



## MEETING MINUTES

### DUBLIN VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 18, 2024

#### CALL TO ORDER

Jeff Noble, Chair, called the Dublin Veterans Advisory Committee (DVAC) meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in City Council Chamber, 5555 Perimeter Drive.

#### OATH OF OFFICE

Council Member John Reiner administered the Oath of Office to reappointed DVAC members Bonnie Gamary and Mike Kehoe.

#### ROLL CALL

Members Present: Roger Ansel, Sean Clifton, Tim Hansley, Stephen Dickman, Bonnie Gamary, Jan Rozanski, Jeff Noble, Mike Kehoe, Tracy Owens, John Reiner

Staff Present: Kendel Blake, Carrie Ritzler

Guests Present: Robert (Buck) Bramlisch, Executive Director, Franklin County Veterans Service Commission  
Tom Holton, president, Dublin Historical Society  
Matt Heins, Dublin Jerome High School student  
John Flynn, commander, Chapter 500, Military Order of the Purple Heart

#### INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER

Mr. Noble welcomed new DVAC member Tracy Owens and invited him to share a little about himself and his military experience.

Mr. Owens stated that he has lived in Dublin for 17 years. He served in the U.S. Army from 1988 to 1994, including service in Operation Desert Storm. There, he worked in the theater level prison camp interrogating Iraqi prisoners. In 1993, he deployed to Somalia, where he ran a counter intelligence mission -- a different, more intense experience. The Black Hawk Down incident happened in April of that year. He was in Somalia from December to March, so left just before that incident occurred in the streets of Somalia. After that assignment, he had a temporary assignment with the U.S. State Department out of Finland, when the Soviet Union split from 15 republics into 15 countries. He was tasked with setting up embassies in those new countries.

## **CITIZEN COMMENT**

Robert, (Buck) Bramlish, Executive Director, Franklin County Veterans Service Commission, 280 E. Broad Street, Room 100, Columbus, commended the City of Dublin on having a Veterans Advisory Committee, which sets a good example for other communities. The Veterans Service Commission is a county agency dedicated to helping veterans, active duty members of the Armed Forces of the United States, and their dependents. There are several distinct services the agency provides veteran families, including public housing.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Kehoe moved, Ms. Gamary seconded approval of the May 16, 2024 DVAC minutes.

Vote: Mr. Reiner, yes; Mr. Kehoe, yes; Mr. Noble, yes; Mr. Rozanski – abstain; Ms. Gamary, yes; Mr. Dickman, abstain; Mr. Hansley, yes; Mr. Clifton, yes; Mr. Ansell, yes; Tracy Owens – abstain. [Motion carried 7-0 with 3 abstentions.]

## **JULY 4, 2024 PARADE REPORT**

Mr. Noble stated that the 2024 July 4 parade was very well attended. The weather was perfect and the crowd enjoyed the parade. Previously, he has considered the potential of hiring a trolley service to enable those Dublin veterans not participating in the Color Guard to ride in the parade. VFW Post funds could be used to sponsor the service.

Mr. Rozanski suggested use of a Deuce and Half military truck, instead of a trolley. Perhaps the Delaware or Marysville National Guard units would have a vehicle available.

Committee members inquired if the City had a flatbed trailer that could be modified to serve as a float for veterans. There might also be the opportunity to rent a senior citizen home vehicle to carry the veterans.

Ms. Blake stated that the City has shuttle buses available. It would be necessary to have an official recommendation from this committee to use a City vehicle and decorate it for the purpose of carrying veterans in the parade.

Mr. Noble stated a preference for a trolley, because they are open and the veterans could be seen. In addition to the Independence Day parade, there are also the Memorial and Veterans Day parades in which the veterans could participate.

