

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes – August 17, 2020

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Michael Coote at 12:31 hrs. Chair Coote asked Member Gary Cardenas to take the minutes.
2. **Roll Call: Present** - Michael Coote, Angel Vazquez, Gary Cardenas, Edward Paez, Larry Borman, Leonardo Rodriguez, Janiel Lazala, Dennis Polo, Pedro Fiallo. **Absent:** Bryan Bacallao, Alejandro Sanchez, and Mario Chavez. Ed Paez informed us that Mario Chavez was in the Hospital with COVID-19.
3. Chair Michael Coote led our members into our Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.
Chair Coote said that for those who are not yet aware, the reason for his chairing the meeting is because our former Chairman Nayib Hassan had tossed his hat into the ring and filed to run for Council seat # 1. As a result, he had to resign as Chairman of our Committee. Before turning it over to Nayib Hassan for a few words, Chair Coote proceeded to thank him for helping to establish our Committee as a force for Veterans issues. While Mr. Hassan is not a Veteran, there are deep connections for his dedication to Veterans and their causes. Chair Coote acknowledged his many contributions to the Committee and the Town, including the Jingle Bell Jog 5k, the VTR initiative which he hoped to see it moved forward, just to name a few.
Mr. Hassan followed by thanking chair Coote for his kind words and everyone else in the Committee. He expressed his appreciation to Mr. Cardenas for his guidance after he took over the Committee in January 2018. Mr. Hassan said he had been honored to serve everyone and expressed his appreciation for the support he received from every committee member, which made it possible for the events being so successful; we all worked as a team. He also expressed his appreciation for the support from the sponsors; Fred Senra from Miami Lakes AutoMall, Headquarter Toyota, and many others in the community.
At this time, he asked if Chair Coote would like him to speak now about the items under the Old Business heading, which had been involved with but Chair Coote asked him to wait until we reach those item.

Jay asked that now that Mr. Hassan is gone how does a replacement work. Chair Coote said that the issue will be addressed further down in the agenda. Jay mentioned that he was pressed for time if it could be moved up. Chair Coote explained that Town Attorney indicated that elections had to be held, although Roberts Rules of Order says that the Vice Chair moves up. He told Jay that most of the items on the agenda are older items previously discussed, there should not be much debating, thus it would not take long to get to the elections portion of the meeting.

4. Public Comments:

5. Order of Business (Deferrals, Additions, Deletions)

Items under line 8. Old Business are hereby reflected in their proper order.

- a. Plaques for Sponsors Update
- b. Transfer of funds for Shirts approval Update
- c. Miami Dade Police Dept Training/Veterans Response Team (VTR) Update
- d. Veterans Day (Nov) Grand Marshall
- e. 5K Jingle Bell Jog

Items under line 9. New Business are hereby reflected in their proper order

- a. 9/11 Flag Planting Ceremony at Picnic Park West
- b. Proposal to include Military Tribute Banner for USN Jack Ryan Otrovsky, crew member of the USS Bonhomme Richard who died at the Naval Base in San Diego in July. Grandparents are ML residents.
- c. Elections for Veterans Committee Vacancy

6. Adoption of Minutes:

- a. February – Deferred to next meeting
- b. May 21, 2020 - Conclusion of 5/14 meeting. Deferred to next meeting
- c. June – After corrections were noted by Mr. Cardenas, Ed moved to adopt, Gary seconded. Vote passed with one Nay vote from Chair Coote.
- d. July – Ed moved to adopt; Jay seconded. Vote passed with one Nay vote from Chair Coote.

7. Presentations/Announcements: None

8. Old Business:

- a. Plaques for Sponsors Update:
Dennis said quote should be delivered to William Sanchez by Friday
- b. Transfer of funds for Shirts approval Update.
Chair Coote asked William for an Update, but Mr. Hassan interjected stating that transfer of funds was previously approved by the Committee, all it needed was for it to be transferred from the Town's Finance department. William said he will put it on the Council's meeting agenda for transfer. Chair Coote asked that since we had added new members, had everyone's shirt size has been provided. Mr. Hassan replied yes.
- b. MDPD /Veterans Response Team (VRT)
Chair Coote said that this project's initiative had been presented to Council and it involved the MDPD CIC Director who provided the training to the Town's Police force. In order to establish a baseline, the

CIC Director said that out of 7,500 cases where the CIC response team was involved, only 50 were Veterans therefore he believes the numbers do not warrant said project. Chair Coote strongly believes this project should be carried across Miami Dade.

Mr. Hassan said he had spoken with Councilman Collazo, who had spoken with Major Ruiz, Commander for the Town's police who said that he would follow it up the chain of command. Mr. Hassan said that he will stay in contact with Councilman Collazo to ensure that this project is carried across Miami Dade, perhaps using the Town's Police force as the Pilot.

