**DEL WEBB NAPLES VETERAN’S CLUB MEETING**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2020**

**delwebbnaplesveterans.com**

**PRESIDENT: JOSEPT TILLMAN**

**VICE PRESIDENT: ED DEMAIO**

**TREASURER: RICK BACHOFNER**

**SECRETARY: HELEN SCORSONE**

**ADVISORS: MARK CLAYTON FRANCISKA BLANKENFELD JOE RIVERA BILL KAUFMANN**

 **BARRY WEAVING**

**The Meeting was called to order by Joseph Tillman, President at 10:00AM.**

**The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.**

**Joe Tillman recognized, Jay Phillips, a new Member to the Veteran’s Club, who retired from the Air Force after serving from 1981 to 1985. (Security Police)**

**Joe thanked the Members for attending the Meeting. This Meeting was attended by 23 Members. The largest this year. Joe expressed his hope for more attendance next year. He understands many members are still not comfortable attending the Meetings due to the COVID Virus.**

**Joe Tillman requested a motion to approve the Minutes from the November 6, 2020 Meeting. Motion made and approved.**

**Rick Bachofner provided a current Treasurer Report. There is $12,990.36 available balance for general expenses at the end of November, 2020. $14,305.36 was the check book balance on 11/30/2020. Monies allocated were $115.00 for the Memorial Fund and $1,200 for the Honor Flights. $8,396.63 in expenses and $960 deposited from Shirts, Golf Challenge, and dues. Anticipated expenses for December amount to $3,337.03.**

**Rick provided the 2021 Budget Expenses: Veteran’s Steak Dinner, $3,000**

 **Veteran’s Cup Challenge, $5,500**

 **Christmas VA Gift Cards, $1,000**

 **Veterans Angel Tree, $2,000**

 **VA (backpacks, bus passes, etc.), $8,000**

 **ROTC Grant, $1,500**

 **(2) $500 ROTC Scholarships, $1,000**

**Total 2021 Budget Expenses amount to $22,000. 2020 actual expenses amounted to $16,478. $13,900 was budgeted for 2020.**

**Rick again reminded the Membership that dues in the amount of $25 are now due. Dues can be mailed to Rick at 6391 Prestige, Ave Maria, Florida 34142**

**Joe Tillman emphasized that the Budget Expenses for 2021 are anticipated expensed, however, obviously, if the money is not available, (anticipated revenue coming in) the Club would not go ahead with items requested from the VA, etc.**

**Joe informed the Membership that the Annual Dinner will be held in April, 2021 in the Grand Hall. The Committee is hoping for a Prime Rib dinner instead of a Steak Dinner to accommodate more Members and Residents who would like to attend the Dinner. Ed DeMaio will continue to work with his Committee.**

**Joe Tillman will be sending out a Calendar in the next few weeks that will inform the Membership of the events for next year. Joe will ask, Tad Duffy, to put the Calendar on delwebbnaplesveterans.com.**

**The Walmart Gift Cards for Veterans Affairs, Cape Coral, approved in the November Meeting (300, $10 Cards) were mailed.**

**Rick purchased the Douglas Jacobson Nursing Home Gift Cards totaling $1,000 and the cards were given to Helen Scorsone to mail out. Ed will be receiving Holiday Cards from the Ave Maria American Heritage Girls Club and both the Gift Cards and the handmade Holiday Cards will be mailed together.**

**The Ave Maria American Heritage Girls Club have made cards for the Nursing Home in the past and Joe thanked them for the generosity, support, and time.**

**Ed DeMaio spoke about the Diaper Drive starting Monday, December 7th through Saturday, December 12, 2020 for the Guadalupe Center Social Services which is located at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Immokalee. The Veteran’s Club conducted a Diaper and Baby Care Items Collection earlier this year and thanks to the generosity of all Residents, we were able to provide more than 12,000 diapers and several thousand baby wipes to Immokalee moms in need. Our Club is asking for support in donating diapers, preferably sized 4, 5 and 6 and related items such as baby wipes, baby power and Vaseline. Ed DeMaio will be collecting donations daily from 8AM until 5PM. He is located at 5892 Constitution Street. There will be a collection table set-up in his driveway for the entire week.**

