



**MANATEE COUNTY
VETERANS COUNCIL**

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March Meeting, Thursday, March 21, 2024

1. **Meeting was called to order** at 11:02AM by Chairman Jim Klocke. The meeting was held at the American Legion Post 24.
2. **Invocation:** Chairman Jim Klocke opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chairman Tom Sweeney offered a prayer.
3. **Chairman's Comments:** Chairman Klocke reported that the stone at the Donald L. Courtney Memorial Park, should be engraved next week for the 2023 Winners of Veteran, Auxiliary, and Civilian of the Year. Chairman Klocke reported that the MSWD Army of Hope annual fundraising event that was held on March 3, 2024 was very successful, they raised \$3575. The funds raised go to helping families in need, of deployed servicemen and women. If you know of anyone in need please contact the Elks.
4. **Guest Speakers:**
 - Craig Warzecha announced that the Bradenton Marauders Baseball Organization will be honoring Veterans on Military Appreciation Night on Saturday May 25, 2024.
 - Noel Fresh stated that there will be "Free Chow for Vietnam Vets" at Mission BBQ for National Vietnam War Veterans Day on March 29, 2024.
5. **Recognition of Special Guests:** There were no special guests.
6. **Roll Call:** Roll call was conducted by the Secretary-Appointed, Molly Boardman. Present were 20 people of whom 10 were paid members and 4 officers. Quorum was met.
7. **Minutes:** February's minutes were voted for approval. Janice Klocke made the motion and Theresa Cobb seconded the motion. All voting members voted for approval of the minutes by stating "Aye". The vote was unanimous for approval.

8. **Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report was presented by Treasurer Janice "Spike" Klocke for February 2024. Jim Klocke moved for the report to go to audit.

9. **Primary Representative Reports:**
 - **Manatee County Veterans Services:** Victor McKinsey announced that April is Government Month in Manatee County. A variety of presentations will be offered throughout the month, in a variety of locations.
 - **Manatee Veterans Village (VOA):** Sylvia Yimer stated that Veterans Village has one opening, that is scheduled to be filled next week. The organization is in the final stages of trying to get approval to include women at Veterans Village, which is currently a men-only facility.
 - **St. Vincent DePaul CARES:** Al Ainscoe stated that his organization provides housing-based and community support for veterans in permanent housing. He passed out a flyer that lists their services.

10. **Reports of Standing Committees:**
 - **Donald L. Courtney Memorial Park:** Benderson Park donated used banners to use as weed cover. They've started to put down new mulch.

11. **Old Business:**
 - **Audit Committee:** Meg Smelser passed out the Annual Report of Financial Review Committee. "The records were found to be in good order and their contents to appear reasonable."
 - **Scholarship Update:** Gill Ruderman stated that the scholarship interviews will be conducted at Lakewood Ranch High School on April 8, 2024 at 3:00PM, in room 403. Donna Fournier volunteered to help with the interviews.

12. **New Business:**
 - **2024 DeSoto Grand Parade:** Emmitt Dykes of Manatee JcCongress, reported that the plans for the parade are going well. The cut-off date to apply to be in the parade is April 1, 2024. There are 2 jeeps reserved for MCVV members.
 - **Lakewood Ranch, Tribute to Hero's Parade:** Gill Ruderman announced the parade will be on May 26, 2024 at 6:30PM.
 - **Membership Concerns:** Kevin Wright brought up the concern that our membership roster has decreased from previous years. Possible ideas were discussed to increase membership. Discussion to be continued in the future.

13. **Around the Room:**
 - Donna Fournier shared that the next meeting of Women Veterans of the Sun Coast (WVSC) will be Saturday April 20, 2024 at 1:00PM at the VFW Post 10141.
 - Kevin Wright suggested that the MCVV might want to get in touch with Goodwill Manasota Veterans Services, to see if we could work together. He also stated that the "Let's Buddy Up" program meets the third Wednesday of every month, and it's free for Veterans and 1st Responders.

- Stephanie Petersen, from Fidelity Wellness, explained that her program is working on Veterans Wellness, with an emphasis on suicide awareness and prevention for women.

14. **Closing Prayer and Meeting Adjournment:** Vice Chairman Tom Sweeney led the closing prayer. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Jim Klocke at 11:55AM.

15. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held at the American Legion Post 24 on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 11:00AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Boardman

Council Recording Secretary-Appointed