**Veterans, Ceremony and Parade Commission Regular Meeting**

**January 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**Opening:** The Veterans, Ceremony and Parade Commission held their Regular Meeting on Thursday January 12, 2023 in the Fowler Memorial Building, 45 New Haven Avenue, Tom Jackson called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and asked those present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:**

Tom Jackson

Emily Sopchak

Jack Jansen

Frank Rodriquez

**Guests:**

Bill Kates

Diane Zelinsky

Cathy Gorman – Recording Secy

**Agenda**

Agenda provided by Tom

A quorum was present for tonight’s meeting

Tom expressed appreciation to Diane and Vinny for all their work and support. Thank you both.

**Consideration of Minutes:** Tom asked for a motion to waive reading and to accept the minutes for the December meeting although he did want to review them since there were some important points made.

**Review of December minutes:**

* Debriefing of veteran’s day parade, all went well, 31 units, positive and negative feedback was appreciated.
* Scouts: should be announced in marching order
* Excitement of children with musket shoot by fife and drum. There were a couple of misfires due to unforeseen circumstances which was disappointing. Perhaps we should contact the Marine Corp League as they have a musket as well, making more noise for the spectators.
* Reach out to Wiener Mobile to get them back
* The Drum and Bugle Corp was successful, did a nice concert on the Green
* Parades should be geared to all age groups
* CT Jeep should go out in proper order; further discussion is needed; Emily suggested rotating order. Bill agreed and stated that this is what was done previously
* Tom shared the lineup – military groups up front, then jeeps, then others.

**Old Business: Opportunities:**

* Sikorsky or National Guard helicopters
* Emily suggested reaching out to Drill centers for Honor Guard, reach out to recruiters and offices of all military groups. Bill said problems have arisen as the Honor Guard had been looking for monetary compensation, which we don’t have the funds for, our parades are voluntary. Emily stated that the Honor Guards get paid for doing this job and they don’t require payment for marching.
* Tom mentioned checking in with Black Knights, but they are booked years in advance. Maybe we could check with Groton. Joe Viscount was able to book the Black Knights previously because he was a pilot.

Motion to accept December minutes, Jack first, Bill second, all approved, minutes accepted.

**New Business:**

* Memorial Day parade will be May 28, 2023, 2pm step off, need to secure all necessary permits.
* 10am wreath laying - Tom suggested that we don’t do wreath laying same day as parade, but kids come to parade and want to see wreaths, so sticking with plan
* We need to contact:
* Brian Smith
* Colonel Bob Goetzm Parade Marshall
* Bill Cates, Master of Ceremonies
* Diane sent templates of invitation and press release to Cathy, new recording secretary, as well as existing email list, current Alderman, Educ, City officials, Commissioners. civic groups (this one may need more contacts) and Churches. Diane will send email list to Jack as well.
* Facebook was a good gathering place as well. Diane said she will contact Karen to verify the Boards. VCPC commission has facebook page. Will need to remove Diane as administrator and perhaps add Cathy as facebook admin. Also include Milford concert band prior to parade for concert on The Green
* The Thumb drive has some other data, need to take a look. Much of this info was from Tom Flowers. This list is created in excel, and will need to update as needed, State Reps and Governor Lamont, Rosa Delora, Senators, Blumenthal, judges, treasurers, suggest reaching out to chamber of commerce, key clubs, and bands, sports teams, cheerleaders.
* Tom mentioned that there have been comments about ‘toning’ down the Memorial day parade, group consensus is that it’s a public event and it’s a celebration. The DAV were concerned.
* Discussions about Legion Riders and some inappropriate behavior, those guilty will not be invited again and have been reprimanded.
* Diane stated that the Combat Vets Motorcycle Club, needs a new commander. Need to recruit a Milford resident to be an official VSO.
* Jeeps: what to do about all of the Jeeps, we need to keep 20-25 jeeps. Also, suggest that if you are driving as a veteran, put signage on your vehicle.
* Wreath laying: get invitations out for that, some emailed, other US Mail, this is the same invitation as Memorial Day parade. Tom and Bill’s contacts are on the invitation. Diane shared lists with Cathy. We need to purchase 5 wreaths.

**Kudos:** Tom stated that we are making improvements all the time, that the group is a work in progress, and we are moving in the right direction.

**Monuments:** The Korean Monument is in disrepair. Tom has reached out to Public Works and Justin Treat. There was discussion about getting funds for a perpetual care account, which we think must be done with Rec & Parks. Monuments do need care. Will continue conversation with Mayor Blake and suggest the work be completed before the Memorial Day parade. John Blaire did Vietnam and WWII memorials and he recommends that they clean the figures and coat with bees wax.

**VSO:** Regarding VSO’s, we are down to four and wish to get more.

**Website:** Clean up web site- Diane will reach out to Karen Fortunati to review and update website. Also, was Travis presented and approved? Should have happened at January meeting. Diane to reach out for update.

**Fathers Day 5k race** sponsored by Milford Bank. VSO’s benefit from that so we need to check with Milford Bank on status.

**Flags:** We have an abundance flag left over so should be in good shape here.

**July 4**: there is a Monument that needs work in the old cemetery. Doesn’t fall under our purview. It’s Milford Cemetery’s property, Bill said they there used to be a Graves Preservation Committee. Need to check on that. There are (3) cemeteries in Milford: St. Mary, Kings Highway, Milford Cemetery.

**Veterans Day**, falls on a Saturday, the November 11, 2023, parade will be on 11/12. Wreath laying must be 11/11 at 11AM.

**For the Good of the Order:**

Any comments or questions? No comments or questions.

**Motions to adjourn**, Frank made motion, Emily seconded, all in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

*Respectfully submitted by Cathy (Gorman) Rose, Recording Secretary*