*At this time Ed Paez reminded everyone that we had not taken a vote to transfer the additional \$237.00 needed to pay for the Committee's shirt, and Chair Coote asked for a motion. Ed Paez moved; Leo Rodriguez seconded. Motion passed without objection.

****This item should be added at the end of line 8. b.**

c. Veterans Day parade Grand Marshall:

Chair Coote said that last month we said to proceed with the solicitation of nominees for Grand Marshall, and William Sanchez said that since the COVID-19 numbers were still high the Town was holding up the Parade event. Discussion from various members of the Committee ensued asking William Sanchez as to why not proceed with the Grand Marshall nomination/selection, this is something that we ought to do whether we have a Parade or not. If no Parade, we can do a Viral presentation where he/she is introduced and speak, much like the 4th of July celebration. Our guest, Ed Rodriguez, Veterans Affairs Director Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services chimed in suggesting that could even plan a virtual parade. William Sanchez said that he would send an email to Council members today.

d. 5K Jingle Bell Jog

Mr. Hassan said that he had reached out to Headquarter Toyota and said that funding for this year's race would be an issue for all of our sponsors and we should consider cancelling it. However, he said that the contract with the promoter is for 3 years, that we needed to discuss with them. Ed jumped up and said he was not even aware that we had a 3-year contract, and if there is not an escape clause. Dennis said that he is a runner, and most races these days are viral, and they are less expensive. Chair Coote asked Willie if he get a copy of the contract, and that perhaps Ed can review it. Ed said ok, but to be aware that he would not be offering any "legal advice." Willie said he would provide the copy to Chair Coote.

Just as we were getting ready to move on, Willie informed us that the Town Administration had cancelled the Jingle Bell Jog 5K for 2020.

9. New Business

a. Flag Planting Ceremony at Picnic Park West

This project was presented to Mr. Hassan prior to his resignation, and he had provided Mr. Sanchez with the information in July. Mr. Hassan said that Pharma Natural, a local company would donate 2,997 Flags to be buried around the perimeter of Picnic Park West, to honor the fallen on that fateful day: 9/11/2001. He said he had already spoken with the Public Service Committee, that volunteers were needed, and that it would be of no cost to the Town.

Chairman Coote suggested that the Town contact channel 10 or others to be there on that day. He also asked for a volunteer to lead this project, and Larry Borman said he would lead it. Chair Coote asked for a motion to move forward this project. Pedro moved; Larry seconded. Vote passed without objection

b. Proposal to include Military Tribute Banner for USN Jack Ryan

Otrovsky, crew member of the USS Bonhomme Richard who died at the Naval Base in San Diego in July. Grandparents are ML residents.

Chair Coote said that this was a sailor who lost his life on the fire onboard the USS Bonhomme Richard, and he feels that since he has a family connection to Town residents we should honor him, and asked about cost involved. William Sanchez said that he had already contacted the Banner company, and when it involves the loss of life in the line of duty the Banner is printed for free. William also mentioned that this would be of no cost to the sponsor or to the Town. Gary Cardenas asked who was responsible for providing photo and military data, and Mr. Hassan said that he had already provided that information to Mr. Sanchez.

At this point Ms. Clarisell DeCardenas-Collazo asked for a point of order to inform Mr. Hassan that he was no longer part of the Committee, but a member of the community at large. As such he could not be introducing or leading any project or event for the Committee. Anything he had to say would fall under the Public Comments. Her statement was supported by Town Attorney Lorenzo Cobiella. Mr. Hassan apologized to the Town representatives and the Committee. Chair Coote asked for a motion to approve. Angel moved; Pedro seconded. Vote passed without objection.

c. Election for Veterans Committee Vacancy.

Larry began by asking why we needed an election. Why don't we give Chairman Coote a little bit of time as our leader, obviously he is doing a very nice job, and he proceed to make a motion to keep Chairman

Coote in place, and the motion was seconded by Gary. Chair Coote asked Town Attorney Cobiella if that was a possibility, but he said no. That in all previous cases, there has always been an election for a Chairman whenever a vacancy occurred. He said that Elections needed to take place, that come January 2021 elections anyone can be nominated once again. The motion by Larry did not carry. Town Attorney Cobiella said that we should proceed with the nominations, followed by the election. As such, Chair Coote asked for nominations as Chairman.

Pedro nominated Angel Vazquez, and he accepted
Larry Borman nominated Michael Coote, and he accepted
Gary Cardenas was nominated, but he respectfully declined

Chair Coote began to take a roll call of members present, asking for their vote for Chairman until January 2021, and asked Gary to tally the vote count.

Michael Coote received 4 votes

Angel Vazquez received 5 votes

Accordingly, Angel Vazquez was elected to serve as new Chairman until January 2021.

Michael Coote will continue to serve as Vice Chairman

Following the election, the gavel was passed on to our new Chairman Angel Vazquez, whose first order of business was to call for the adjournment of our meeting.

Jay moved to adjourn; Angel seconded. Meeting was adjourned without objection.