

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA
NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
11 January 2024

Call to Order: The BOD Zoom meeting was called to order by President Larry Miller at 1900 hours. The invocation was led by Gary Terhune and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Larry Miller and recited by those assembled.

Attending: Balcolm, Breuder, Burdett, Day (Roby & Sharon), Dunn, Frost, Hulse, Cheshire, LeFebvre, Luti, McLean, Miller (Larry & Pat), Rowan, Siemens, Terhune. A quorum of members was officially present.

President's Opening Remarks: The first order of business tonight was the official swearing-in of the new BOD Director, Jim Dunn, by the President. Larry wanted to try and stay within the time limits of the scheduled meeting. Regarding emails, he stated that he will try not to editorialize in his responses. If you want to discuss a particular issue, please call him. He may not respond immediately, but will try to respond as soon as possible, usually within one day. If something is urgent, please call. Also, he does not like discussing specific individuals without having them on the email and aware of the discussion. If you call him, don't hang up if a woman answers (it's his answering machine).

Immediate Past President Remarks: Jim hoped everyone had a wonderful holiday. Jim presented some comments regarding the re-writing process for the Chapter by-laws. Larry and Michael have already done a lot of work on this process. It is more important to do this well rather than to rush the process and wants to complete this task before November of this year prior to the annual meeting and would like to aim for July/August to have a final draft ready for the BOD review to present to the members for approval/amendment at the annual meeting. In another matter, there are two bills moving through the legislature, one dealing with homestead property tax exemptions. This was put forward by the towns of Conway and Portsmouth. The second bill was put forward by Conway because the rooms and meals tax, a portion of which is to be refunded to the towns, has not received its fair share as per the original legislation. Normally, they should receive a rebate of 40%, but have never received that amount. They are proposing to allocate an additional \$1-\$2's for the town of Conway which they estimate would give them an additional \$1million in revenue annually without having to send anything else to Concord. Peter tried to clarify this further, and Jim stated they, Conway, never receives the 40% rebate because the legislature waives this provision of the law every year. A similar situation exists with Portsmouth. HB 1034 is the enabling legislation for the town of Conway. There is also another bill being put together in Conway to move them from the \$500 veteran exemption up to the maximum of \$750. Gary thought the maximum was \$500, but Jennifer said you need to be careful as the veteran exemption is a tax credit applied directly to the property tax bill. All veteran credits are state statute driven and every town in NH follows the same rules. The local town has to vote in an increase to this exemption, and most town are presently at the \$500 level. This proposal would need to be brought forward to each town's governing body for consideration. Jim said that they are starting a petition drive in Conway to get 25 signatures to start this warrant process. Larry stated that exemptions for veteran disabilities is another entirely different piece of legislation.

Vice President Remarks: Peter stated that in order to stay within the meeting time constraints, he had no additional comments at this time.

Secretary's Report: Michael said that the last official meeting was in November at the annual meeting, and those minutes would be approved at the next annual meeting. A motion to approve those minutes now was made, seconded, and approved by all present.

Bookkeeper's Report: Roby appeared to be a little disoriented in time, but eventually noted that the December income and balance sheet statements were distributed earlier in the day. He was a little concerned that the YTD retained earnings were only \$754.50 for CY 2023. He felt that this was too small to be comfortable. This is driven by a smaller membership but offset somewhat by the market performance. For the last year, our total assets have increased dramatically by about \$80K. Where do we make money? Luncheons and recruiting are our main sources of income, and the future doesn't look too bright. A motion to approve those minutes now was made, seconded, and approved by all present.

Trustee of the Trust Fund: Drew said that the December report for investments appear to all be doing well for the last few months and compared to December of 2022. For Life Membership investments, we gained \$12,474 for an annual rate of increase of +14.6%. The scholarship investments increased \$37,911 for an annual rate of return of +20.6%. The American funds increased \$1500 for an annual rate of return of +8.9%, and our total investments increased \$51,015 for an annual rate of return of +15.8%.

DISCUSSION

Clambake Discussion: Larry stated that we still need volunteers to manage next year's event. Gary emphasized that, when we discuss it with prospective managers, they understand that they are not doing this alone and that there are many others involved in the process. It would be nice if the bake Meister lived on the coast, but it's not an absolute requirement. Larry will again mention this issue in the President's column in the next issue of the Granite Slate. Sharon wondered if we could put out a blast email focused on this and state that if someone doesn't volunteer to do this, the clambake will be history. It needs to tell the membership that this is not a one-person operation. Gary will draft a proposed statement and send it to Larry and include a draft to the BOD as well.

