

WreathsForTheFallen.org

Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2011

I. Call to order

John Thomas called the regular meeting for the WreathsForTheFallen.org to order on Tuesday April 10, 2011 at 6:30 pm at the VFW in Little Falls MN.

II. Roll call

A sign in sheet was passed around and signed by everyone present. There were 17 members present - Carrie Johnson, David & Laura DiMartino, Hank VanKoevering, Norv Pervier, Ken & Joyce Tveit, Bob Larson, John Thomas, Ron Robbins, Freddie Barbeau, Jamie Storlie, Bill & Fran Kokett, Lydia Sasse, Jim Parent and Michael Coffman, commander of the Little Falls VFW.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting which was held on April 12th St Cloud, MN, were presented. Jamie Storlie made a motion to approve the minutes; motion was seconded by Bob Larson. Motion was approved.

IV. Treasurers Report

The treasurers report was presented by Ron Robbins, treasurer. He reported that the beginning balance on April 1st was \$ 1,537.55. Administrative expenses of \$329.16 were paid leaving a balance of \$1,208.39 at the end of the month. Jamie Storlie made motion to approve the treasurer's report as read, Jim Parent seconded the motion. Motion passed – Ron submitted report.

V. Committee Reports

Wreaths Procurement Committee – Bob Larson, committee chairperson, gave his report. He reported that he had sent out some requests out to other greenhouses to get pricing for the wreaths. The prices that he has received ranged from \$10.50 - \$ 11.75 per wreath. Some of the prices included delivery but others did not. Bob asked if any of the members knew of greenhouses in the area that would consider giving us a quote for wreaths. We would like to keep it as local as possible. Mykel from Erickson's Greenhouse in Brainerd has a price of \$10.00 without delivery. Delivery will be a big issue since we are looking at a possibility of several thousand wreaths being delivered to the cemetery this year. If anyone has any suggestions about where we could **purchase wreaths** in larger quantities please give **Bob** a call at **320-240-9508**.

John Thomas also reported – along with the wreaths procurement committee report - that he had visited with Dave from the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery, Little Falls and had some updated information to report. The

cemetery currently has about 3900 sites, and the total is expected to be 4026 by December of this year. Currently they are having 4 burials per day with an increase expected of up to 7 per day consisting of 4 casket burials and 3 cremations. Two new cemetery locations have been approved by the legislature, possibilities are Rochester and Duluth. Camp Ripley cemetery is preparing to break ground in October on several new sections which will greatly increase the number of sites available.

Contributions Committee – Norville Pervier, chairman of the committee presented his report. He stated that the mailings have not been sent out yet because the web site is not ready quite yet. Joyce however did comment that the mailings for the special wreath requests are also ready to be mailed. Norv passed around the sponsorship form and asked anyone who wanted any to let him know and he would make sure everyone had enough to hand out to businesses, family and friends who would like to contribute this year. These letters and sponsorship forms are available to all members. Jim Parent brought up an issue about wreaths being requested for the columbarium – which we place one huge wreath and several wreaths around the columbarium area, and had name cards placed on the huge wreath in memory of the veteran. It was discussed that when we receive a special request that we need all the information to know if the person is in the columbarium and explain the process to them about the laying of the wreaths there. Comment was also made about mentioning the columbarium on the web site.

There was a round of applause for Joyce Tveit for the fabulous job she has done processing all the donors, letters and thank you's received last year. She has completed a spreadsheet full of very useful information. Thanks to Joyce - - Great Job!!! She stated that we received donations from as far away as Texas, Arizona and many, many other states!

John Thomas added that he contacted Bob Schole about the Microsoft Access accounting program for managing all the donations, and keeping accurate data for our records. He mentioned a training session to get several members familiar with his program and processing the data.

Web Site Committee – John Thomas, chairperson for the committee, gave an update on the status of the web page. He said Patrick Iten of Iten Creative has been working extremely hard on the web site and it was now in the hands of the programmers at WeLikelt.net. Hopefully we will have the site up and running by May 25th. It will be exciting to be able to access the site! The web address is www.wreathsforthefallen.org. John mentioned that we could also have a training session for members to become familiar with the web. Some members will have to update some areas of the site periodically and they will have to be trained on how the process works. Please watch your emails for an update for when you can log onto the web site – it is an amazing web site with lots of information – not only about our organization but many other veterans' sites.

