

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOVEMBER 21, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chairman Dudley

PLEDGE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Bill Jefferson, Chaplain

INTRODUCTION OF NEW GUESTS: New attendees introduced themselves and who they represent.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Minutes of last meeting conducted October 31, 2024, were presented by Chairman Dudley. Copies of the Minutes are available on the sign-in table and were sent to members electronically by the Secretary. The minutes were approved by voice vote with no changes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Mountcastle presented the Treasurer's Report to the Council. As of October 23, 2024, the total liquid cash balance was \$176,967.08. Treasurer Mountcastle went over the Treasurer's Report including all incoming funds and expenses going out. The floor was open for any questions. The Treasurer's Report was approved by voice vote with no changes.

SPEAKERS: Steve Muskett, Spec. Forces Assoc. 88, JROTC Scholarship Awards Program Mr. Muskett provided a slideshow detailing the Special Forces Association and the JROTC Scholarship Awards. He spoke of the local chapter that has been in NE Florida for the last 20 years and their contributions and accomplishments. Mr. Muskett also spoke of the commemorative pavers available for purchase for the walk at the Veterans Stadium at Pedro Menendez High School. The floor was open for any questions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE, JOSEPH MCDERMOTT Mr. McDermott gave a status update of the Veterans Service Office (VSO) and the new hires that are now in the learning process to handle claims submitted by our Veterans. The VSO is currently about a month out in scheduling due to the number of new incoming Veterans. Hopefully with the new hires, Veteran assistance will catch up with the backlog. Mr. McDermott also spoke of the problems with the local VA Clinic and the issues being worked on to get these resolved. The floor was open to questions.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT, JOHN LESLIE 15 Mr. Leslie introduced himself and gave a history and what the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) does for our Veterans in the legal system. Mr. Leslie gave an update on the VTC and the number of participants SJC has helped through the legal system process. There is always a need for mentors to help with the VTC program. Everyone was invited to attend the new Court Hearing for the VTC on December 6th. The floor was open to questions.

AWARD PRESENTATION: The Patriot Award from the Maria Jefferson DAR Chapter was awarded to the Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley. This is a National Award from their headquarters in Washington DC. Chairman Dudley spoke of his appreciation of receiving such an honorable and prestigious award.

UNFINISHED/NEW BUSINESS Chairman Dudley presented a plaque to Kealey West, St. Johns County Attorney's Office, in appreciation of her assistance to the Veterans Council. Chairman Dudley spoke of receiving a check for \$5,000 from Dale Webb/Nocatee Association. Another check was submitted for \$2,500 for Veterans Village. Much support is received from the Nocatee Community for support of the Veterans Council. One hundred percent of the funds received go completely to the support and assistance of our local Veterans in need. 16 The next program on the schedule is Wreaths Across America and the wreaths being placed on each gravesite at the Nationwide program on December 14, 2024, at 12noon. Everyone is invited to attend the program in St. Augustine. Veterans Village has received an email from FDVA approving contractor repairs that need to be completed. Work orders should be issued soon to get these accomplished. Florida Power and Light has selected Veterans Village for their lighting this year. FPL will completely decorate Veterans Village for Holiday lighting on December 11th. They will also provide a huge Christmas Tree with colored lights. Other organizations are contributing to making this a big event at Veterans Village. The project at SR 16 is moving forward with success and hopefully will be completed in January. The floor was open for discussion and added information. Next Veterans Council meeting will be held on Thursday, December 19th beginning at 7:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Dudley, Chairman