**Joe Tillman asked for a motion to spend up to $8,000 for the Veterans Affairs, Bay Pines, for 2021, ($2,000 per quarter) for such items as backpacks, bus passes, gift cards, etc. as requested by Veterans Affairs. Motion made and approved.**

**Bill Kaufmann gave an update on the Golf Tournament for April 10, 2021. Bill told the Membership that, John Alfonso, agreed to work with him on the Tournament Committee. John will work specifically on securing more sponsors which is a great source of revenue for the Club. Bill asked the Membership that if anyone have any ideas / leads on companies who might be willing to contribute, to contact John or Bill and they will follow-up. Bill reminded the Membership that the first Golf Tournament started in 2017 and the Tournament is the greatest source of revenue for the Club to continue their Mission Statement.**

**Joe Tillman thanked the outgoing Chairman of the Golf Tournament, John Shaffer, for his excellent service to the Club Golf Tournaments. Joe told the Membership that the Golf Tournaments have raised almost $40,000 since the start in 2017. This past year, the Club made approximately $11,000 and had many sponsors who returned.**

**Joe told the Membership that in 2021, the Meetings will alternate. Friday afternoon at 4 PM followed by a Happy Hour with beer and wine and Saturday Morning at 10:00 AM with coffee, juice and donuts starting at 9:30 AM. At the end of 2021, the Membership will be asked to vote on their preference for day and time of Meetings.**

**Ann Hashagen was not present to give an update on the Shirts. Joe told the Membership that the Shirts are still available and can see Ann at the next Meeting in January for purchase. The Shirts are $10 each and have the Del Webb Veteran’s Club Logo on the Shirt and come in several colors.**

**Joe Tillman spoke on the motion to allocate $5,000 for Backpacks / Tents for Wounded Warriors of Naples. Bob Wheeler is our Clubs go-between and has done a lot of work with the Wounded Warriors of Naples. Joe obtained a 13-minute video to show the Membership the work done by the Wounded Warriors of Naples.**

 **A summary of the video: the video was about the many needs of Veterans in United States but especially about the needs of Veterans in Collier County. Many Veterans in Collier County slip through the cracks, are homeless and in some cases, Veterans commit suicide, suffer domestic abuse and substance abuse. Unfortunately, there are limited services and funding in many cases to help returning Veterans. In Collier County, 13% of the population are Veterans. Many have faced hardships such as homelessness, mental health illness, and chronic substance abuse. Dale Mullins, now President of Wounded Warriors of Collier County and a Viet Nam Veteran, saw a need in Collier County to help our returning Veterans and in 2010, Wounded Warriors of Collier County was founded. Since then, there is hope and help for returning Veterans in Collier County. Their mission is to assist with the needs of Veterans and their families and focus on housing, education, and mental health. The vision of Wounded Warriors of Collier is that “No Veteran is Left Behind”. Many Veterans that return, per Dale Mullins, suffer from invisible signs of war such as post-traumatic stress syndrome and traumatic brain injuries that unfortunately cause the suicide rates to be twice the national average. Through the work and efforts, the community has rallied around our Veterans by providing and coordinating resources to meet the unique needs of Veterans. Dale spoke on the first home for returning Veterans, Alpha House, that now houses four Veterans. These Veterans are homeless Veterans and transition from places such as St. Matthew House and are taken off the streets to turn their lives around. The Veterans eventually get jobs and can avail themselves of many programs offered at Alpha House, so they are able to return to their families. This is all done by donations. Room and Board for Veterans at Alpha House is approximately $41 per day. The Wounded Warriors of Collier County is looking to open a second home next year and will again look to many business, contractors, and donations to obtain this goal. This program provides affordable, transitional, and permanent housing for Veterans in need of a “Hand Up, and not a Handout”. Bravo House, a second home, is tentatively approved for a grant and will house 3 / 4 Veterans. A retired Marine spoke about his struggles with alcohol and incarceration and the help he received at Alpha House. Currently, an extensive program for mental health and addiction is moving forward to provide addition help for Veterans. This program will not only provide service for short term help but for long term help as well. Wounded Warriors, in collaboration with Ave Maria School of Law, has raised and donated funds and scholarship program to aid Veterans who are looking to forward their education in the practice of law. 10 Veterans have availed themselves of this scholarship program.**