OLD BUSINESS:

Granite State Warrior's Award: Peter said that the next award presentation for 2023 would be at the next meeting in April as previously discussed. The write-up for the award is available from Ray D'Amante. The awardee was previously discussed and lives in the Plymouth area, so it is convenient to the Common Man restaurant. Roby asked if we had confirmed the meeting in April with the Common Man? Gerry Boyle was not present and needs to be contacted when he returns from his vacation to the Dominican Republic at the end of the month.

NEW BUSINESS:

By-Laws: See earlier discussion. Larry wanted to include two new positions of (a) Surviving spouse, and (b) state legislative advocacy. Michael will save his comments for the working group discussion.

Chapter Operations Handbook 2015: Michael has volunteered to take this on as he wrote the 2015 version along with Chad Chadwick.

Event/Activity Guide: It was recommended that Gerry Boyle be the chair for this document review. Michael again wrote the original document but concurred that Gerry should be the chair for this review.

Chaplain: Gary Terhune volunteered for this position and the President concurred.

Veteran Cemetery Project: Larry recently visited the veteran cemetery in Boscawen with Gail and Pat and noted that on the walkway a lot of organizations have small monuments at the cemetery, but MOAA was not represented. He knows that this would be very expensive and has spoken to David Kenney (a chapter member) who had been on the board at the cemetery. We would need a design, a construction plan, a budget to maintain the monument, and then the proposal would be placed on the cemetery website for donations to support it. He noted that this particular walkway is getting quite a few memorials and space will become an issue. Jim asked if he had any rough sketch idea of what this memorial would look like and costs? Larry described the Women's Memorial. Unfortunately, a tree had fallen on this memorial and seriously damaged it and it took months to have it repaired. Larry didn't think we needed a professional designer, and it might be a bench or something else. Peter asked if he saw the "Global War on Terror" monument? Peter was on the committee to put that one up and he at least knows the process. He said this is expensive and suggested other potential options such as placing it in the Educational Center. The Center is also collecting donations for such memorials and suggested that we consider putting a MOAA memorial inside the Education Center which would alleviate the risk of weather-related damage. David Kenney could probably provide us with guidance on how to do this. In the past for the maintenance funds, the donations have been placed in an escrow account and the funds are withdrawn from that account to maintain the memorial. This was done for the Global War on Terror memorial as the committee no longer exists. The Army Corps of Engineers does not support these monuments. This is all donations driven. Michael suggested approaching MOAA National because they have a fund to support up to \$1000 to fund these types of projects. Peter mentioned that the Global War on Terror memorial cost around \$80K. Larry suggested that we could look to others outside our chapter to contribute funds to this project.

NH HB 1283, End of Life Options: Bill Luti called in and said he was approached by the NH Coalition for the Prevention of Suicide to see if NH MOAA would sign a pledge to oppose the subject bill. This bill is really an attempt to implement medically assisted suicide in this state. Eleven states and Canada have such legislation and this bill is of serious concern for veterans, especially veterans with serious disabilities/injuries. This bill would open "Pandora's" box. Canada recently had a scandal where care givers in their Veterans Administration were caught recommending suicide to disabled veterans. There is a spinal cord injury group in California that is suing the state over their concerns for disabled veterans to make sure these groups are not pressured into making this decision. Since veterans are the number one group at risk for suicide, he thinks opposing this bill is right. He spoke to Arnie Soucy at the Catholic War Veterans Auxiliary, and they are going to sign the pledge. Peter, Larry, and Bill had a discussion at the SVAC meeting, and this bill was not included in the usual list of bills presented to the committee. When Bill asked Kevin Grady why, he stated that he and the chairman had decided it wasn't a good idea to present it. Arnie Soucy will bring it up at the next SVAC meeting in February. Peter made a motion that the BOD sign the pledge and announce it to the national committee. A motion was made by Peter and seconded. Drew asked if we wanted to add this as a small article in the March edition of the Granite Slate. There was some discussion regarding the motion, and it was recommended to keep this strictly as a non-religious motion, and that any option like this presented a slippery slope for the future. Rick Siemens mentioned that in the past the Manchester VAMC put up a wall of pictures of veterans who had committed suicide next to those who died in service. Bill checked with Jim O'Brien at National to see if Chapters could take this stance