## **DUBLIN CEMETERY VETERANS ROSTER**

Tom Holton, president Dublin Historical Society, stated that approximately a year ago, a team from Leadership Dublin compiled a roster of all the veterans in the Dublin Cemetery. To the extent possible, they also collected stories regarding the veterans from their families. Visitors to the cemetery could use a QR code to locate veteran grave sites and listen to the recorded stories regarding those veterans. However, from his vantage point with the Dublin Historical Society, he was able to identify that some veterans and/or information about the veterans were missing from the list Leadership Dublin had compiled. In some cases, there were errors or incomplete information in the Dublin Cemetery records. He has attempted to make a more comprehensive list that includes all the names, known years of service and whether they served in a combat theater or during peacetime, and to make that information available online. He has been able to tentatively identify 51 additional veteran interments within the Dublin cemeteries. He is now working on confirming their service through a couple other document resources. His current list includes their

names, the branch in which they served and if available, their role or specialty and the conflict in which they were engaged. He is trying to determine how to identify the periods of time, such as the Cold War, in which the veterans provided service that was not during a time of conflict. When all the information has been confirmed, it will be made available to the public.

Mr. Noble stated that the DVAC has been tasked by City Council to monitor and advise on issues also related to veterans in cemeteries. That is the reason this project is germane to this Committee. He asked members to think about the classification of time periods that are not in times of conflict.

Mr. Bramlish recommended beginning with the Veterans Affairs' classifications, because they already have a classification system. However, he does not believe they classify peace times differently.

Mr. Rozanski inquired the total number of interments in the Dublin Cemetery.

Mr. Holt responded that as of July 11, 2024, the Dublin Cemetery lists 472 veteran interments. His list of names are in addition to the Dublin Cemetery's list.

Committee members thanked Mr. Holton for his efforts to provide complete veteran information. It is commendable.

### **AMERICAN FLAG DROP-OFF BOX**

Matt Heims, Dublin Jerome High School, presented an idea for a drop-off box for retirements of American flags. He has several military veterans in his own family, so is interested in ways to honor them. His suggestion is for the City to have American flag dropboxes at different locations, in which torn or weathered flags can be placed to be disposed of properly. He displayed slide images of examples of flag dropboxes in Texas communities and passed around examples of other flag dropboxes. He would like Dublin to offer something similar. Some possible dropbox locations could be the Justice Center or the Dublin Cemetery. He believes this would be one way in which to honor our veterans.

Mr. Noble inquired what his request was of the DVAC for his project.

Mr. Heims responded that he would need assistance with the funding.

Mr. Reiner inquired about the cost of a drop box.

Mr. Heims responded that the cost would be approximately \$1,000, depending on the number of dropboxes offered in this program.

Ms. Blake thanked Mr. Heims for his idea and for bringing it to the DVAC to consider. The City does not presently offer this service. It was offered previously via an Eagles Scout project; that dropbox was located at the Dublin Recreation Center. For whatever reason, that dropbox was not continued. Currently, if a resident brings a worn American flag to the Dublin Service Center, the City will dispose of the flag in the proper manner, but it is not a service that is promoted. The dropbox is a wonderful idea, but DVAC would need to discuss the logistics. The City has many connections to Boy Scout troops, so there might not be a need for the City to pay for a brand new box. She would encourage the committee to think about the logistics. For this to be a service that the City offers to its residents, it would require a recommendation from DVAC to City Council to

initiate the program. This Committee does not have a budget. She encouraged the Committee to discuss the idea.

Mr. Rozanski stated that the City of Upper Arlington has an American flag dropoff box in the lobby of their municipal building. The dropbox is typically full. The type of dropboxes shown are what is used. In the City of Powell, as part of their July 4 celebration, the Boy Scouts have a proper flag disposal ceremony at the park. Residents can bring their worn flags, and they will be honorably disposed of by burning them in a special ceremony.

Mr. Clifton thanked Mr. Heims for offering his idea. His son previously was in the Boy Scouts and took part in a flag disposal ceremony. He would suggest placing a dropbox near a Boy Scout troop meeting place, typically a school. It could be the task of that Boy Scout troop to check the dropbox for flags.

Mr. Owens thanked Mr. Heims for sharing his idea. He inquired about the benchmarking he conducted, such as in Texas. He inquired if the disposal also would include non-flag items, such as the pole.

Mr. Heims responded that their dropbox design would accommodate only the flags themselves.

