

**MINUTES OF THE HAMDEN VETERAN'S COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2011 AT 5:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Mr. DiSorbo, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Laffin, Mr. McCarthy,
Mr. Oakes. Mr. Ortoleva, Mr. Shultz

Absent: Mr. Best, Mr. Conway, Ms. Pavlis Mr. Weil

Guests: Mr. Creed, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Watson

Approval of Minutes – March 8, 2011 – **APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

Mr. Oakes introduced David Lewis. Mr. Lewis is retired Army (28 years) and currently working at the West Haven VA. He drives the bus for disabled veterans and is hopeful that he can possibly transport up to 18 veterans from the VA to our Veterans Awareness Day Event on May 27th.

VAD – MAY 27TH. Mr. Oakes reported he has had 2 meetings with Mr. Levy, Mr. Ortoleva, Mr. Shultz & Mr. Weil. The Invite List is up. We anticipate 100+ veterans and up to 450 students. In addition to HHS, HMS & Wintergreen we have St. Aedan's & St. Brendan's which are new to VAD.

The main speaker is a woman from eastern CT, an Army Colonel. Robert Laffin will bring the dogs again and he will try to have the helicopter come as a display. There are about 25 Korean War Veterans coming. Mr. Oakes is still waiting to hear back from Sikorsky.

Mr. Ortoleva has made up the booklets. People are giving him questions to go in the booklets. Hopefully, by the next meeting the sample booklets will be done.

Everything is all set with QU. The dining room is back open – they will serve us a meal. Mr. DiSorbo will provide a cake again this year.

Mr. Ortoleva reported on the passing of veteran Seabee Bill Rossi. He also reported on the taping of the television show May 5th.

Memorial Day Parade – Mr. McCarthy reported he received a letter from John Carusone thanking the HVC for their support and accepting the honor of Grand Marshal for this year.

Mr. DiSorbo shared that Post 150 needs vehicles. He is looking for a ride for 4 people. Mr. Oakes reported that the Boy Scouts are all set. The cars - we'll know better for the next meeting. Mr. Laffin reported Gus Gertz will bring a jeep and there will be a Bronco/Blazer type vehicle as well.

We only have one band – The Gaelic Pipers. We also have the HHS, HMS, the grade schools and we picked up 2 marching bands from New Haven.

Monument for Flag Pole in the Park – The monument is at Nolan's ready to be engraved. The money will come from a budget that's going to be voted on tomorrow night. It's special money that's in a budget for Parks & Recreation – for enhancing parks. Curt Leng does not see any problem getting the \$1000 to pay for the monument.

5K Run/Walk up Sleeping Giant – April 16th at 9:00 a.m. Money goes to Wounded Warriors.

History of Memorial Day Parade – Mr. Oakes has been researching the history of the parade. This year is our 75th Memorial Day Parade. Mr. Shultz volunteered that Ed Randall, Chuck Noonan and George Connelly were past Grand Marshals. Lou Matteo was mentioned as a source of info as well.

Fisher House – Kevin Creed graduated from high school in 1970, joined the service, got out and became a policeman. He was a state trooper until 1978. He went back into the service and was a gun pilot for 20 years. He retired in 1996. He went to law school and became an attorney - first as a prosecutor then into private practice. After 911 the Army asked him to come back in. He did.

During this time he shared his aircraft with the injured or the remains of a deceased soldier. He shared details of this experience and the inspiration he felt – knowing that some family back home will be receiving bad news.

When he returned home, he and his law partner devoted themselves to Fisher House Foundation. “It's like Ronald McDonald House, Plus. Ronald McDonald House offers families a place to stay while their loved one is in the hospital. But here, the soldier will actually stay in a house.”

He gave a very detailed presentation on Fisher House including a video for the HVC to view.

He then spoke of numerous events and fundraising efforts taking place and/or being planned to raise funds for Fisher House. They are also developing corporate sponsorships and support from the 3000 fraternal organizations in the state. Their goal is to raise \$3M.

Mr. Oakes stated the Army Band is coming again for the Fireworks. “We have opportunities to set up booths at the Fireworks”. Mimsie Coleman also needs some ideas for meals for the Band. Mr. Oakes asked that all HVC members give it some thought and be ready to discuss at next meeting.

New Street – Gallagher Road named for the Vietnam POW/MIA John Gallagher. They're talking about having it on his birthday which is June 17th.

Meeting Adjourned 6:40 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Deborah Gaiolini, Commission Clerk