



# Vietnam Veterans Of America

## Chapter One

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

SEPTEMBER 2023



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### MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

At Chapter 1's September meeting, held on the Zoom app and in person at our office at the VFW, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; Directors Michael Murphy, Dick Doyle, and Carl Baldwin; and members Larry Gold, Mike Divoll and John Pisanelli. A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

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

Treasurer Richard Reed reported that \$1,127 for Rutland's Open Door Mission for chairs the chapter agreed to donate has not been paid, as we have received no invoice. "It looks like we're going to pay taxes this year," he noted, based on the overall picture. "That's okay, there are worse things in the world." Richard said he thought he could handle the filing. "It's not that complicated," he said. The report was approved unanimously.

President Bill Ellwood ordered a new American flag and a new POW/MIA flag for the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Main Street Park, as both are becoming tattered. The cost is \$170 for the flags, made of a durable, Tough Tex material.

Membership Chair Dick Doyle said updates to our membership list researched by Mike Murphy and Larry Gold have started to appear on the official VVA national roster. Membership currently stands at 127, down slightly as a result of the deaths of Bill Whitney, Fred Hellmuth, and Scott Lobdell. Meanwhile, Dave Posner transferred out to a Florida chapter. Two renewed memberships are pending submission of DD 214 records, which Jack Crowther and Bill Ellwood will pursue. Bill and Dick have recruited a couple of others likely to be joining. Larry Gold noted that he and Michael Murphy had attempted to call 60 people on the Chapter 1 roster to update contact information. Some on the roster had no email address and lacked a working phone number. He asked if an attempt should be made to snail-mail them to get better contact information. Dick Doyle suggested getting all the recent updates logged in and then working on the names Larry was concerned about. "We'll come up with something in the future that tries to further refine our connection to our members," Dick said. Tim Lonergan said our snail mail list for the newsletter stands at 48.

**Chapter 1 members who have email are encouraged to have us email this newsletter, as it saves on postage and handling of the newsletter. Just send an email to [vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com](mailto:vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com).**

Bill said that as of that afternoon, there were 22 people committed to attending the Chapter 1 celebratory luncheon Oct. 11 at the Rutland Country Club. The deadline for responses to the invitation is Sept. 22.

Treasurer Richard Reed asked for some clarity on the chapter's policy when awarding grants for various kinds of assistance. Noting that "we don't have a process," he said the chapter needed guidelines. Richard will prepare a guideline. Carl Baldwin, with his accounting background, will provide guidance as necessary. Bill said the goal was not to create excessive red tape but to clarify the procedure to be followed. Richard said the procedure he was talking about would allow the chapter to "justify" its financial operations when someone in the future asks for a

justification. The secretary notes that standard practice for some time has been not to directly pay the person being helped but rather the vendor providing the help, upon receipt of an invoice.

Richard also requested a resumption of mileage payments for driving to Fair Haven to pick up the break-open tickets from Tomasi's Tavern, as well as the \$50 stipend for attending State Council meetings outside Rutland. Both practices had been suspended during the pandemic. The chapter will resume this practice. The mileage rate is 50.4 cents per mile according to State Council practice, considerably lower than the federal IRS rate for tax purposes. It was noted that Richard has been elected vice president of the State Council.

Jack Crowther said he had been able to reach Chris Morgan, former director of the Dodge House for homeless veterans, in order to invite her to the Oct. 11 luncheon. She'll be invited to say a few words. Jack said he was disturbed by Chris's account of her recent ouster. The Dodge House remains closed since Chris's departure.

Jack reviewed his recent outreach to Rutland's Project Vision and to the developer of the eight-unit housing project at 146 North Main St. in Rutland. It is the site of the former Mr. C's fish market. The project is being developed by Stephen Box, who is working with an official of the VA. Neither has responded with a specific request, though they were invited to this meeting.

Bill Ellwood proposed buying hats for the members, to be distributed at the luncheon and given to new members in the future. The consensus was to provide a black hat with the name of the chapter and a "First in the Nation" tag line. Also to be given away will be a copy of the slide show that Jack Crowther has prepared, along with a copy of the archive of Chapter 1 documents, including more than 900 scanned documents and photos. The meeting approved an expenditure of \$243 to pay for 40 flash drives to be given away at the luncheon. The drives will have the Chapter 1 logo printed on it and enough extra space for people to use for storage of photos and other documents. A motion to approve the expenditure was unanimously approved. Also available at the luncheon will be a collection of marble chips from the marble sculpture at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Larry Gold and Jack Crowther will order a cake with the chapter logo and appropriate wording.

Bill Ellwood noted that he and Jack had selected the baked haddock and penne with meatballs as the entrees offered with the buffet luncheon. This was done in consultation with Brittany Chase of Baxter's Restaurant. Baxter's also has the ability to accommodate persons with specific dietary restrictions.

A Vets Town Hall will be held Nov. 3 in Rutland at 6 p.m. at the Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St. The web site for the Town Hall programs states, "At a Vets Town Hall, veterans of any era who served in any capacity are invited to stand before their community and speak for up to ten minutes about what it was like to serve their country. Non-veterans are encouraged to attend and listen. These events are non-political, and all perspectives are valued. There will be no debate on American foreign policy. We will simply listen and learn about what it was like to serve in the wars that this nation has chosen to fight. Further information can be found at [vtvetstownhall.org](http://vtvetstownhall.org).

In a final note, Dick said he expected to bring a dozen membership applications to the luncheon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, NOV. 8, AT 4:30 P.M.  
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE CHAPTER 1 OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND**

Here's the Zoom link:

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

Meeting ID: 865 5991 0704

Passcode: 068619