

**NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes, Monday, February 20, 2023, 7PM**

**Members Present:**

Kristin Reilly  
Tom Yaegel  
Wendell Rich  
Dave Reese  
Erik Saracino

**Others Present**

Lisa Russo – Administration Liasion  
Bernadette Heenan (Public Participant)  
John Colburn (Public Participant)

**Absent:**

Paula Gasper - Liasion

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 pm**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** - November 21, 2022, Unanimous consent<sup>1</sup>.

**ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OFFICERS FOR 2023:**

**Chairperson: Kristin Reilly**  
**Vice-Chairperson: Wendell Rich**  
**Secretary: Erik Saracino**

**OLD BUSINESS**

- Timothy Wynn, Director of Veterans Affairs (VA) for Bucks County, PA, and Ms. Betty Carleo, Veterans Service Officer, for the Veterans Affairs, Doylestown, PA, provided an informative presentation to township veterans on October 17, 2022. The presentation highlighted the PACT Act, which is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.
  - VAC members were informed that Wynn resigned/retired as Director of Veterans Affairs in Dec 2022. Saracino informed the committee that an appointment with Ms. Carleo is scheduled in late February. The purpose of the meeting is to gain a better understanding of the VA's process for filing a disability claim.

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<sup>1</sup> The VAC did not host a formal meeting in December 2022 and January 2023; although the committee remained activity in the community during the winter months.

- The results of the meeting will be highlighted in a summary that committee members will review. The VAC plans to release the information to the public upon approval from township management.
- Hometown Hero Wreath Fundraiser
  - On October 12, 2022, VAC members hosted a fundraiser at Giuseppe's Pizzeria, 990 2nd Street Pike, Richboro, PA. The event collected the necessary funds needed to purchase approximately 400 ceremonial wreaths.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Northampton Township is currently accepting applications for an open position on the VAC.
- Washington Crossing is hosting a dedication ceremony of George Washington which will be installed at the National Ceremony.
- Washington Crossing Historic Park will hold its annual Memorial Day ceremony on Sunday, May 28 at 1:00pm at the gravesite of Continental soldiers located near the Thompson-Neely House. The observation will include a colonial color guard, fife and drum music, Revolutionary War reenactors, veterans, and other honored guests. After the dedication, American flags will be placed on the graves. The gravesite marks the resting place of soldiers who died during the Continental army's December 1776 encampment in Bucks County.
- VAC members exchanged ideas needed to honor the burial flags initially presented to the family of Army Master Sergeant Kenneth Elwell, a lifelong resident of Holland, PA, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan on July 19, 2011. The VAC agreed to place Master Sergeant Elwell's burial flags in a framed display case that will be included in the formal dedication of the Richboro Nike Ajax Base video presented to Council Rock North High School (TBD).
  - VAC members plan to invite our Gold Star families to attend the dedication ceremony.
- The VAC anticipates purchasing the U.S. Space Force flag which was officially unveiled on May 15, 2020.

### **BUDGET DUE IN FEBRUARY 2023**

Every year, VAC members and non-members participate in four distinct Veterans related ceremonies: (1) Memorial Day (at Dembowski Park); (2) Flag Day (NH Civic Center); Veterans Day (Front of Admin. Bldg.) and Wreath Laying (Union Cemetery).

- **MEMORIAL DAY: Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup> @ Dembowski Park:**
  - M/C: W. Rich

- Guest Speaker: Lynn O'Brien/Charlene Lindsey (Potential Candidates)
  - Singer: TBD
  - Chaplain: TBD
  - Color Guard, Firing Squad, and Bugler: TBD
- **FLAG DAY: Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> @ NH Recreation Civic Center.**
    - Sound system provided by the Northampton Indians Football and Cheerleading Organization.
    - The VAC seeks to obtain participation commitments from the Northampton Township Baseball Organization and Troop 145 parents & scouts.
    - M/C: Frank O'Donnell/James Gallagher (Potential Candidates)
    - Singer: TBD
    - Chaplain: TBD
    - Color Guard, Firing Squad, and Bugler: TBD
- **VETERANS DAY: Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> @ NHT Admin. Bldg:**
    - CR South Marching Band. [Check on availability]
    - M/C & Guest Speaker: Erik Saracino
    - Chaplain: TBD
    - Singer: TBD
    - Color Guard, Firing Squad, and Bugler: TBD
- **HOMETOWN HEROS WREATH LAYING CEREMONY: Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> @ Union Cemetery, 209 Almshouse Rd, Richboro, PA**
    - M/C: K. Reilly
    - Singer: TBD
    - Chaplain: TBD
    - Wreaths: TBD
    - Color Guard, Firing Squad, and Bugler: TBD

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 pm**

**Respectively Submitted**

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**Erik Saracino, Secretary**

**Next Meeting: Monday, March 20, 2023**