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

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2023**

**GRAND HALL**

**10 AM**

**delwebbnaplesveterans.com**

**PRESIDENT: ED DEMAIO**

**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: TRACY SUNDERLAGE**

**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: MARK CLAYTON**

**TREASURER: RICK BACHOFNER**

**SECRETARY: HELEN SCORSONE**

**ADVISORS: JOE TILLMAN MIKE TRAYNOR MARGE SCHEFFLER MAC MCTAMNEY JOE RIVERA**

The Meeting was called to order by Ed De Maio, President at 10 AM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

Father Petruska offered a prayer.

Ed read the list of potential new members who signed up at the New Residents Orientation. Ed is hoping they come to the next Meeting. They will be put on the email list for communications. Bob and Joan Coones became members at today’s Meeting.

Ed spoke about the background of the Veterans Club. The Club started in 2014 with 12 Veteran Members and has grown to over 150 men and women, Veterans and Veteran supporters. The Mission of the Club was established to help Veterans and the Club, in 2015, became a 501(C)(3) Charitable Organization. In 2016, the Club established a relationship with the Veteran’s Affairs, Bay Pines location. Monies were needed to help with our Mission Statement and under the direction of John Schaffer, Joe Tillman, and Bill Kaufmann, the first Annual Golf Tournament was established to help raise money for Veterans in need. Since 2016, the Club has raised over $120,000. Scholarships have also been established for graduating ROTC students at Palmetto Ridge High School. Two scholarships are given based on academic achievements and a third scholarship, an IT (Information Technology) scholarship, is founded by a charitable donation by Rich Bachofner. (Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Schield)

Our guest speaker, Stephen Wener, M.D., a Veteran Physician, spoke about the Collier-Lee Honor Flights. Collier County Honor Flight is a 501(c) (3) 100% volunteer non-profit organization created solely to honor America’s War Veterans for all their sacrifices by transporting these Heroes to Washington, DC for the day to visit and reflect at their Memorials. There is never a charge for the Veterans being honored!!! These trips are organized by volunteers and are funded by local donors. These Honor Flights are not possible without public support. Businesses, professional groups, schools, civic entities, and Veteran service organizations are encouraged to sponsor or contribute to the Honor Flights. All donations are 100% deductible. Anyone interested in additional information can contact Dr. Wener at 239-777-9295 or email him at CollierHonorFlight.org or DocWener@CollierHonorFlight,.org. Our Veteran’s Club has allocated a $1,200 donation from our WW2 Veteran member, Bill LaMothe who passed away last year.

Treasurer Report, Rick Bachofner: Balance in the check book on September 30, 2023 is $17,678.34. Deposits amounted to $1,396 and expenses amounted to $6,250.51. The balance in the check book on October 31, 2023 was $12,823.83. Available balance is $9,423.83.

Rick will continue to collect dues for 2024. The dues remain at $25. Rick has asked if you are paying by check to make the check out to Del Webb Naples Veteran’s Club.

The next Pancake Breakfast will be November 17, 2023 starting at 9:00. Marge asked all who would like to attend the Breakfast to register on the Oasis Calendar and if you are not able to attend to please remove your name from the attending list.

The Ave Maria Veteran’s Club, Del Webb Naples, The Knights of Columbus and Ave Maria University will be hosting Veteran’s Day (November 11, 2023) events starting at 11:11 AM with the dedication of the Veteran’s Memorial in the town of Ave Maria. Events will continue throughout the day and end with the Ave Maria Veteran’s Day Ball, Grand Hall starting at 6 PM. The cost is $125 per person.

Because of a very generous donation by one of our Club Members, the Del Webb Naples Veteran’s Club will have a bench dedicated at the Ave Maria Veteran’s Memorial and the plaque will read, “**In Honor of Those Who Have Served”.** In addition, our member, Lori Whitlock, has sponsored a bench.

If interested in purchasing a Veteran’s Club shirt or hat, please contact Jill Mortensen at jillmortenson@gmail.com.

Claudette Sang will be hosting an informative get-together for all who will be going on the Panama Canal Cruise in February, 2024 at the Grand Hall on Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 4 PM.

Officers who were elected for 2024 are: President, Ed DeMaio; Vice President, Mac McTamney; Vice President and Golf Tournament Director, Mark Clayton; Secretary, Jeff Plys; and Treasurer, Rick Bachofner.

The Diaper Drive will begin on Sunday, December 10, 2023 through Saturday, December 16, 2023. All related items such as baby wipes, baby powder, etc. along with the diapers (preferably sizes 4, 5 and 6) would be greatly appreciated. However, all sizes of diapers will be gladly accepted. Ed DeMaio (5892 Constitution Street) will be collecting donations daily from 8 AM until 5PM. He will have a collection table set up in his driveway for the entire week.

The “Branch of Service Luncheons” hosted by the Club’s newly elected Vice President, Mac McTamney, will start on November 7, 2023. Detailed information has been sent to all Club Members.

Every quarter, associates are nominated for the Elevance Health (Formerly Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield) Foundation’s Volunteer Recognition Program (VRP). Rick Bachofner, Tech Project Manager, received the grand prize of $1,000 as voted by all his associates. Rick selected the Del Webb Veteran’s Club to receive this grand prize. Rick told Elevance Associates that he strongly believes in the Del Webb Veteran’s Club mission to support homeless and needy Veterans. Ed thanked Rick on behalf of the Club.

Tracy Sunderlage will be sharing some of his interesting stories from his Military Career at future Meetings.

Rick Bachofner proposed allocating $500 for an individual person who will accompany a Veteran on the Honor Flight to help with their expenses. Motion made and approved.

**PLEASE NOTE, THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CLUB WILL BE ON DECEMBER 9, 2023 AT THE OASIS CLUB STARTING AT 10 AM. COFFEE AND DONUTS WILL BE SERVED AT 9:30 AM.**

It was suggested that the Club reach out to the Community to let all residents know that you do not need to be a Veteran to join the Club. All are welcome to join. This idea was favorably received, and Ed will reach out to the HOA staff to have them create a flyer.

The Meeting was adjourned at 10:50 AM.