

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

31 MARCH 2022

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chairman Dudley

PLEDGE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Vice Chairman Quinn

Point of Order called to recognized Vice Chairman Quinn as the “Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Sgt. Major Quinn”

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: Chairman Dudley

- Jim & Donna Boyce, next month’s guest speaker, St. Joseph Academy
- Sharon Unger, Veterans Village of NE Florida (daughter Samantha, Dir. Of Donations)
- Dr. Matthew Burke, 10 CAN, Inc.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Minutes of last meeting conducted on 24 February 2022 were presented by Chairman Dudley. Copies of Minutes and Agenda are available on the sign-in table and were set to members electronically by the Secretary. The minutes were approved by voice vote with no changes.

Vice Chairman Quinn took the opportunity to recognize the new Recording Secretary, Donna Pullium.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Treasurer John Mountcastle provided a detailed report that as of February 24, 2022, there was a balance of **\$115,76.75** and on March 30, 2022, there was a balance of **\$112,427.02**. There is an outstanding credit card balance of \$1,075.98. Leaving a balance of **\$111,351.04**, with 1/3 of the net funds restricted to specific programs. Donations to the Council and withdraws for the

different programs and organizations were discussed. Motion for the approval of the Treasurer's Report was made and approval was obtained.

PRESENTATIONS:

SHARON UNGER, HOMELESS VETERANS STAND DOWN, CLAY COUNTY

Discussed the Stand Down representing 6 counties in NE Florida for homeless Veterans (200 total with 150 men and 50 women) to be held at the Clay County Fairground September 29th – October 2nd. Packet of the event with schedules were provided. Discussion held of the different organizations that will be assisting and services that will be available, including the Veterans Court and Veterans Administration helping with paperwork process. Security and guest services will be provided for the Veterans. Ms. Unger took questions about the event and how help can be provided to assist the homeless Veterans.

Dr. Matthew Burke, 10 CAN, INC., HELPING VETERANS

Dr. Burke, a "spiritual combat trainer," discussed problems associated with PTSD and its effect on our Veterans. Dr. Burke's organization has teamed with others to obtain a 100% success rate in suicide prevention in their 9 years. They teach other organizations how to implement their strategies. To understand and know the formula that 10 CAN, Inc. uses, order the book, "Saving Heroes." Dr. Burke offered 10 tickets to the event "American Heroes Bash" to be held on May 7th and left them with Chairman Dudley for distribution.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Veterans Service Officer Joseph McDermott

An email was received that the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis was fully staffed on February 9, 2022. Although fully staffed, they are still very far behind with over 500,000 requests for records, claims, DD214's, etc. and will get them out as soon as possible. Three presumptives have been added on and you hear it referred to as "Particular Matter" but is well known as "Burn Pit:"

- Asthma, Rhinitis and Sinusitis

They are proposing to add 9 more presumptives to bring the total to 12. There has to be a diagnosis within 10 years of leaving country to apply these disability claims.

Stand Down for St. Johns County is tentatively set for October 8th at the Elk's Lodge. The Veteran Service Officers are going to be going out to homeless camps to let the homeless Veterans know of the Stand Down and hopefully draw more in for assistance this year.

The Board of Veteran Appeals (BVA) has changed their criteria. They are no longer sending a "Law Judge" for in-person meetings. To appear before the Judge in person, you must go to Washington DC and the VA will no longer reimburse for charges. BVA is also utilizing a video conference hearing (held in VA Regional Office) and virtual tele hearing in the Veteran Service Office.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT, JOHN LESLIE

John Leslie spoke of attending the celebrations regarding National Vietnam Veterans Day. He attended ceremonies in Union and Clay Counties presented by the incarcerated VVA Chapter 1080.

Next treatment court date will be held on April 8th at the SJC Courthouse. There have been 98 that entered the program since inception, 54 have graduated and 13 left the program without graduation due to probation ending. Trying to bring in more mentors to help with the program. Spoke of Duval County's program and their success rate. John took questions regarding the VTC. Chairman Dudley said next session will be in the Annex and not the Courthouse.

CHAIRMAN DUDLEY REMARKS:

Discussed the amount of money that is being spent by the Veterans Council on housing our homeless Veterans here in SJC. Some of these Veterans are also accompanied by their families, including children. Talked of other organizations that help, but their process is time consuming. The need for a place in SJC to house homeless Veterans was also brought to discussion. There are numerous

requests for assistance. The Veterans Council is blessed to be able to assist even though not required, but it's "what we do."

The Chairman announced the US Coast Guard Band would be performing on April 4, 2022, at Anastasia Baptist Church. The concert will start at 7 pm and all are invited to attend.

Observance of Memorial Day on May 30, 2022, will be conducted at the St. Augustine National Cemetery. There will be no restrictions, and everyone is urged to attend.

NEW BUSINESS:

General Mike Fleming, Operation Firewatch, discussed an article that was published by Folio Weekly, proclaiming that Firewatch was failing in their attempt to prevent Veteran suicide. General Fleming is submitting an argument to Folio Weekly to dispute this claim in hopes they will print.

Joe Snowberger, Liberty Life, spoke of his publication and support of all Veteran issues that they support and will help with any publication on Veteran matters. Also, his joining of Mission United and how they can assist.

Chairman Dudley acknowledged Sgt. Major Ray Quinn's nomination and acceptance into the Veteran's Hall of Fame along with 15 others throughout the State of Florida.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Dudley, Chairman

Ray A. Quinn, Vice Chairman