

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA – CHAPTER 120**  
**MEMBERSHIP MINUTES – THURSDAY, Sept. 7, 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, leading with the pledge of allegiance, followed by a moment of silence. Officers present: President Frank Mello, Vice President Jerry Blum, Treasurer Roger Anderson, and Secretary Pete Lund. Board of Directors present: was Frank Zizzamia and Paul Barry. Bill Chiodo, Pattie Dumin and Peter Galgano were absent and excused.

**READING OF THE MINUTES**

Chapter read minutes. Motion made by Bob Burgess to accept minutes, seconded by Ken Lewis; motion passed unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Roger Anderson provided copies of account balances report as of 8-31-17 and the transaction report for this period. He reviewed the income and expense items on the transaction report. Roger mentioned there was bad news; financial didn't get to National and he has to reinvent the wheel with that with IRS. Good news; chapter in good shape. President Frank Mello thanked Roger for his report.

**SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT** –John Cutler reported the following: As of 31 August, we have 40 open claims and 44 appeals, for a total caseload of 84. Of the 44 appeals, 21 are at the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA).

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**MEMBERSHIP** – Frank Mello reported that the chapter has a total of 262 VVA members, 36 individual members, 4 permanently hospitalized members, and 222 life members. +1 from last month. Frank reported that AVVA has 17 members, 6 individual and 11 life members.

**AGENT ORANGE** – No Report

**VAVS** – Frank Mello looking for new volunteer representative for this position. Next meeting is at Newington Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>.

**AVVA** – Jerry Blum to represent read a note from Joanne expressing appreciation for Chapter 120 and State Council for compensation to send her to Nat'l Convention. She was elected Region 1 Director for AVVA at the Nat'l Convention. Joanne is looking forward to moving ahead and connecting with members from Region 1.f

**POW/MIA** – Mary Beaulieu spoke this mentioned that there are now 1603 missing; since 1976 there have been 55 sightings most one reported in 2013. She also mentioned that many remains are being returned and identified from WW2 and Korea. Also a new Director of Defense POWMIA Accounting Agency has been named; Kelly McKeogue.

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**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS** – Tim Siggia reported that military benefits won't be affected in case of a shut-down. Several veterans' bills passed by Congress and sent to the President including as follows:

A bill to improve the veterans appeals process; a bill G.I. Bill Forever Act to extend the 15 year eligibility for education to forever; and V.A. Choice and Quality and education act of 2017. He spoke on several other bills being worked at the Nat'l Convention including DOD clarifies veterans' discharge upgrades. Senator Blumenthal was awarded the VVA legislator of year for 2017 and Congressman Mike Kaufman was awarded the VVA legislator of year for 2017.

Paul Barry spoke on Ct. Veterans Affairs budget continues to get drastic cuts including the Rocky Hill Hospital to change from critical care to a nursing home. Cuts include a decrease of 6 million; 2009 was 34 million dollars to 21 million dollars.

**GOOD AND WELFARE** – Bob Venti had mentioned Goodwin College is holding a 9-11 ceremony at Riverside Ave. East Hartford on 9-11. B-17 bombers display at Brainard Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> to Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>. He also spoke on the park being developed in East Windsor; expected to be done in 6 weeks. He also spoke on a situation of a convicted felon veteran's body had to be removed at Middletown to a private cemetery in Norwich. There wasn't a process to catch this; now a family member has to sign paperwork to signify no felony crimes before getting buried in a veteran's cemetery. He also mentioned of Gold Star families to be celebrated last Sunday of September.

Paul Barry, Jerry Blum, Phil Morneau, and Frank Mello spoke on their attendance at the Nat'l Convention; lots of hard work and long days including going to break out sessions. Discussions including a thank you to Chapter for sending them.

**OLD BUSINESS** No Report

**NEW BUSINESS** Frank Mello had mentioned he'd be interested in participation burning ceremony as other organizations have had. He also mentioned that Sept. is suicide prevention month.

Frank Zizzamia made a motion for Chapter donate to Vernon VNA in memory of Paggani Family who provides the food for dance an amount of \$100. Motion seconded and passed.

There was some discussion of Chapter to help for Texas and Florida hurricane victims; finally motion by Frank Mello to have Chapter to donate \$500 for Texas hurricane victims to be sent to a VVA representative in Texas. Motion seconded and passed. Another motion made by Frank Mello to do similar help to Florida victims in donating \$500 for Florida hurricane victims to be sent to a VVA representative in Florida.

Motion was made by Pete Lund to have Chapter donate \$250 to Dept. of Veterans Affairs Stand-down event at Rocky Hill Sept. 15th. Motion seconded by Roger Anderson. Motion seconded and passed.

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**COMMUNITY SERVICES** Chapter will participate in Ct. Stand-down Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> in Rocky Hill.

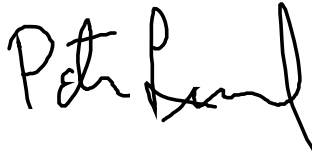
**NEWSLETTER** – John Cutler reported cutoff for October newsletter articles is 22 September.

**PRODUCT SALES** – No report

**ADJOURNMENT-** Motion made to adjourn at 8:10. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The next Chapter Board meeting will be Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>. The next Chapter membership meeting will be held Oct. 5, 2017. The next State Council meeting will be held Sept. 17, 2017.

Respectively submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Lund", written in a cursive style.

Pete Lund  
Secretary Chapter 120