Mr. Noble stated that a recent issue has arisen with flag disposal. It is not acceptable to burn nylon flags, because of the noxious gases emitted; they must be shred or buried. Previously, the Boy Scouts had dropboxes at the fire stations. However, those earlier projects were abandoned. He believes that with the recent issues about proper disposal of the flags, it may be getting more difficult for the Boy Scouts to handle the mission. To ask City Council that the City assume this service for its residents may not be as simple of an issue as we might think.

A committee member noted that there are some flag disposal boxes in the community. There is one in Plain City, which is used often. In regard to participation by the schools – he believes this would be an excellent opportunity for the Purple Star Club to step forward and take ownership of this task. They can contact Plain City and Upper Arlington and figure out the logistics involved with taking it on. The Purple Star Club could raise the funds for the dropbox. At that point, perhaps a location recommendation could be brought to DVAC for the committee to make to Council. He believes this would be a good idea in which some Dublin School students could engage in a patriotic interest.

Mr. Holt noted that the only flag dropbox he has seen used frequently is the one in the lower level entryway of Dublin Community Church. There is a Boy Scout troop that meets there in the basement. Due to the turmoil the Scouts have experienced lately, the Purple Star Club in the schools may be a better idea.

Mr. Owens stated that he would love to see Jerome High School become involved with the Purple Star Club effort. Perhaps Mr. Heims could consider a team effort with them. He invited Ms. Gamary's insight on the idea.

Ms. Gamary stated that she could make sure Mr. Heims gets connected with the right individual. Grizzell and Karrer Middle Schools just received their Purple Star Club designations in 2024. After receiving their designation, they are required to advance to the next step. This idea would be a type of "next step."

Mr. Bramlish stated that there is always a need for a funding stream. The Franklin County Veterans Service Commission spends a lot of money on handing out flags, but no money on proper flag disposal. They are running \$1.5M ahead of budget right now. If there is a need, perhaps they could explore partnering with the Purple Heart Clubs to fund the boxes for their project. It might be an opportunity they could consider.

Mr. Noble inquired of Mr. Heims who would paint the boxes, if he handled the purchase of them. Mr. Heims responded that the company from which they would purchase the boxes would also wrap them. The boxes can be used inside or outside, as they are weather proof.  
[Discussion continued regarding box composition.]

Mr. Kehoe congratulated Mr. Heims on this project, which appears to have garnered significant interest from this Committee. He recommends returning to the Committee with a more thorough, fleshed-out proposal with answers to the questions that were posed today. Whether it is from the City or the Franklin County Veterans Services Commission, it appears there may be funding available.

Mr. Noble recommended that Mr. Heims look into the Purple Star Club opportunity.

Mr. Heims thanked the Committee for their input.

## **MILITARY ROUND TABLE**

Mr. Noble stated that at the Military Roundtable, held at the Dublin Recreation Center [1:00 p.m., 4<sup>th</sup> Monday], this month Bill Wright will be speaking on The Bay of Pigs. On August 19, 2024, Dick Craig, American Legion member, will be speaking regarding his earlier experiences in the U.S. Navy. On September 23, the speaker will be Frank LaRose, Ohio Secretary of State.

## **VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Ms. Blake stated that included in the committee's packet information was a spreadsheet of all the legislation occurring regarding veteran affairs at the State level. Little progress has occurred on the proposed legislation. There is still a bill in the House to authorize the full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of veterans. There appears to still be a proposed amendment to require one member of the Veterans Service Commission to be a veteran who served after the 9-11 event.

Mr. Bramlish responded that he believes the bill was unable to proceed due to lack of support.

Ms. Blake stated that she would continue to keep the committee apprised of any new legislation that is introduced.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- DVAC Meeting Time

Mr. Noble stated that at their last meeting, the Committee suggested the possibility of moving the meeting time back an hour so it would be easier for all members to attend. The issue is that there is another body that meets in Council Chamber at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Blake stated that is correct. The meeting could be moved back only one-half hour to start at 4:00 p.m., as there are Planning & Zoning Commission meetings in this room every other Thursday evening. We would need to make sure our meeting is completed by 5:30 p.m., so that the next

meeting could be set up. Legislative Services has suggested that the DVAC meeting could be moved to a different day, but would need to be held later in the evening, as Council committee meetings occur in the Chambers from 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Mr. Noble suggested that the committee keep their existing meeting dates but move the meeting time to 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Rozanski inquired if it would be possible to hold the meeting in a different space.

