

**West Suburban Veterans District – March 2, 2020**

**Location: Great Plain Room, Needham Town Hall**

**Present: Kate Fitzpatrick, Leon Gaumond, and Meghan Jop**

**Also present: Nancy Blanchard, Amy Frigulietti, Sarada Kalpee and Sally Rose**

**Call to order: Meeting called to order at 4:00 pm.**

**Business:**

**1. Citizen Speak**

None

**2. Minutes**

The Board voted (3-0-0) to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2019 meeting.

**3. Outreach Events**

Meghan introduced Amy Frigulietti, Wellesley's Assistant Executive Director, and Nancy Blanchard, the District's new Deputy Director. After a brief discussion, and after making the name change from Head Administrator to Deputy Director, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the FY21 Budget.

Sarada updated the Board regarding Outreach that had occurred since the last meeting in October. Dave Henke, from VA Boston, spoke at a Wayland Veteran's Breakfast about Benefits available. Sarada took a group of seniors on a day trip to Hanscom where they enjoyed shopping at the commissary. A Veteran's Reception was held at Regis College and Operation Moneywise is a program that can help Veteran's bridge finances when they are not in school, spring break, summer vacation. Low income students who are not using GI Bill benefits may be eligible for CH 115. Kate asked about Mass Bay Community College, as that population is more likely to need economic assistance. Sarada said that Marie Hahs is very aware of the programs available. A motorized wheelchair was donated free of charge to a Weston Veteran by the Lutz Buddy Up program. In the last four months Weston has had 2 VA claims, Wellesley 3, Needham 3 and Wayland 2. On October 29<sup>th</sup>, Sarada, along with some American Legion Members, met with Wellesley High School students to discuss their military service. On November 8<sup>th</sup> she visited with Tenacre students.

Meghan spoke about the hiring process for the Deputy Director. She said they received 14 applications, reached out to 7 and interviewed 5. Meghan, Louise, and Sarada, along with Wellesley's HR Department, conducted the interviews. Meghan said the applicant pool was strong, some of whom were prior VSO's wanting to come out of retirement. Meghan said that Nancy's enthusiasm and overall knowledge won them over. Nancy spoke about her 23-year military career with the Army. She served as a surgical tech, drill sergeant, instructor, and served in Afghanistan where she defended hospitals. She has served as the Chair of the NAACP Veteran's Affairs and is now in inactive reserves. She plans to pursue a Master of Education degree at Harvard. Nancy was raised and continues to live in Cambridge. With the exception of

the Wellesley COA, Nancy has visited all four town halls and senior centers. She has learned to knit at the Needham COA.

#### **4. Director's Update**

Sarada asked for approval for a new Dell laptop and case for Nancy at a cost of \$985.58. This was unanimously approved.

Sarada has met with Cindi Gonzalez from Needham and Stephanie Hawkinson from Wellesley regarding media outreach and the Veteran's Office and available benefits.

Discussion transpired regarding ordering grave flags from MassCor Industries, [www.masscor.us](http://www.masscor.us). Our contact there is Steve Cristol #774-235-5099. Sally has ordered 3 POW flags for Wayland and 9 boxes of grave flags for Wellesley. There is no shipping charge and the flags are made in Massachusetts.

Chris Coleman, Westwood's Town Administrator, is interested in joining the District. Chris was unable to attend the District meeting. The Board is interested in having Westwood join, but they wanted to know what is happening with the current Westwood VSO and the town's population and number of veteran's served.

Meghan asked Sarada to draft a letter to Francisco Urena regarding Westwood's joining the district.

Sarada will be on military leave for the month of June and then again starting in August for a military deployment. The Deputy Director will manage the office and all CH 115 and VA cases on a full time basis.

#### **5. Old/New Business**

The next meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at the Wellesley Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.