and he said “absolutely”. Larry asked Bill if he could write a small article on this topic for the next Granite Slate by around 1 March. Bill will also alert the BOD when this bill goes up in the House so members can testify against it. Bill stated that the more people that show up or testify against this bill will have a significant impact. You can sign up online on the legislative website to oppose the bill. He can also send out a blast email when the time comes with links on how to sign up on the legislative website. Peter said that the SVAC, representing 20 veteran service organizations, shows up, it will also have a large impact. This issue will be brought before the next SVAC in February. Peter called the question, and the motion to oppose this legislation and sign the pledge was approved by all present. After the vote, Larry mentioned that he wanted to appoint someone to take on the State Legislative Advocacy position and Bill Luti agreed to do this. Michael mentioned that in the past we had two members who covered both the national and local legislative issues. Bill said that MOAA National has a list of state legislative items that they encourage their chapters to pursue, either by writing drafts or proposing ideas through different channels. These items are published on the national website. Peter said that as the President, he can make an appointment to this function without the BOD approval. Bill will go ahead and convey to the NH Coalition for the Prevention of Suicide our wish to be added to the pledge. If you have any connections with other veteran groups in the state regarding this issue, please have them get in contact with Bill. Jim mentioned that he will be speaking to the state American Legion Hq. in the next 1-2 days regarding a former state commander who is dying. He wanted to know if the state American Legion on the list of veteran organizations that the Coalition has? Bill said “yes” but it’s through the SVAC, but there are a lot of other small organizations that the Coalition is not familiar with. They don’t know who to call. Bill asked Jim to talk to the state American Legion about this and let them know what is going on.

Outings: 1) MT Washington 2) Train Ride: Bob Jaffin was not present but sent Larry an email after the annual meeting whether the chapter wanted to schedule some outings. Larry said “yes” but hasn’t received any further responses from Bob. Larry will try to reach out to him again.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Government Relations (National/State/SVAC/MLT/Vets Count): Peter Burdett said that the SVAC met on 2 January. Several members of the BOD attended this meeting. It was noted that the Air Force Association has changed its name to include the US Space Force. Regarding the Manchester VAMC, they are looking at a zero-budget growth in the future. Kevin Forest agrees that the more veterans that join the VA helps to improve their budget outlook. This is a capitated system meaning that total funding is directly tied to the total number of veterans enrolled. They did experience an increase in enrollment due to the enactment of the PACT act recently, but more than 50% of the NH veterans in the state are not enrolled. **NOTE: The four western counties of NH are in the catchment area of the White River Junction VAMC.** Drew mentioned that during Covid, he enrolled for the vaccinations as the enrollment eligibility was opened up to all veterans. However, he doesn’t know if that is still the case. Normally, enrollment is divided into eligibility groups based on the veteran’s disability rating. Peter suggested going into the VA and signing up anyway even if you have no disability rating. Peter said that the “Ask the Question” program has reached the 10-year point. A new updated version should be coming out soon. There is also a movement to provide some basic dental care to disadvantaged veterans and that this is important for overall general good health. The NH Veteran’s Home needs a licensed Social Worker. Then the SVAC reviewed a large number of bills which won’t be discussed here. HB1354 is a proposal to allow veteran surviving spouses to retain their current veteran license plate beyond the current annual renewal date after the veteran’s death. It has been proposed before and would allow un-remarried veteran surviving spouses to retain the special veteran license plates until they either die or remarry. Pat Miller said that she did not want a special license plate that indicated that she was a surviving spouse. This would potentially attract unwanted

attention to these spouses. She wanted to know if there were anyone present who didn't think that this was not a good idea. The SVAC voted to support this bill as written. Pat and Jennifer were upset that some members of the SVAC were concerned that the surviving spouse might be confused for the veteran, but none of the BOD members agreed with that opinion. Gary's next-door neighbor, a retired Lt. Col., recently died and he had to explain the current law to his surviving wife. All of the bills recommended by the TAG were supported. Finally, there was a small disagreement between Peter and Roby regarding the concern over the amount of retained earnings from the bookkeeper's report.

Personal Affairs: Jim said that any veteran who is having a problem, much is being done with the ReachOut program in the American Legion. Jim will continue working on these issues as they come up.

Membership: Since December, there was one new members, no deceased, and one dropped members, for a total of 546. Michael will be sending out 209 annual dues letters next week. There will be no bill for printing as Michael used his own printer. If we fall below 200 dues letters, we can't get the bulk rate and would have to be sent out as 1st Class mail. There are possible workarounds to that issue. Michael has also received a few comments for the LOE submission, and it is ready to be sent unless there are still other comments that need to be addressed to meet the February suspense date. The package for the website communications award is also ready for submission. The questions that have to be addressed require a URL for the reply, and these are all contained on our website. He will probably submit this next week. Jennifer asked if it's time to consider different ways of sending out the dues notifications using email or a Google form. Michael said this has been considered in the past and would require him to maintain two separate lists when only about 1/3 of our membership have email addresses. He's not sure how many of the outstanding dues members have email addresses. We do have the option for paying the dues online and the link for this is on our chapter website. This issue could be looked at again in the future.