Mr. Noble stated that the committee meeting must be held in Council Chamber for recording purposes.

Ms. Blake confirmed that is correct. The intent is that Council Advisory Committee meetings are held in Council Chamber due to the technology provided in this space.

Mr. Reiner moved, Mr. Rozanski seconded to move the DVAC meeting time to 4:00 p.m. going forward.

Vote: Mr. Ansel, yes; Mr. Clifton, yes; Mr. Hansley, yes; Mr. Dickman, yes; Ms. Garmy, yes; Mr. Rozanski, yes; Mr. Noble, yes; Mr. Kehoe, yes; Mr. Owens, yes; Mr. Reiner, yes.

[Motion passed 10-0.]

- Junior ROTC Program Effort – Dublin Schools

Councilmember Reiner stated that he met with Dublin School Superintendent Dr. Marschausen to continue discussion of this idea. Dr. Marschausen was supportive of the idea and indicated that he has already looked into the idea and was interested in having an Air Force ROTC unit. He stated that there are some students in need of discipline, and this program could be well suited for them. There are other students who are shy, and this program could help them with their confidence. Mr. Reiner indicated that if there were any students interested in joining who needed financial assistance in obtaining their uniform, there would be assistance available.

He inquired if Mr. Dickman is aware of any other schools with a Junior ROTC program other than the one with which he is working.

Mr. Dickman responded that Southwestern City Schools and a couple of other Columbus City Schools have programs. One of the most positive changes he has evidenced in students participating in the Junior ROTC program is the confidence the program instills. The program turns them into people who can go out and make a difference. The need for uniforms should not be a problem. The program receives funding from the national level, and the money goes toward such needs as uniforms.

Mr. Reiner stated that Dr. Marschausen has advanced his efforts to include the Junior ROTC program at Dublin City Schools. He has already reached out to the Air Force unit, and does not seem to need any other help. He believes the next step for this committee is to wait and see if the Committee could participate or lend assistance after the program launches.

Mr. Dickman stated that as Ms. Garmy could corroborate, it would be good to reach out to eighth graders about this opportunity before their freshman year of high school.

Ms. Garmy stated that Delaware City Schools has an Air Force Junior ROTC program.

Mr. Noble stated that the Southwestern Schools Junior ROTC conducted a Folds of Honor ceremony at the Dublin's Veterans Day ceremony last year. They also will be at the Dublin Irish Festival (DIF)

in the Defender's Den at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday afternoon of the festival. Everyone is invited to observe the ceremony.

### **COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE**

Mr. Clifton introduced a friend, who is present with him tonight, Mr. John Flynn. He and Mr. Flynn are both Purple Heart medal recipients. Mr. Flynn is the commander of Chapter 500 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart chapter, the Buckeye Purple Heart Foundation, which is located in the City of Columbus. As a member of both the DVAC and Chapter 500, he would like to give Mr. Flynn the opportunity to comment on the work of their chapter.

John Flynn stated that Chapter 500 currently is composed primarily of older veterans. They are looking for some younger members, such as veterans of the Afghan wars. He distributed copies of a brochure they have devised to honor Purple Heart recipient veterans in Franklin County. Chapter 500 is very involved in the community in efforts to help former service members. They issued \$2,000 scholarships last year to two veterans to help them at Christmas. While many veterans are successful and doing well, others are not. He is a Vietnam combat veteran. He received his purple heart in Vietnam at the Cam Ranh Bay conflict, and experienced a difficult time returning and trying to re-assimilate into civilian life again. It took him a while to get his life back together, but he achieved it. Many other veterans experience similar difficulties. He is here tonight to ask for the Committee's support in any way it is able. Their chapter has a couple of events coming up. On Sunday, August 18, with the Ohio Health Grandview Yard Half & Quarter Marathon, the Chapter will have a Purple Heart 5K event. They will also be holding the Bullet Ranch Birthday Bash on October 27. The funds received from the events will be used to assist purple heart veterans and members of their families. He thanked the Committee for the opportunity to share information about their Purple Heart Chapter. He is happy to see there is an active committee attempting to help military veterans and consider the potential for ways in which to prepare the next generation for service, such as the Junior ROTC program.

