

THE EASTERN HAMPDEN COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICE DISTRICT MEETING
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Members Present: Mary McNally; Michael Valanzola

Member Absent/Excused: Ken Geromini

Others Present: Gerard "Jerry" Rathe, VSO; Pamela Leduc, District Coordinator

Mr. Valanzola called the meeting to order at 9:36 am.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to access the meeting may do so by following the Zoom instructions below. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, for reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts, we will post on the Town of East Longmeadow, Town of Hampden and Town of Wales municipal websites an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting."

INTRODUCTION

Ken Geromini, Town of Hampden representative (RG): Postponed.

REORGANIZATION

Motion by Ms. McNally; seconded by Mr. Valanzola; to nominate Michael Valanzola as Chairman. Mr. Valanzola accepted the nomination. Ms. McNally – yes; Mr. Valanzola – yes.

NEW BUSINESS

Review and vote to approve the October 6, 2022 Regular Session Meeting Minutes: Previously approved.

Review and vote to approve the October 11, 2022 Regular Session Meeting Minutes: Previously approved.

Review and vote to approve the October 11, 2022 Executive Session Meeting Minutes not subject to release: Previously approved.

Review and vote to approve the December 12, 2022 Regular Session Meeting Minutes: Action postponed until March 14, 2023.

Review and vote to approve payroll and accounts payable for December 2022: Accounts payable action postponed until March 14, 2023.

Review and vote to approve payroll and accounts payable for January 2023: Accounts payable action postponed until March 14, 2023.

Jerry Rathe, Veterans' Service Officer: VSO Rathe acknowledged that he is still working at getting up to speed on the requirements of the position. Ms. Leduc acquired a new cell phone for the VSO. He requests that business cards be produced and the purchase of a new laptop be approved. Chairman Valanzola questioned the original purchase of the laptop. It was determined that the laptop was donated to the district by Mr. Green, origin unknown. Chairman Valanzola recommended that Ms. Leduc seek a quote for replacement and have the laptop evaluated by Wales's IT vendor. VSO Rathe requested authorization to establish a handful of memberships he explained would be beneficial to the district. He advised that his training is ongoing and the next remote session is scheduled for tomorrow. He is meeting with the VSOs from Chicopee and Palmer on Thursday to discuss best practices and obtain various documents/templates to assist with

DVS processes. Chairman Valanzola requested and VSO Rathe provided an update on the status of Chapter 115 benefit payments and the state reimbursement process. He expressed frustration with the initial reluctance of many of the local VSOs to offer guidance and/or support to him in his new role.

FY 2023 BUDGET

Motion by Ms. McNally; seconded by Chairman Valanzola; to approve the FY 2023 adjusted budget as presented. Ms. McNally – yes; Chairman Valanzola – yes.

FY 2024 BUDGET

Action postponed until March 14, 2023.

OTHER BUSINESS

The payroll approval process going forward was discussed. Ms. Leduc displayed a payroll voucher on her screen for the board to review. Payroll vouchers will be emailed to Chairman Valanzola for approval. Accounts payable will continue to require board action at regular monthly meetings.

Motion by Ms. McNally; seconded by Chairman Valanzola; to approve the payroll for December 2022 and January 2023. Ms. McNally – yes; Chairman Valanzola – yes.

Motion by Ms. McNally; seconded by Chairman Valanzola; to authorize Chairman Valanzola to approach the towns of Brimfield and Holland to determine their potential interest in joining the district. Ms. McNally – yes; Chairman Valanzola – yes.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. McNally; seconded by Chairman Valanzola; to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 am. Ms. McNally – yes; Chairman Valanzola – yes.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela A. Leduc
District Coordinator