

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA – CHAPTER 120
MEMBERSHIP MINUTES – THURSDAY, Jan 5, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Mello at 7:10 pm at the IAM Union Hall, 357 Main Street, East Hartford, CT, with the pledge of allegiance, followed by a moment of silence. Officers present: President Frank Mello, Treasurer Roger Anderson, and Secretary Pete Lund. Board of Directors present: Paul Barry, Bill Chiodo, Frank Zizzamia, Pattie Dumin, and Peter Galgano. Vice President Jerry Blum was absent and excused.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Bob Burgess made motion made to accept the minutes; motion seconded by Roger Anderson which passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Roger Anderson provided copies of account balances report as of 12/31/16 and the transaction report for the period thru 12/31/16. He reviewed the income and expense items on the transaction report. President Frank Mello thanked Roger for his report. Paul Barry also mentioned a large amount of people not able to attend the dance made a donation. Dance net proceeds approx. \$3000; a thank you to all who attended and helped out in this success.

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

John Cutler reported the following:

As of 31 December, we have 59 open claims and 37 appeals, for a total caseload of 96 (this figure does not include brokered claims from other Regional Offices).

For Calendar Year 2016, we won over \$1 million for our veterans while spending just \$6,000 to operate our Veterans Benefits Program. Our Return on Investment (ROI) is 177 to 1, meaning we win \$177 for every dollar we spend on our benefits program. Last year's ROI was 106 to 1, so this year is a definite improvement.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP – Frank Mello reported that the chapter has a total of 259 VVA members, 39 individual members, 4 permanently hospitalized members, and 216 life members. Frank reported that AVVA has 15 members, 5 individual and 10 life members.

AGENT ORANGE – Brad Mathews discussed a meeting held with member Paul Scappaticci to discuss Blue Water Act with Sen. Blumenthal. Paul continues to be upbeat on this subject.

VAVS – Frank Mello mentioned volunteers are always much needed at the VA Facilities. Pattie had mentioned a letter from State Council for approval for VVA to get credit for hours worked. Frank also mentioned the State VA healthcare facilities having the 2nd highest award.

AVVA – No Report

POW/MIA – No Report

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS – Tim Siggia reported on several items including the following: **Government Shutdown Avoided with CR** on December 9, the Senate passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the

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federal government until April 28, 2017, avoiding a government shutdown by less than an hour. A group of angry Senate Democrats backed away from their threats to block the funding measure because of a dispute over healthcare benefits for retired miners. The measure passed the Senate with a 63-36 vote and the President signed it into law, before the previous CR expired.

Vets Omnibus Bill Passes before Adjournment. The Senate passed without amendment, the “Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act” (H.R 6416). The bill is sponsored by Rep. Phil Roe (Tenn.) who will serve as Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee in the next (115th) Congress. The bill provides funding for research on the health effects of toxic exposures, expands homeless veterans’ benefits, provides veteran’s status to 20-year Reserve Component members who were not activated, and restores education benefits for Reserve Component members who were called to serve on active duty. The bill now goes to the President to be signed into law or be vetoed. FRA members are urged to use the Action Center to ask the President to sign the bill into law.

Paul Barry mentioned of a better rate structure for Veterans at Rocky Hill Home. Instead of a \$200.00 monthly fee, rates to be increased to 30% of Veteran’s income. This would be responsibility in looking out for state taxpayers interests instead of old rate structure. Discussion was held on example of un-fairness to some of the latest examples of what Veterans. Pay/versus o what incomes they have.

A discussion held on issue of Statewide Funeral Details; state defunding the Funeral Honors Detail because of budget problems. An Email from Sal Sena Funeral Honors Commander was provided detailing of a Rally during week of Jan. 9th; more info to follow.

WOMEN VETERANS – No report

GOOD AND WELFARE – No report

OLD BUSINESS None

NEW BUSINESS Frank Mello had mentioned that Correspondence received from Glastonbury VFW asking for support for troops “Valentines For Our Troops”. Motion made to expend \$50.00 to help out; motioned seconded and approved. Pattie Dumin had mentioned of Elections coming up for Nominating Committee and Delegates to National Convention to be held in April. Some discussion was held on expected expenditures and nominations to be suggested and accepted to present committee: Tim Siggia, Ken Lewis, and Bill Chiodo. Pete Lund will get particular correspondence to committee.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Wreaths Across America events were held Dec. 17th. across the State; one in South Windsor at noon Bob Burgess mentioned about Chapter purchased coats; 90 coats purchased with \$4800 dollars saved. Coats will be distributed to 4 area towns this month. Chapter supported Vet Center with x-mas gifts for 5 families. Huge success held on our Annual Dance. Some discussion on caterer and dj; dj mentioned of good time and would like to provide services next year. Net proceeds approx \$3000.00. Chapter will take down lites tonite, Chapter decorated trees at Rocky Hill Home after and then proceeded to acknowledge Tom Blanchard at Col. Gates Cemetery. Tom was youngest KIA from Ct. Chapter120 has done this for years. Membership Awards given out at Dance are: Member of Year: Frank Zizzamia and Appreciation Award: Paul Barry. Congratulations in order.

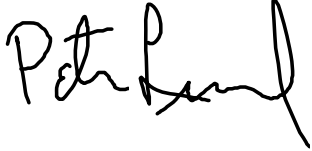
NEWSLETTER – John Cutler reported Cutoff for February newsletter articles is 20 January.

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PRODUCT SALES – No report.

ADJOURNMENT- Motion made to adjourn at 7:50. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The next Chapter Board meeting will be Jan. 26 2017. The next membership meeting will be held Feb. 2nd. The next State Council meeting will be held Jan 22nd, 2017

Respectively submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Lund". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Pete Lund
Secretary Chapter 120