

Veterans Memorial Cemetery Association

March 13, 2012
VFW Post, Leighton Road, Augusta

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Kelley Wynne at 9:00 a.m.

New members of the Association were introduced:

David Williams, representing the VFW

OPENING CEREMONY: Kelley Wynne (Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag)

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:

Present: Kelley Wynne, Chairman
Mike Clark, Treasurer
Patricia Theriault, Secretary
Gary Laweryson, Marine Corps League
Jack Stearns, Purple Heart
David Williams, VFW
Mike Murphy, General Public
Louise Dorr, General Public
Peter Ogden, Veterans Services
David Richmond, Director

Excused Absent:

Charles Bennett, Vice Chairman
Richard Fournier, DAV
Florence Hoover-Johnson, Maine Women Veterans
Diane Culleton, General Public
General Bill Libby, Adjutant General

Required number of voting members for quorum is five; **eight voting members present.**

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

- The minutes of the December 6, 2011 Association meeting were sent electronically to members of the Association in December by Kelley Wynne for review.
- Gary Laweryson made a motion to accept the minutes as written.
- Mike Murphy seconded the motion.
- The motion to accept the December 6, 2011 minutes as written was voted on and passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- The Annual Report for 2011 was presented and reviewed by Treasurer Mike Clark.
- The Quarterly Report for January – March 2012 was presented and reviewed by Mike Clark.
- Gary Laweryson made a motion to accept both reports as written.

- Mike Murphy seconded the motion.
- The motion to accept the Annual and Quarterly reports as written was voted on and passed.
- Mike Clark reported that the annual audit had been successfully completed for the 2011 financial records. Members of the Association completing the audit were Mike Clark, Kelley Wynne, and Patricia Theriault.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Director David Richmond identified burial totals at each cemetery as of February 2012:

- Mount Vernon, 4820
- Civic Center Drive, 14971
- Caribou, 531
- Spring Vale, 210

Cemetery Updates:

Civic Center Drive:

Serve Pro has completed their contract of mold removal at the chapel. This is the first stage. They have removed the drywall and ceiling damaged by the mold, as well as the rubber membrane in the roof that contributed to the mold growth. Removing the rubber exposed additional need for repairs, including the need for some roofing work and further waterproofing before new drywall / ceiling work is done.

The grant from the VA for headstone work will resume this spring, beginning in O section, and moving through the cemetery from there. It is anticipated that they will complete about 5 rows a day. The work may impact aesthetics (equipment, noise). The work is being completed by Farley & Sons.

Mt. Vernon:

A proposal is being developed to hire out the installation of upright headstones to a local contractor (to be determined). The proposal would allow for installation to occur twice a month. This would allow crews to focus their efforts on burials, maintenance, and cemetery needs. The crew would continue to install flush mount headstones. At this point, Mt. Vernon experiences up to 80 burials in a two-week period. Each burial requires substantial checks and balances and quality control efforts.

Kelley Wynne asked whether it would be more cost effective to hire additional crew members, rather than pay an outside contractor.

Mr. Richmond replied that it is difficult to strike a year-round balance in staffing needs, and hiring seasonal staff is not effective, though it has been tried in the past. Hiring an outside contractor for headstone installation seems the most cost-effective approach at this time.

Spring Vale:

The Administrative Building is complete to the point that a punch list is being worked on, and is close to being accepted. Display cases are being considered. Once the interior of the building is complete, and as spring arrives, attention will need to be shifted to the exterior landscaping needs. The contractor is now working on the niche walls.

Mr. Richmond explained a niche wall vase and holder that is used in Caribou, sold for \$40 each, and effectively cuts down on families taping or wiring flowers to niches. He will forward a photo of the vase and its fastener to members.

Memorial Day Preparation:

Kelley Wynne asked about preparations for Memorial Day services. Dave Richmond wondered whether there should continue to be two separate services, or combining to one. There was discussion about needing to honor the Veterans at both cemeteries.

It was decided that there will be an alternating annual rotation between Civic Center Drive and Mt. Vernon. Due to headstone repair work at Civic Center drive this year, the public ceremony will be held at Mt. Vernon. The rotation will be:

At noon, an honor guard will be present as flags are raised to full staff at the “off” cemetery.

A 2:00 p.m., there will be a public ceremony with guest speakers at the “on” cemetery.

VETERAN’S AFFAIRS REPORT:

Peter Ogden discussed the retirement of Adjutant General Bill Libby, and the hiring process for a new Adjutant General. In the interim, the Deputy Adjutant General is filling the position. When a candidate has been selected, they must go before the Senate for approval. If this process is not done by April, it may take until June/July to be completed.

Mr. Ogden reviewed Governor LePage’s zero-based budgeting process for 2014-2015. He anticipates that Mt. Vernon will need to be expanded in about four years, and Spring Vale expanded in three to four years. He explained that the VA will provide funds for the expansion but not staff. Mr. Ogden also identified the goal that the VA will provide in-ground double depth crypts.

Mike Murphy wondered whether the work of the special committee formed by Former Governor Baldacci on Veteran’s Cemeteries was still of use. Mr. Ogden felt that the work of that committee was still useful in developing a Master Plan, along with new information, the work of the State Planning committee (which soon ‘goes away’), and the Bureau of General Service. In addition, Mr. Ogden would like an Ad Hoc committee working on the issue of Veterans buried in non-Veteran cemeteries.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Kelley Wynne reported that the money for the Battlefield Cross had been sent as approved. A location was recommended. There was general discussion about the recommended location, base, footprint, checking with an architect, landscapers, and engineers. It was noted that power and waterlines run through the suggested location. Mike Clark will get the specifications on the monument to Louise Dorr for possible base contractor. The monument will be completed in April, but will not likely be installed by Memorial Day. A Veteran's Day dedication ceremony was suggested and discussed.

Ideas for fundraising initiatives, getting and recognizing donors were discussed, including donation envelopes. Donations would be made out to the Association's name and mailed to Mike Clark's address.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Burial payments through the VA have been straightened out, and funds are being appropriately received.

Charles Bennett, Vice Chairman, has made known his desire to resign from the committee. The Chairman will talk to him, and wishes that he would reconsider.

Florence Hoover-Johnson has a conflict, and has not yet been able to attend a meeting. If necessary, the committee will request a replacement representative of the Maine Women Veterans.

Gary Laweryson asked Dave Richmond to check how the repair to the chapel windows did this winter.

Louise Dorr reported that Mr. Rousseau of the local museum is gathering artifacts for placement in the display cases. Dave Richmond suggested two more locations, at Spring Vale, and Caribou.

NEXT AGENDA:

- Donation envelopes for Battlefield Cross
- Gary Laweryson made a motion to adjourn
- Mike Clark seconded to motion
- The motion was voted on and passed.

NEXT MEETING, JUNE 12, 2012 9:00 A.M., VFW, LEIGHTON RD, AUGUSTA

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Theriault