

VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES 1/13/21

Date: 1/13/21 **Time:** 5:03 PM

1.Meeting Opening: The Vice Chair called the Virtual Zoom Meeting to order at 5:30 and led the membership in the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence for departed brothers and sister in arms

the tribute below to deceased former Commissioner Roland Cartier was read into the record

Roland Cartier-Lowell area Veterans lost a good friend and tireless advocate when Roland passed away on October 22nd- Long time member of the Lowell Veterans Commission who was dedicated to championing the rights and honoring the service of his brother and sister Veterans. He worked with his Heart of the Traveling Soldier Foundation and often on his own to help Veterans. He was an accomplished "scrounger" in the best military sense of the word who developed a network of resources he could tap for Veterans in need. He was a proud Navy Veteran of the Vietnam War. May God give this good sailor calm seas on his final voyage

2. Roll call The clerk called the roll. Answering present were Andeth Vann, Brian Gorman, Wally J. O' Neil, Latashia White, Matt Elkins, Richard Cote and James J. Gaffney III. The Veterans Service officer was in attendance and the Clerk noted the presence of a quorum

3 Suicide Prevention. The Clerk reported a 988 emergency suicide hotline coming on line next year. Matt Elkins and Brian Gorman discussed VA findings of increased Veteran suicide and addiction due to isolation and other COVID 19 Factors. The Vice Chair emphasized the need for Veterans to keep in touch with and support each other.

4. Vaccinations: Members discussed the availability and process for Covid Vaccinations at Bedford VA and withing the City

5.VOM Ceremony Dors Musgray – Andeth Vann reported successful ceremony held outside on November 10th Commission Members in attendance were recognized, but there was a sense that the Commission role in initiating and processing nominations was not fully recognized. It was decided to bring this issue up with Mayor prior to Cermony for next Vetern of the Month. The commission reviewed the criteria and discussed possible souces of new nominees and outrach efforts. Andeth Vann noted reluctance of some of the younger Veterans to be singles out. Latasha white proposed a larger ceremony possibly tied in with Service Birthdays. The possibility was raised of treating this suggestion as a separate larger event. It was agreed to bring up Roland Cartier for a Posthumous award

6. Collateral Update – Commission discussed design and obtaining approval from manger. It was determined to renew request with city Manager and revist at next meeting. Design issues were discussed for later review

7 MRV Disabled Veterans. The clerk opened discussion of the motion with attached correspondence included with the meeting agenda relating expanding eligibility for RMV tax and Fee waiver to Disabled Veterans who did not qualify for Handicapped Plate.Upon motion made by Mr. Gorman and seconded by Mr. Elkins. It was unanimously voted to send the attached correspondence to be followed up with possible lobbying efforts.

8 Covid Issues: Chair initiated a disunion of the Commission's role during the Covid crisis. Mr. Elkins stressed the importance of maintaining visibility. Possibly through media outlets.

9. VSO Update

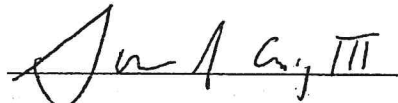
VSO noted limitation of Veterans served due to death and lack of access because of COVID-19 restrictions.

10 Meetings: Mr. Cote announced new informal Veterans Gathering on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 on at North Chelmsford legion hall on Route 40

11 Election of Officers: Andeth Vann raised the issue of absence of an official Chair and the need to elect officers. Election of a Chair vice chair and Clerk were then scheduled For the March meeting. Any member being able to nominate anyone including themselves.

12. Adjourn: Upon motion made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn.

Signed this 20th Day of Febnuar 2021 as a True Record of Proceedings of the City of Lowell Veterans Commission



James J Gaffney III Clerk