Recruiting: Jim said that Tom Goff is currently in Texas. Jim has identified several members to be local recruiters in different regions of the state. Gary is covering the seacoast, Peter, and Jim in the North Country. We need someone in the western part of the state. He is going to try to reach Joan Huber, a former president of the chapter, to see if she would be willing to accept this. He also needs someone in the Manchester area and the Concord area. He is also working on two others in the North Country; a CW3 and the other is General Perkins. If you also know of people who are national but not local chapter members, please let Jim know. He is still working with National on the 1600 name list. It appears that we have to be sending them an invitation to an event. He has not had an opportunity to talk with Frank Michael about this point yet. This approach might not be as beneficial as he had hoped. Larry has tried to contact Frank Michael multiple times and has been unable to reach him. This may be related to the fact that he took over from Erin Stone in the middle of December. Jim will try to contact him again next week and see if he can contact Larry directly. Wayne Balcom volunteered to assist with recruiting in the Nashua/Manchester area.

Programs: Gerry Boyle was out of town and there is no report.

Web page: We had 786 hits in December down from 803 in November. Again, Michael is looking for someone to assume this duty. He has been doing this for twenty-four years. We continue to receive a five-star rating for it each year.

Travel Program: Tony Burdo not present. He submitted the following report - We currently have four travelers booked for 2024. We continue to offer four group travel trips and any trip offered by

Collette under our World Connect Program for the remainder of 2024. I will be meeting with the Collette district manager to discuss our 2025 travel program sometime in February.

Scholarship Loan Program: Wayne reported that we gave out eight scholarships this past semester. We still have not tapped any of the scholarship investment funds and still have money coming in from repayments. We should be adequately funded for at least another year.

2024 Granite State Warrior Award: Larry has reviewed the instructions he received on this program, and he feels that we could give out two awards annually. One would be for military capabilities, and the other for services. Peter said that we could still nominate someone for the military capability award and asked if Larry had anyone in mind. We had previously awarded BAE Systems in the past for turning “dumb” bombs into “smart” bombs. Michael asked if we had ever tried to give an award to Dean Kamen? Peter said “No”, we have not approached him because his connection to veterans is not quite as well-known as others we have presented. It’s also difficult to get him to appear for these types of events.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Nominations – Directors: Sharon said we have several people have expressed an interest in doing this, but that is all.

Nominations – Officers: Jim indicated that they may have someone who is interested in the Treasurer’s position.

Granite Slate Update: Drew stated that the last edition was published in mid-December. He has not received any feedback on that edition. He also sent a copy of the “Remembering Linebacker II” article to both the Union Leader and MOAA National. The Union Leader declined, and the MOAA National editor thought it was a great article for our newsletter, but they probably wouldn’t be publishing it. If they changed their mind, they would let me know. At this time, there are no major articles set up for March. Larry wanted to add a few specific items for that issue. Any submissions should be sent to me NLT 1 March 24. Jim wanted to thank Bill Luti for the article he wrote for the Wall Street Journal, and it was truly excellent, but it can’t be reproduced otherwise. Bill said he would send it out to the BOD. Jim had previously received and distributed it.

Web Communications: Jennifer Rowan had nothing to report. Jennifer recently got married and her last name is now Rowan. This is in the updated membership directory. Her email address has not been changed.

Blast Email: No report.

LIAISONS

ESGR: Nothing has really changed since the last report.

Transition Assistance: Jim had nothing new to report.

Martin’s Point Liaison: No report.

Manchester VAMC: Served in World War II? New law says you’re eligible for VA health care.
<https://news.va.gov/125927/served-in-world-war-ii-law-eligible-health-care/>

If you served in the U.S. military between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, a new law makes you eligible for VA health care benefits, but you have to apply. The Cleland-Dole Act was signed into law Dec. 29, 2022. Section 101 of this law expands eligibility for VA care for Veterans of World War II. Now is the time to apply for VA health care, even if you applied before and were not approved due to your income level. Veterans may still have to pay copayments for medication or urgent care or long-term care in some cases, depending on their eligibility and service connection.

