



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

MARCH 2024



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING MARCH 13, 2024

At Chapter 1's March meeting, held on the Zoom app and in person at our office at the VFW, attendees included Bill Ellwood, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Dick Doyle, Michael Murphy and Carl Baldwin. Members and guests attending included Richard Baker, Wilbur Abrams, James Philbrook, Thomas Purdy, Richard Shum, Louise Clarino, Beth Higgins, Norman and Victoria Hawley, David Potter, Tom Rousseau, Lawrence Caruso, and Al Wilkinson.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported the total in the chapter's accounts. Dick Doyle noted the chapter is open to requests for assistance, with Richard noting, "We don't want to keep the money. If we still have it at some point in the future, when we dissolve, I don't want to give it back to national."

The highlight of the meeting was a visit by members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a non-profit group of lineal descendants of patriots of the American Revolution. The DAR's mission focuses on historic preservation, education and patriotism. Present at the meeting and representing the state organization and the local Ann Story Chapter of the DAR were: Janet Weaver, Vermont state regent of the DAR; Cindy Roberts, regent of the local Ann Story Chapter; Michel Susina, vice regent of Ann Story Chapter; Nancy West, past regent of the Ann Story Chapter; and Barb Giffin, also a past regent of Ann Story Chapter. Randy Roberts, president of the Vermont Sons of the American Revolution, also attended.



Cindy Roberts, regent of the Ann Story Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, presented Vietnam War commemorative pins to Beth Higgins, center, and Louise Clarino, as part of a DAR tribute to veterans of the war. Beth's and Louise's late husbands were Vietnam vets and active members of Chapter 1.

Cindy Roberts keynoted the presentation of a commemorative flag for Chapter 1 and lapel pins for veterans who served during the period of the Vietnam War, regardless of where they were stationed, and separate pins for surviving spouses. The event was part of the Vietnam War Commemoration, an initiative of the secretary of defense and authorized by Congress.

Beside the flag and pins, Cindy presented the chapter with a handsome blue folder recognizing Chapter 1 as a partner in the commemoration.

A number of Chapter 1 members who could not be present had requested pins, and the DAR graciously provided them. The chapter will mail them out, as necessary.

Moving on to regular business, Bill Ellwood noted that member Larry Gold has come up with 50 sets of eclipse viewing glasses for observing the solar eclipse on April 8. It had been suggested the chapter might organize a group eclipse-viewing event, but that never gelled. The Rutland Historical Society will be holding a “watch party,” so the glasses acquired by Larry will be given to the Historical Society.

Richard Reed presented information on investment opportunities outside our savings and checking accounts at Heritage Family Credit Union, where the chapter does its banking. Our present, basic accounts provide minimal interest, but the bank offers “term share certificates” with interest rates of up to 4.2 percent for a year.

Carl Baldwin, an accountant and board member, recommended we take advantage of the term share program, noting that any penalties for early withdrawal are limited to quarterly interest payments and don’t put the principal amounts at risk. Carl’s understanding of the bank’s rules is that if the chapter were forced to make an early withdrawal, the penalty would only apply to interest on the withdrawn amount, still with no risk to the principal.

After some discussion, Richard Reed suggested investing an amount in a one-year term share, leaving about half the chapter’s “operating money” not tied up. After a bit more back and forth, Richard moved to invest in a one-year certificate. Seconded by Dick Doyle. Passed unanimously.

Tim Lonergan shared that at Rutland’s CBOC clinic, operated by the VA, every second Monday of the month at 10 a.m. is a gathering of vets. The vets meet and, according to Tim, “talk about whatever” over coffee.

Dick Doyle, who serves as membership chair of Chapter 1, reminded us that \$50 buys a lifetime membership in the chapter, an attractive price for any vet interested in joining. Chapter 1 will pay the \$50 for anyone who was a previous member and wants to rejoin as a life member.

Bill Ellwood gave a brief preview of the Annual Meeting in April, mentioning the election of officers. There will also be a discussion of plans for the coming year. He encouraged those attending the March meeting to continue attending meetings.

Bill also mentioned Loyalty Day, a Rutland event held at the start of May and featuring a parade, usually well attended. He suggested the chapter might participate on a small scale, even though we no longer have a color guard. It might only require a suitable parade vehicle. Send the chapter an email at vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com if you want to pursue the idea.

Jack Crowther nominated a slate of officers and directors, as follows: president, Bill Ellwood; vice president, Tim Lonergan; treasurer, Richard Reed; secretary, Jack Crowther; and directors, Dick Doyle, Mike Murphy, Carl Baldwin, Andy Megrath, and Larry Gold. Larry would be a new member of the board. (Since the meeting, Tim Lonergan has said he will not be a candidate for vice president.) Elections will be held at the April 10 meeting. Jack reminded everyone that members are welcome to step forward and be nominated for any of the positions. All positions are for one year.

Next Jack presented two changes in the chapter bylaws for consideration at the annual meeting. The first would raise from \$1,000 to \$2,000 the amount that can be spent between meetings if a majority of officers and board members approve.

The other change concerned meetings of the Board of Directors. However, upon reviewing the national VVA Constitution, he realized that the national Constitution deals with meetings of the membership and the board, so he is withdrawing that suggested change.

Jack also handed out “guidelines” for when the chapter receives requests for assistance. Richard Reed had suggested a need for such guidelines, so that requests for assistance could be handled according to a standard procedure. These guidelines, proposed to be acted on in April, would not be part of the chapter bylaws. The guidelines, as proposed by Richard and edited by Jack, are as follows:

Guidelines for Oral or Written Grant Requests

Requests for Chapter 1 assistance . must include:

1. Amount requested and statement of need.
2. Proof of veteran status (individual) or veterans services (organization) or other charitable purpose of the applicant.
3. Individual grants must be made with a co-payee, i.e., landlord, utility company, etc.
4. Organizations must show involvement with veterans or be deemed appropriate by the Chapter 1 Board of Directors.
5. All grant requests must be approved by the Chapter 1 members during regular meetings, except as allowed under Article XI of the Chapter 1 Bylaws.
6. Grant applicants are responsible for providing needed documentation to the Board. It is not the responsibility of the Board or individual members to chase them down.
7. Third party requests may be considered when presented by known parties, i.e, Veterans Outreach, Vet Center, clinic workers, etc.
8. No individual may receive more than three grants unless otherwise approved by the Board.

Dick Doyle pointed out that a key provision of the guidelines, which the chapter has observed in the past, is that money is not given directly to a veteran. Instead, if the vet is in need of a service or item, the money is paid to the provider of the service or item.

Bill Ellwood said he hopes to establish a couple of committees at the April meeting, including a Liaison Committee to work with organizations like the American Legion, the VFW, the visiting nurses and the Dodge House. A second committee would be designated Digital-Technical, to deal with things like the chapter website, social media, and Zoom meetings.

Following up on earlier discussions, Bill proposed appropriating “up to \$1,500” for upgraded electronics to facilitate our Zoom meetings. This would include a large, wall-mounted television and upgraded computer, camera and microphone. Quotes obtained so far suggest the cost might run about \$750-\$800. A motion was made and seconded by Mike Murphy and Dick Doyle. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, AT 4:30 P.M.
BY ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT THE CHAPTER 1 OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND.**