Mr. Noble noted that their Purple Heart chapter will have a table in the Defenders Den at the DIF.

Mr. Clifton thanked Mr. Flynn for sharing information about their Chapter. He thanked Mr. Bramlish for the work of the Veterans Commission. Recently, the Veterans Service Commission assisted one of the Purple Heart members of their Chapter who experienced some financial hardship. The Commission took care of his need. Their Chapter is also involved in the Junior ROTC program. They present a Leadership Award to outstanding Junior ROTC students. He would love to see the ROTC program established in Dublin City Schools.

Mr. Hansley thanked the four guests today for adding to the Committee's agenda and discussion. He thanked staff for their support of the Committee.

Ms. Garmy stated that she participates on the Defender's Den Committee. She noted that students are involved in this effort, as well. As mentioned, the Purple Heart Chapter will have a table in the Defender's Den. The goal of the Defender's Den is to reach out to area veterans and provide them support. She invited DVAC members to attend. It is enjoyable to see and connect with the different military service-related organizations.

Mr. Owens stated that he is happy to become a member of this committee. He loves the energy already! He has an idea he would like DVAC members to consider. His idea is an inter-branch competition for area veterans at some local events, such as Independence Day, the DIF Defender's Den and Veterans Day. The competition would involve one group at a time, the different military branch members singing their branch song. The competition would be judged by vote. If the competition were to occur three times a year, the three high schools could take turns providing instrument accompaniment. The prize could be an inexpensive trophy kept in the trophy case at the Dublin Recreation Center. The trophy could reflect a scrolling list of the winners of the event. [The Committee lacked a consensus of support for pursuing the idea.]

Mr. Dickman expressed appreciation of the Committee's interesting discussion tonight. He is confident there will be some good results.

Mr. Ansel stated that he very much enjoyed the Committee's previous meeting, which involved recognition of students who will be entering military service.

Ms. Blake stated that annually following the appointment of new Committee members, the Committee holds an election for a new Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year. Elections will occur at the Committee's next meeting on September 19. If any member is interested in serving as a Chair or Vice Chair, she invited them to share their interest.

Mr. Reiner stated that he recently spoke at a Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) event held in Dublin. The other guest lecturer was Laurel Lee Schaefer, Miss America 1972 and the first Miss America from our area, specifically Bexley. She was asked to speak because she was the last Miss America to entertain the troops in Vietnam and in Thailand. She shared a letter of appreciation she received from an American soldier during that difficult time for our country. She also shared that for the year she invested with the troops during time of war, she did not receive any better treatment than the veterans returning home. The head of the organization, who also was present, shared with him that 92,000 Vietnam veterans remain in their national organization, and there are approximately 300,000 Vietnam veterans remaining within the country.

Mr. Kehoe noted that the VVA will cease to exist at some point, although that time has not yet been defined.

Mr. Noble affirmed that the VVA has chosen not to pass the torch but to "disappear" when the last Vietnam veteran disappears.

Mr. Holton stated that in response to the Purple Heart veterans conversation tonight, he recalls reading some letters that his grandfather wrote in World War I. One of his comments was regarding the Golden Hour, which was the time period in which a wounded soldier must have medical attention to have a good chance for survival. Today, the Golden Hour is considered one hour; the Golden Hour in WWI was six hours.

Mr. Noble reminded members of the Army-Navy Game local event on December 14 at the Crooked Can Brewery in Hilliard, Ohio. The event is a Post 1 fundraiser. Most of the funds go toward sending students to Buckeye Boys State and Buckeye Girls State.

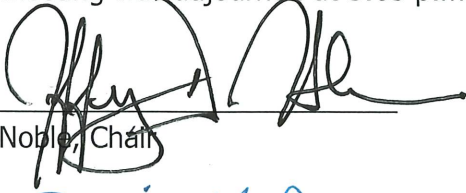
Mr. Noble thanked the guests for adding valuable discussion to the evening's meeting.



The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 19, 4:00 p.m., in Council Chamber.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Noble", written over a horizontal line.

Jeff Noble, Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judith K. Beale", written over a horizontal line.

Assistant Clerk of Council