Veterans Benefits at 30% Disability | VA Service-Connected Disability | theSITREP
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozZ1O0eAmOU>

In this YouTube episode of theSITREP, discusses Veterans benefits available to those receiving 30% disability. One particular item is the 30% rating is no cost health care and prescription medications for service-connected disabilities. Check out the link for the many other service-connected benefits at 30% and other theSITREP episodes relating to VA care.

Surviving Spouse Liaison: Pat Miller submitted a two-page PDF report which is attached as an annex to this report. After her report, Peter mentioned that he is still attending the NH Military Leadership team meetings, an executive group of the SVAC. This group gives advice to the Governor and the TAG. Peter will discuss the details on this group with Larry on a separate call in the future.

Last Thoughts: Michael had two additional items to discuss. He asked Roby regarding the suggested budget for 2024 that only \$30 was allocated to surviving spouse issues. Pat, in her December report, had spent about \$106. Pat was asked how much she needed for various items, and she said that she will get back to us with a more detailed itemized list. Roby stated that committee expenses are legitimate, but he needs receipts. Secondly, Michael asked if there were any comments on his report about membership breakout by service or rank? Everyone seemed to think it was very useful. The last report of this kind was three years ago. Finally, Jim told Roby that Frank Michaels indicated that the chapter would receive the \$1,500 for council operations + \$180 for Zoom meeting sometime during this month.

Next Board Meeting: The next BOD meeting will be a Zoom meeting on 8 February 2024. Jim mentioned that if we wanted to do something up in Conway in June in conjunction with the luncheon, he has a place called the Red Fox that could seat 30 attendees for a BOD meeting and would allow us to order off the menu with no room charge. The BOD could be the night before the luncheon. He asked members to think about this option. If more than 30 people attended, then the Red Fox would need to move to a fixed menu. Jim is using this facility for an American Legion meeting on 1 February and will report on the outcome.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 2048 hours which was seconded and accepted by all present.

Respectfully submitted

Michael A. McLean
CDR, USN (Ret.)
Secretary
New Hampshire Chapter

Surviving Spouse Liaison

January, 2024

1. Point of contact and resource for surviving spouse and spouse legislative and benefits issue
2. Chapters with an assigned surviving spouse liaison are awarded 10 points on their Levels of Excellence scoring
3. I intend to promote the key values of MOAA:
 1. Advocacy
 2. Membership
 3. Chapter Support
 4. Engagement/Resources
 5. The MOAA Foundation and MOAA Scholarship Fund
4. Provide information that affect the military community but especially surviving spouses and spouses to:
 1. Elected officials
 2. The MOAA members
 3. Surviving spouses and spouses

Now I would like to tell you a bit about myself. I have been surrounded by death since the young age of seven when my father, a WWI Army veteran passed away from colon cancer.

I have been a member of the church bereavement team working with surviving family members, priests, and funeral homes.

I have worked for Senator Bob Smith for 20 years, who is a Vietnam Navy Veteran. I worked in his official Manchester office as Director of Outreach, Director of his Academy selection Board, Manager of Constituent Services, where

he would present medals to veterans who never received them in the past. I also worked on his campaign as his Administrative Assistant.

I may not be a “Surviving Spouse”, thank God! BUT I am a SURVIVOR from cancer, been a warrior for family members....2 sisters,1 brother, my daughter, my daughter-in-law and husband...some have lost the battle and some have won and some are still struggling....i have also been a caregiver for other family members one with ALS and one with Alzheimer’s. I AM A SURVIVOR!

Since I have been appointed to SSL by past president, Jim LeFevere:

1. I have attended virtual MOAA SSL informational meetings. Discussion about higher TRICARE Fees AND retraction of the monthly pay on the death of veteran.
 2. Sent Christmas cards to Surviving spouses
 3. Presented 3 Surviving Spouse pins to Surviving Spouses
 4. Been in contact with National Board member, Gail Joyce on a regular basis.
 5. In keeping with MOAA National, I will write articles for the Granite Slate regarding surviving spouse issues
 6. Sent information to a spouse who, after listening to Gail Joyce’s presentation, wanted to begin planning for the future.
 7. Written to both Senators and Congressmen Pappas regarding the pay back issue
 8. Spoke to Congressman Pappas
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1. Attended to several SVAC meetings. During the last meeting there was a discussion regarding a Act relative to veterans plates for surviving spouses. I spoke in support of lifetime retention of surviving spouses keeping their spouses Veteran plate. The result was a vocal and a subsequent hand vote. Result was of a split vote was to support the bill.