John Thomas and Lydia Sasse are the contact persons if you should have any concerns about the site.

Lydia Sasse would like to be informed of any **events** that she could post on the site. This would be events primarily related to veterans, and would include rides, memorials, meet and greets. Some of the events posted are from the Freedom Ride, Family Day at Craguns, Patriot Guards rides, Vietnam rides, Tribute to the Troops and others. She needs contact names, dates, places and other details of the event in order to post it on our web site.

Her phone # is 218-765-4477 or 218-330-1085.

VI. Old Business

Carrie Johnson reported that the status of the 501(c) (3) tax exempt application with the IRS is still being processed by the IRS. She reported that she contacted the IRS and the agent told her that they were processing applications that they had received in December so ours is still making its way through the system. The state is on hold also, dependent on the rulings from the IRS. Carrie will keep in touch with the IRS and the State regarding the determination.

VII. New Business

Memorial Day events were discussed and it was mentioned that not a lot of information was available as to different events. Jim Parent was going to check with the cemetery about their schedule. Please watch your emails for event locations and times. Jim Parent talked about placing flags on the graves for Memorial Day and that the cemetery may need additional help. He will check it out and get more information to John. As a group the WreathsForTheFallen.org are not at any specific event. There are lots of events in the area and if attend any please feel free to take photos to share.

Motley fair – and other area fairs – were brought up for discussion. Who would work the booth, what did we all need at the booth, do we have enough brochures, handouts to take to a fair, do we need a fair committee, and what fairs do we go to – were just some of the issues brought up. John made a motion to open it up for discussion and Lydia seconded it. Group discussion followed – everyone had input about different issues. One of the issues about maybe building a booth to take to the fairs was tabled until future meetings.

The issue about having a booth at the Motley Fair was voted on by all members present and the vote was to NOT have a booth at the fair. The decision was due to the fact that we could not get a commitment for people to man the booth for the duration of the fair. It was mentioned that Jason Olson was very gracious in asking us to participate at the fair and for his efforts to line it up. Carrie Johnson will send a letter to Jason thanking him for his help and that maybe next year we could make something happen. We will continue to look at possibilities. We had a great discussion!

Other Comments: Our newest member at the meeting was Michael Coffman. He is the new commander of the Little Falls VFW. He wanted to share some information with our group about an organization that he supports - **Beyond The Yellow Ribbon** - an organization that helps returning soldiers adjust to returning back home and helping them with community support, service and resources. Their web site is www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org and helps Minnesota servicemen and their families. He mentioned that there will be a meeting on 5-23-11 at the Elementary School in Little Falls. He said everyone was welcome! Michael has been with the guard for 29 years. He felt that maybe we could work together on different events.

FACEBOOK was mentioned very quickly as we were running a little late. One of our members present at the meeting – Laura DiMartino - was very interested in learning more about what we wanted out of Facebook. We will be in touch with her and the possibility of her maintaining the page. It will be addressed at the next general meeting.

PRAYER - Freddie Barbeau brought up the idea of saying a prayer and/or the Pledge of Allegiance at our meetings. Everyone present thought it was a wonderful idea and should be said at each meeting. Freddie led us in prayer at the end of the meeting. Thank You Freddie – it was a great ending to a great meeting.

VIII. Next Meeting

It was decided that the next general monthly meeting will be on **Tuesday - June 14th at 6:30 pm. Brainerd MN. This is the 2nd Tuesday of the month.**

Exact location has not been announced yet but will be shortly.

Please invite your family, friends and neighbors to join us – ALSO - please share with them information about our web site and that they are welcome anytime ! Web address is : www.wreathsforthefallen.org

IX. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Bob Larson and seconded by Ron Robbins. Meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.

**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING!!
THANKS ALSO FOR THE GREAT DISCUSSION –
IT WAS ANOTHER GREAT MEETING!**

Minutes submitted by: Carrie Johnson, Secretary

Minutes approved by: _____

Remember - - “It’s not about Us – It’s about Them”