**Joe Tillman was going to have Dale Mullins at one of our Meetings this year, however, due to COVID, this has been postponed. Joe told the Membership present that Bob Wheeler and he went to visit the Alpha House that is now housing four Veterans. Joe and Bob both feel that Wounded Warriors of Collier County do excellent work with the Veterans and Alpha House.**

**Joe spoke about the Wounded Warriors of Collier County and the National Chapter of Wounded Warriors and the controversy several years ago of misappropriation of funds. This is still “hanging over” the Wounded Warriors of Collier County and our Membership still has concerns about their possible affiliation with the National Chapter.**

**Bob Wheeler was asked to talk about the “Point-In-Time Count” in Naples on January 29, 2021 from 7:30 AM to 3 PM. This is a national effort to identify homeless in communities. Collier County is doing their count on January 29, 2021. Training is given on January 6, 2021 via Zoom (**[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85266590120**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85266590120)**) from 2 to 3 PM and on January 22, 2021 from 2 to 4 PM at 1791 Trade Center Way, Unit D, Naples. (239-263-9363) Wounded Warriors of Collier County joins the Collier County group to specifically target homeless Veterans to try to get them the help needed such as housing, medical and mental help, food, etc. Bob assured volunteers that their safety is guaranteed. Wounded Warriors will then go to government organizations to obtain funding for the Veterans. Del Webb Naples Veteran’s Club has supplied backpacks and tents in the past for the homeless Veterans. Wounded Warriors of Collier County has asked for our Club’s help for Veterans that have been identified by Wounded Warriors and the Point-in-Time Count. Bob assured the Membership that the Wounded Warriors of Collier County are specific on the distribution of these backpacks and tents and they will only go to Veterans. For additional information, contact Joe Tillman or Bob Wheeler.**

**Joe Tillman clarified the donations of previous backpacks and tents. These items went to Veterans Affairs in Lee County and given directly to Social Workers. These Social Workers were from Bay Pines who identified a homeless Veteran who needed a backpack and the items enclosed in the backpacks. Collier County choose not to accept our backpacks as a donation to them because of a legal issue. Collier County is ok with our Club giving out backpacks through the Wounded Warriors of Collier County.**

