



# Vietnam Veterans Of America

## Chapter One

[www.vietnamvetschapter1.org](http://www.vietnamvetschapter1.org)

**AUGUST 2023**



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### MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING AUGUST 9, 2023

At Chapter 1's August meeting, held on the Zoom app, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Director Michael Murphy. Also attending was member Larry Gold. A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The host of the Zoom meeting, Secretary Jack Crowther, had trouble launching the meeting, resulting in a decision to cancel the meeting. Almost immediately, Jack was able to access his Zoom account, resulting in a reversal of the cancellation. We emailed and called people who usually attend and decide to hold the meeting. Apologies to anyone who wanted to take part and couldn't.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter with one correction. The June newsletter erroneously stated the chapter was buying 800-900 bedspreads for the Rutland Open Door Mission, which serves a significant veteran population. The newsletter should have stated the chapter had approved spending \$800-\$900 for bedspreads.

Treasurer Richard Reed's report was approved unanimously.

President Bill Ellwood reviewed a proposal from Baxter's Restaurant at the Rutland Country Club for a Chapter 1 celebratory luncheon or dinner this fall. Previously discussed, the event would celebrate the chapter's history and achievements as the first Vietnam Veterans of America chapter in the country and would allow us to pay tribute to individuals who have made important contributions to the chapter.

Bill and Jack Crowther, who met with Brittany Chase at Baxter's, favored a weekday luncheon event because of its lower cost, about \$32 per person, which would include two main dishes as part of a buffet-style meal, non-alcoholic beverages, and use of the banquet room. An advantage of a noontime event is that it would allow those attending to avoid driving at night. A podium and audio-visual hookup would be provided.

As a veterans group, we would have the banquet room fee waived for a weekday event, and our tax-exempt status will allow us to avoid taxes.

Bill and Jack's proposal for a \$4,000 expenditure would anticipate up to 100 guests at \$32 apiece, along with \$500 for any printed material, tokens, or giveaways. The proposal was for the chapter to pay the cost for a member and guest, and the cost for specially invited guests.

Jack made a motion to allocate \$4,000 for the banquet, as defined above. Seconded by Richard Reed.

In discussing the efforts involved in putting on the banquet, Bill said he would put together a program and would talk about the future direction of the chapter. He'll also plan to recognize individuals inside and outside the chapter for contributions to our work. One such thank-you would go to the Rutland Historical Society for assistance in archiving our records.

Jack Crowther has begun work on a slide show recapping the Chapter 1 history and activities. Still needed will be someone agreeing to keep track of RSVPs and provide a head count for the country club.

Mike Murphy suggested the chapter needed to be outgoing in recruiting people to take part and offered to help with an effort to call members.

Jack raised the question of whether to open the event to non-members interested in attending and willing to pay to attend. Jack suggested that in line with the presumed chapter goal of greater visibility, it would make sense to invite the public to the event at a cost-per-ticket. That idea lacked support, however, partly because it would add to the burden of keeping track of signups and payments.

Tim Lonergan spoke in favor of the noon event and favored paying for those who attend. Richard Reed emphasized the need for an RSVP date sufficient to give the country club notice of the number attending. Bill Ellwood suggested "honor the veterans" as a theme for the event.

Final wording of the motion specified a \$4,000 allocation to put on a luncheon in October and allow Bill Ellwood to set a date. The motion passed unanimously. A planning committee will meet as needed to firm up details of the event.

Richard Reed said the next VVA State Council meeting will be Sept. 16 at 11 a.m. at the Chapter 1 offices, but he will be away. Jack Crowther and Tim Lonergan will see to opening the office and providing refreshments.

Tim Lonergan suggested that some flood relief assistance would be an appropriate use of chapter funds. The suggestion had also come from Pete Hults, our chaplain. Bill Ellwood suggested we do some research on a proper recipient of such assistance. Mike Murphy noted he was in touch with a city alderman and could use that connection in figuring out how the chapter might help with flood relief.

Two days after our meeting, on Aug. 11, Jack met with Rutland Mayor Mike Doenges to explore ways Chapter 1 might help homeless vets in Rutland and flood recovery. Jack suggested to the mayor that it might be possible for the chapter to "set aside" an amount of money to assist homeless vets and flood recovery on a case-by-case basis if the need were judged legitimate by city officials. Establishment of such a fund would of course be subject to members' approval at a regular Chapter 1 meeting.

Mayor Doenges was receptive to the idea and mentioned a couple of things in the works, including the planned reopening of the Dodge House for homeless veterans, a small housing complex designated for veterans on North Main Street in the old Mr. C's building, and the ongoing efforts of Richard Gallo, a veterans outreach specialist. He suggested the chapter make contact with the city's Project Vision at one of their weekly luncheons on Tuesday at the Rutland City Police Department.

Project Vision describes itself as "a coalition of over 400 partners in the Rutland area" that strives "to create an environment of collaboration where each of us can work together to expand community engagement, build great neighborhoods, and improve public health."

The mayor suggested that Project Vision often encounters needs of the type Jack was describing. Jack plans to attend the Tuesday meeting and explore opportunities for Chapter 1 to be helpful. The mayor said he would touch base with Project Vision following the Tuesday meeting.

Switching to the question of social opportunities for Chapter 1 members, Jack noted a gathering of vets on the second Tuesday of the month at Denny's. Tim Lonergan had attended the breakfast the day before and commended Richard Gallo, the veterans outreach specialist, for a presentation on the Pact Act for veterans health services. Tim said one should show up between 9 and 9:30 a.m. to take part in the breakfasts.

The final issue discussed was having a "hybrid" meeting for the chapter, whereby members without internet service could come to the Chapter 1 offices on Wales Street and take part in our usual Zoom meeting using an internet connection at the office. Larry Gold has agreed to help work out the setup, which involves a large-screen TV and a couple of laptop computers. We will try to implement that for our next meeting, Sept. 13. Andy Megrath has offered us a 32-inch television to be used in the setup.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 13, AT 4:30 P.M.**

**NOTE THE TIME!**

Here's the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86559910704?pwd=U05wZUozWXQzV09pZVVOUU5xRGUrQT09>

Meeting ID: 865 5991 0704

Passcode: 068619