James Douglas and his wife Dorothy, and Rutland Mayor John Cassarino. About 90 people attended. That was our last social gathering.

Bill Ellwood asked about needing authorization for purchasing office supplies. Treasurer Richard Reed said if it was a matter of routine expenditures, Bill could just put them on the credit card.

Jack Crowther said we have a stash of Chapter 1 patches, which we routinely give to members, although we haven’t always done so. Dick Doyle said we should be making them available to new members.

Bill Ellwood spoke of his interest in refreshing the chapter website, vietnamvetschapter1.org, to make it more current, “so the members have something to go look at.” “It’s kind of been a static thing,” Bill said. Some of the links don’t work. Larry Gold said he would be able to help.

Bill also threw out the idea of members gathering occasionally in a social setting, such as a breakfast, and participating in parades. Bill invited anyone interested to contact him. Also, anyone interested in serving as a speaker for the organization can likewise contact Bill. Board member Andy McGrath, until recently our president, has spoken to school groups on a number of occasions.

Bill also floated the idea of a hybrid meeting format, that is, a combined in-person and Zoom meeting, allowing members to participate in person if they don't have computer connections. The VFW building where Chapter 1 has its offices, does have wifi service.

Larry Gold, a new member, generously offered to supply the chapter with a computer, if needed for its functions. That could help, among other ways, if the chapter began the hybrid meeting structure mentioned above, using the office at the VFW. Larry also is interested in motorcycle riding and asked about any vet group that might function in support of charity work. We referred him to Andy Megrath has been active on that front as a member of the Patriot Guard, motorcycle group, as well as the Red Knights, a firefighter motorcycle outfit.

In settling on a time for our next meeting, it was agreed that planning for our Veterans Recognition Dinner could continue with several members meeting as a committee, rather the full membership.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, AUG. 9, AT 4:30 P.M.