**John Shaffer raised issues concerning the executives of the National Wounded Warriors and their spending monies inappropriately, such as flying first class, chartering private jets, staying at five-star hotels and spending money that should go to the homeless Veterans. Wounded Warriors of Collier County, so we have been told, are not affiliated at all with the National Chapter of Wounded Warriors. There is no proof they are. However, in 2017 tax returns of the Wounded Warriors of Collier County showed a donation to the National Organization of Wounded Warriors of $64,000. (John gave a copy of this information to Joe Tillman) John expressed his concerns that Wounded Warriors of Collier County is possibly affiliated with the National Organization of Wounded Warriors. John feels further investigation is needed before we give any money, backpacks, etc. to this organization. Bill Kaufmann reiterated that our Club is not giving any money to the organization, but we are giving backpacks. Bill still has concerns after watching the video as to what Wounded Warriors of Collier County is doing with their money. Bill is feeling that our Club should be looking into other ways to supporting Veterans until our Club can do further investigation on Wounded Warriors of Collier County. Joe Tillman stated he does not really care where Wounded Warriors of Collier County spends their cash money. He feels that it is their business. We are looking to give them backpacks and have been assured the backpacks are used for Veterans and the homeless Veterans. He told the Membership the Wounded Warriors of Collier County is recognizable within the Naples area. They get support from large companies. They run a golf tournament that is probably twice the size of our tournament. This is where they make most of their money in addition to all the donations and grants. Joe acknowledge John and Bill for their opinions / concerns, but he feels our Club is giving backpacks to Veterans and we are not giving Wounded Warriors cash. They asked us to help support them in this way. Joe wound not give cash to them and is in total agreement with John and Bill because 10% of cash donations goes towards administration and 90% goes towards Veteran or event they are supporting. Ed DeMaio asked, Bob Wheeler, if our Club is the only organization to supply backpacks to Wounded Warriors of Collier County? Bob told the Membership that in the past, there are two other groups that supplied backpacks to their organization. One other organization supplied day beds for the Veterans. Bob could not say if this year any other organization is supplying backpacks to the homeless Veterans. Bob should know on December 21, 2020 at the next meeting of Wounded Warriors of Collier County. Helen Scorsone asked, Bob Wheeler, why Wounded Warriors of Collier County chooses to use this name since there is such controversy with the National Organization of Wounded Warriors? Bob explained that this name was chosen to segregate themselves from the National Organization of Wounded Warriors. Bob addressed the information that John Shaffer presented to the Membership and said he would follow-up with Dale Mullins who confirmed prior that their organization is separate from the National Organization. Bill Kaufmann found it questionable that the name, Wounded Warriors of Collier County, could be used without the approval of the National Organization of Wounded Warriors. John feels the motion should be put on hold, however, Joe Tillman disagreed and explained that we cannot wait until our January Meeting to bring up a motion for the backpacks for Wounded Warriors. Our bylaws state that we must bring up the motion the month before and vote after the Membership has a month to look over the information. Joe is only asking for a motion to approve at this time and this will give Bob Wheeler time to obtain the information about the concerns raised by John Shaffer. In January we will ask for the vote to spend the money. Joe is asking for a motion to approve $5,000 (2021) for backpacks and tents for the Wounded Warriors of Collier County. Not for any money for the Alpha House currently. Joe asked for a show of hands on the motion. 23 Members attended the Meeting, 12 Members voted yes on the motion and 11 voted no on the motion. Because the voting was so close but approved, Joe decided to put the motion on hold and not bring it forward at this time. Joe asked Bob Wheeler to inform Dale Mullins about our decision and to ask him about the $64,000 donation. Bob agreed. Ed DeMaio also wanted to know if there have been any donations since 2017. Joe will put together an e-mail informing the Membership of Bob Wheeler inquires and the response from Wounded Warriors about our concerns with their organization. Helen will be asked to forward the information to all Members.**

**A motion was approved at our November Meeting for $2000 for the Angel Tree for Veterans Affairs, Bay Pines. Final vote on the motion was made and approved.**

**Ed DeMaio spoke about Reliable Pressure Cleaning (844-829-7727) and their donation to our Veteran’s Club. Reliable cleaned over 40 homes and donated $10 back to our Club per home cleaned. Reliable Pressure Cleaning has once again agreed to donate $10 per roof scheduled and cleaned to our Club to benefit Veterans in need in our area. Ed is asking our Members to consider Reliable Pressure Cleaning in 2021 for their pressure cleaning needs. Several members present had this company this past year and spoke highly of their work.**

**Ed DeMaio spoke about the Ave Maria American Heritage Girls Group who are led by Sidney McManus and Alicia Ritter. The girls will have handmade Holiday Cards for the Veterans at Douglas Jacobson Nursing Home ready by next week and the cards will be given to Helen to mail along with the Gift Cards to the Nursing Home. Ed will send out a thank you card to the girls for their kindness.**

**The Board selected the Advisors for 2021: Bill Kaufmann (returning), Jim Brodie, Tracy Sunderlage, John Alfonso, Joe Rivera (returning) and Bobby White. Joe thanked the Advisors from 2020, Mark Clayton, Franciska Blankenfield, Joe Rivera, Bill Kaufmann, and Barry Weaving for serving as Advisors in 2020.**

**Bill Kaufmann will be Chairman of the Golf Committee for 2021.**

**Joe Rivera will continue his work on getting the Monument built. He will continue to work with Ken Rice. Bob Griess will work on the Committee with Joe.**

**Our next Meeting is Friday, January 8, 2021 at 4 PM followed by a Happy Hour. Tad was asked to put the next Meeting on our website.**

**Ed DeMaio told the Membership about the Veteran of the Month, AC Schmidt, as told by the Ave Maria Veterans Association. His story was told in the December 2020 “Ave Maria Neighbors” Magazine. Ed encouraged all Members to read about the amazing career of our very own, Captain, AC Schmidt.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:07 AM**