

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,  
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2011**

**Commissioners Present:** Mr. Best, Mr. Conway, Mr. Laffin, Mr. McCarthy  
Mr. Oakes, Mr. Shultz

**Absent:** Mr. DiSorbo, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Ortoleva, Ms. Pavlis, Mr. Weil

**Guests:** Mr. Lewis, Mr. May

**Approval of Minutes – October 11, 2011 – APPROVED WITH CORRECTION**

Mr. McCarthy noted a correction to paragraph 1. The amount should be \$31,000 from Shop Rite.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the Minutes with correction. Mr. Laffin seconded.

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

**“What it Means to be a Hero”** - November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Hamden Middle School. Mr. Oakes will be there at 8:30 a.m. along with Korean War Veterans, The Order of the Purple Heart and 3 WWII Bomber Pilots to speak to the students. At 10:15 a.m., there will be approximately 100 kids in the auditorium. At that time, the students will be presenting a check to Kevin Creed for Fisher House CT. The total raised as of one hour ago is \$5,319.30. Mr. Oakes also invited all to attend.

**Veterans Day -November 13<sup>th</sup> at NOON** – Mr. Shultz reported on a phone call he'd received from a woman who was very upset about our ceremony being held on Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>. She feels its an insult to her husband, who was wounded in Anzio. There was discussion on the significance of the day, the date and how to plan this event n the future.

The wreaths have all been ordered and paid for. Mr. Conway will be the Master of Ceremonies. The ceremony will be at 12:00 noon at the monument followed by the luncheon at 1:00 at the Elks Lodge.

**Wall at Hamden Middle School** – Mr. Laffin reported on the wall leading into the Veterans Memorial Auditorium. He has to give a formal presentation to the Board. After getting prices for both phases, he will put it all together and present it to the HVC for their approval, then to the BOE. Estimated costs should be no more than \$500.00.

**Meeting Dates 2012** – Mr. Conway questioned the date of the May meeting. In the past we had the meeting scheduled later in the month due to VAD and Memorial Day events. After brief discussion it was agreed to keep the schedule as written. We can hold a Special Meeting if needed. Dates, location and meeting times are all approved. FIRST Tuesday. Miller Senior Center Activity Room.. 5:30 p.m.

Bill May was 23+ years active Army Guard, Black Hawk pilot. He & Steve Cavanaugh of Biltmore Construction are creating a non-profit organization that will help veterans/families who have suffered tragic events by securing their homes, ensuring safety & security. Mr. May's passion is to give back& work with veterans. “House of Heroes” is Fort Benning based.

His goal is to establish a “House of Heroes CT Chapter”. Their objective - “Make a difference in a day”. He would like feedback from the HVC.

They will be reaching out to various veterans organizations as well as getting sponsorships from different organizations and corporations. There will be a team of volunteers and once a veteran has been identified and meets the criteria, Steve Cavanaugh will assess what's needed. Mr. Cavanaugh has access to all trades/craftsmen and all work will be done to code.

Mr. McCarthy suggested he coordinate with the VA regarding accessibility and ramps. “Go lightly at first”. This can be put in the class of John Nolan's program. There are a lot of people who will help. Mr. Shultz suggested getting the Vo-Techs involved. There are 11 in CT. Mr. McCarthy then added contacting various unions, they all have apprenticeship training programs.

Mr. May went on to say they need a lawyer and an accountant who specialize in not-for-profits. The “House of Heroes CT” will come under the National Chapter. They will also have a 'high-level Board of Directors”.

Mr. Oakes informed all that Margaret Middletown (Veterans Legal Center) will be at our next meeting at approximately 6:15 pm. Please feel free to invite others to attend.

**American Warriors Trip** – Mr. Conway stated, “it was the greatest experience I've ever had”. There were so many veterans there at the same time. “US Air should get a letter of thank-you for all they're doing”. He went on to say, “there wasn't a dry eye on the plane. It was a wonderful time”.

Mr. McCarthy added that “we sent 23”. We should consider doing more pasta dinners & fund raisers so we can send more WWII veterans. As soon as possible. Mr. Conway agreed.

**Eagles Scout Project** – Mr. Oakes reminded everyone of Anthony Cardo and his Eagle Scout project. He was turned down for the project he proposed (interviewing veterans). Mr. Oakes asked for ideas of projects Anthony can do? Mr. Laffin offered the option of Anthony working with him on the Wall of Heroes at HMS.

Mr. McCarthy suggested projects up at Brooksvale Park at the VMB.

Mr. Oakes was approached by a funeral director the other day who told him he'd heard about a veteran's funeral during which the priest would not allow them to play God Bless America or the National Anthem. After much discussion it was agreed we need to make some inquiries about 'policies'. Mr. Conway will follow-up on this.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:40pm.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk