

# CITY OF MANCHESTER

## MEETING OF THE VETERANS COMMISSION

Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021

A meeting of the Veterans Commission of the City of Manchester, Missouri was held at 4:30 p.m. on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021, on the video conference application, Zoom, for the transaction of such business that came before the Commission.

Present:

Mayor Mike Clement  
Alderman Megan Huether  
President Kay Bell  
Secretary Bonnie Krueger  
City Administrator/City Clerk Justin Klocke  
Mr. Bob Bell  
Mr. Julie Nguyen  
Mr. James Francis  
Mr. Bud Niebling  
Mr. Bill Pinkston  
Mr. Al Finkelstein - guest

### **Introduction/Welcome**

Kay Bell called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. Megan made the motion to approve the Minutes of the June 18 meeting and Kay Bell seconded it with unanimous approval. The approved minutes will be forwarded to Justin Klocke to be posted on the City of Manchester website.

Justin was introduced and welcomed as the new liaison replacing former administrator Larry Perney. Also congratulated the Bells as this year's Citizens of the Year for Manchester Homecoming! Al Finkelstein joined our meeting as a visitor.

### **POW/MIA Day, Friday Sept. 17 at 10 a.m.**

In a quick efficient manner, the annual POW/MIA Day was put together. It will be held in person and also on Facebook Live. A Missing Man table will be presented by the Bell's and Bill P. will speak at the event.

### **Flags of Valor on Art Hill, September, 2021**

Overall, the program was a major success with national recognition this year. The city of Manchester had over 100 area volunteers to help pair the photos and dog tags and helped with installation.

The next involvement for Manchester is getting 200 of the flags mailed to family members. Rick Randall has asked Bonnie to head up that process, but this will still be a group effort with Mayor Mike and Alderman Megan very involved from a logistics process. More details are to come soon, with delivery of those flags pending. Ideally, Rick would like one person in charge of one box, rather than spreading it out over dozens of people. Details to follow once instructions become clearer.

### **Hometown Heroes Banner Program**

Kay and Kat have not spoken again to confirm next steps of the program, although the banners will come down sometime this fall before winter weather becomes an issue. There was a recommendation from Megan to place the banners in the courtroom gallery at the Justice Center to display indoors.

Bonnie and Megan recommended creating a form so that we can obtain detailed information about their time in the service to put on our website. Seeing the banners is great, but knowing who they are is even better. Kay pointed out that the banner application gives many of the details we would be asking for. In the interest of privacy and “dotting our I’s and crossing out T’s, Julie recommended verifying with applicants that publishing this information was OK. Bonnie suggested that while verifying, it would be a great way for the veterans or their family to add memories or information. That potentially would be added next to the banner in the gallery.

### **Budget 2022 discussion**

Mike is recommending keeping the 2022 budget the same as 2021. We do not have a total of what we have spent, but he expects there still to be money available at the end of the year. Bonnie asked about donating some money to our causes, but Manchester Cares is applying for nonprofit status, which would make donating money from the Veterans fund inappropriate.

### **Installation at Veterans Memorial Park**

The plates are stored in the parks department. Because of the recent death of Robin Collins an additional plate costing around \$100-\$150 with shipping needs to be ordered. We will hold off until we know if there is money in the budget. Justin will see if there is time in the next few weeks to install the plaques in the park. Mike will be out of town, but he is OK with us doing it without him if it works out. Also, a short discussion on having a small plaque reveal ceremony, but nothing was firmly decided if it would be best to wait until Memorial Day.

It was recommended to make sure that city employees are recognized at Veterans day, so Justin will try to get a complete list of honorees.

### **Veterans Community Project**

Megan attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the tiny home community, also sharing pictures. The Veterans hospital, outreach center and public transportation is in the same area of where the homes and community center will be built. We will help VCP by holding drives to collect household items when it is closer to the completion of the project.

### **Freedom Memorial Wall update**

After speaking to Robin Collins’ mom, new plates will be ordered for the wall. Bonnie has not been consistently working on it but announced her “retirement” from *West Newsmagazine* at the end of October. She wants to take a more active role in the veterans’ volunteer work, including the Flags of Valor and at South High.

Rick Randall has gifted the PTSD flag and pole to South High. Principal Dr. Aitch said that because of COVID restrictions, she cannot host a Veteran Day ceremony this year, but hopes to next year. We briefly discussed inviting those seven families to the unveiling of the plaques, who died in service.

### **Presentation of House member Rep. Wayne Wallingford**

Megan will invite Rep. Wallingford to give testimony of his involvement with the Linebacker II operation that ended the Vietnam War. Hopefully he will be available at our October or November meeting.

### **Other**

Julie inquired about the proposed military signing ceremony within Parkway. Bonnie suggested that representatives be present to show our support before they leave for boot camp.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Veterans Commission will be via Zoom on Thursday, Oct. 21. At 4:30 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

At 5:50 p.m. the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

