



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Patriotic Committee

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

ELLINGTON
TOWN CLERK



Members

Joe Boucher
John Chandler
Ted C. Graziani
Dennis Kayhart
Robert King
Cheryl Samborski
Christian Sauer
John Takach

Student Representative

Steven Villanova

Chairman

Bruce Warkentin.

Secretary

Rhonda Villanova

January 22, 2019

Meeting called to order at 7:06 p.m.

In attendance were: Bruce Warkentin, Joe Boucher, Rhonda Villanova, Dennis Kayhart, Christian Sauer, John Chandler, John Takach, and Steven Villanova; Joe Palombizio joined the meeting briefly

Pledge of Allegiance

Motion to Accept last meeting's minutes: Chris 1st, Dennis 2nd

WAA Debriefing: Bruce pointed out that we did not have the Color Guard as we have had in the past, in previous years it had been represented by either the Governor's Foot Guard or the American Legion. Maybe in the future we could have the Fire Department or the Boy Scouts in that role.

Taps: It was noted that one trumpet player could not be heard very well and the sequence was not the usual arrangement. One of the high schoolers was a senior and had played it at WAA before; it was the other student's first time with WAA. We will need to change the location of where they are playing.

Bruce said it would need to be made clearer to volunteers about helping to place wreaths at the end of the ceremony. He spoke with Betsy Feldman. She wanted to know how many wreaths we were short. Christian said that number was approximately 75. We ended up with 432 wreaths, including the 5 ceremonial wreaths. Next year, we should shoot for 500 wreaths. The EVFD said they would increase their donation next year.

Comments regarding the newly printed WAA signs: too small, hard to read. We will have to re-think placement for next year so they are easier to read.

Bruce reported that he received a \$30 donation at the ceremony. He bought 2 wreaths and placed them at the library monuments. He also stated we had approximately 57 donors this past year.

Joe Palombizio mentioned that the Farmer's Market might be a good place to have a booth. Bruce let him know that the committee had tried that in the past and didn't get much response from it, same results from the Fireman's Carnival.

John Takach asked if the arrangements for clean-up were in place. Joe B. reminded that the caretaker at the cemetery will take care of clean-up and disposal for \$250. They will send the bill.

John T. called the company for the sound system. They quoted the MSRP. They told him it would be cheaper going through a reseller. Felicia at Town Hall/Finance office asked if we could purchase with a P.O. – the seller was not keen on using that method. John reviewed the product again, mentioned that we needed weatherproofing option (i.e., cover) and battery-operated. The committee discussed/debated whether the equipment should be “owned” by the Patriotic Committee vs. “shared Town equipment”. It will be used at least twice during the year in multiple locations during one of the days and we need to guarantee it is available to us (and fully charged), specifically because of its portability and ease of use. One of the questions is still, “where do we store it?” Felicia said it could be kept in her office. The committee mentioned possibly asking Joe Palombizio if it could be stored in his office. (Joe had already left for another meeting) Also, if the equipment is shared with the town, does the Patriotic Committee pay half?

Joe Palombizio attended the meeting to clarify funds/budget for Veteran issues in town. Whatever funds he thought he would have, he does not. He repeated his desire for a soldier memorial to be added to the existing memorial at the green. The soldier statue would be approximately 5’ tall, bronze, and would include a plaque. Joe also said he had spoken with Dave Pearson at the Middle School regarding their Veteran’s Day ceremony/activities and having the Patriotic Committee more involved in some way. He called Rhonda regarding giving Dave a call, which she did. She reviewed what the Middle School’s current ceremony/activities entail for both Veteran’s Day and Memorial Day. Rhonda stated that Dave Pearson was retiring at the end of the school year and the committee would need to contact the two teachers that have assisted with the coordination in the past to make sure they were aware of any new involvement going forward as a new principal will need some time to get up to speed. Bruce said he would contact Dave and speak to him before the end of the school year. Bruce has worked with the two teachers that helped coordinate the Patriot’s Pen essays in the past, Ms. Vibert-Johnson and Ms. Reynolds. They are most likely the two teachers Dave was referring to. John T. and Bruce have both been at the EMS ceremony. John C. and Rhonda spoke of past efforts at the various schools.

The Veteran Coffeehouse held at the library was mentioned, as it was attended by several Veteran nurses. There were interesting conversations and issues discussed. It was mentioned that we will need to be looking for a speaker for this year’s Memorial Day ceremony. Rhonda mentioned maybe having a female speaker. Jen Ciotto was one of the previous speakers.

Budget Review: This past year the committee bought (4) new signs (3’ x 4’) apx. \$240. Programs were bought for the Memorial Day ceremonies – apx \$125. (Rhonda stated that the prices have gone up each year). Bruce had mentioned having the monuments at the library cleaned. Where do we get an estimate? Joe B. recommended contacting Rob Binkowski for that information. The committee’s approved budget is \$4200. If we spend \$2500 on the speaker system, we should have enough remaining in this fiscal year to cover everything, except maybe the monument cleaning depending on Rob’s information.

Election of New Officers: After some discussion, the votes were unanimous – John Takach as Chairman, John Chandler as Vice-Chairman, and Rhonda Villanova as Secretary.

New Business: Dennis, currently tasked with cleaning the POW/MIA monument at the library, mentioned that the placement wasn’t the best. Is there something we could do for it to garner more attention or possibly move it? John T. asked if fundraising for Joe P.’s statue and possibly moving the POW/MIA monument and/or helping to install Joe P.’s statue could be a Scout project. It was mentioned that the current POW/MIA monument had been a Scout project. The committee agreed this would

probably also be a good Scout project. Rhonda mentioned (3) encounters over the holidays from people and organizations that are Veteran-related, two of which could help with fundraising. For the record: Soldier Solutions (<https://soldiersolutionsllc.com/> - Apparel for Devoted Patriots; also, per their website, they have joined with TADSHAW – Train a Dog Save a Warrior, which places trained service dogs with Vets) – they do fundraisers; Joanne Swanson – makes items to sell, all proceeds go to Veteran charities (860-871-6865); Focus On Veterans, Inc. – accepts donations in order to provide free medical transportation to VA hospitals and clinics (860-317-1025; questions to ourctveterans@yahoo.com). Rhonda asked if the committee would like to contact the Soldier Solutions company to see what they do for fundraisers. John T. would like to focus on a project and do what we can, bringing in community members as needed.

John C. asked if the Patriotic Committee could vote remaining budget \$\$ at the end of the fiscal year to go towards the Joe P.'s statue. Joe B. reminded that the fiscal year ends on June 30th. The committee will address as we get closer to June and has more information regarding said statue and fundraising status.

Motion to adjourn: John T. 1st, Chris 2nd.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Next Meeting scheduled: February 26, 2019 - 7:00 p.m. Town Hall.

Submitted by:

Rhonda Villanova

Rhonda Villanova

Digitally signed by Rhonda Villanova
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Date: 2019.01.30 11:59:18 -0500