



VCOC 3rd QUARTER MEETING
Thursday July 11th, 2024
Zoom Meeting
MINUTES

1. Administration

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret), VCOC President.

The Pledge & Invocation was delivered by Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret), VCOC President.

Secretary's Report – Invitation for someone to serve as Acting Secretary on 4th Qtr meeting on 24 October 2024.

The Roll Call was conducted by VCOC Acting Secretary, Ruth McWilliams. Of the 15 chapters, 10 were represented:

Central Virginia - Ruth McWilliams

Heritage - Bill Gooding

Heritage Hunt -

Falcons Landing -

George C Marshall – Greg Frederick

Mount Vernon - Doug Yurovich

Northern Neck -

Northern Virginia - Monti Zimmerman

Piedmont - Judy Chantelois

Potomac -

Portsmouth Area - Ken App

Richmond Area -

Southside VA -

SW VA - Gary Powers

Virginia Peninsula - Ron Corson

- **VCOC officers: President:** Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret), **Second Vice President:** CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), **Third Vice President** COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret), **Treasurer** MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret), and **Legal Counsel,** COL Vince Cammarata, USA (Ret). Additional members attending: Mary Lou Wassell, Jim Pauls, John Nahm, Mary Snyder, Matt Haag, Bruce Lalonde.

- Adoption of the Agenda approved. – Ron Corson. Ken App seconded.



- The 2nd Quarter meeting minutes. Motion made by Judy Chantelois. Ron Corson seconded. Approved.

2. President's Report

- Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret) welcomed everyone. Vacant positions, First VP, Secretary, and Chaplain. Noting that all the work can't be done without additional assistance. Ken App volunteered to run the roster and directory.
- Diana is juggling doing the updates to the website which is the 1st VPs job but that is still a vacant position.
- Apologized for the levels of excellence awards distribution. For those who participated in Advocacy in Action, the awards were given in person to those present by MOAA. Certificates went back to MOAA for mailing to the Presidents.
- In April, Monti, Linc and Diana went to South Carolina for a regional meeting and at a subsequent meeting, suggested redoing the Congressional Appreciation Luncheon next year. Thought it would be a time to meet with those Congressional people, but our finances are an issue. They assured me that, if we got a budget for what it would cost, MOAA might be able to subsidize, if we can provide the budget by the 4th Qtr meeting in October. Diana contacting Frank Wickersham for assistance since he worked this in the past. Jim Pauls suggested having it at the Capitol Hill Club because MOAA has some form of membership at the Club to assist in reserving the room. Senate and House office meeting rooms have been used but are not dependable for keeping the rooms open. Diana is considering this as a primary option (the Capitol Hill Club).

3. Treasurer's Report

- MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret) provided financial update: Got dues from Northern Neck so have all 15 Chapters' dues.
- We'd been charged a bank fee for our balance going under \$3K for a few days. The bank returned that fee. Budget is expected to reflect all income for the year.
- VCOC 2nd Quarter Financial Report components:
 - PO Box – Renewed for 1 year for \$182.
 - Insurance: \$25 SEC fee.
 - Communications: One of the Network Solutions fees.
 - Travel for Diana, Linc and Monti at the Southeast Regional Conference.
 - Q: What other expenses are we expecting from Network Solutions? Two due in November. The other two programs – Private Registration and SiteLock Premium.



Every one of the various Network Solutions fees are for varying periods of time from 1 year to multi-year.

- Diana and Sherry talked that we need someone who understands IT to evaluate these as a resource. John Nahm, Richmond Area Chapter, offered to assist. He retired from a career in IT with VDOT and might have the background to help understand. He recently joined the Richmond Area Chapter MOAA Board.
- State Farm Insurance: The policy covered a building that we don't have and also listed us as a labor union. MOAA has a company they use although the company is not a MOAA agency. Sherry spoke to two different reps but neither knew of MOAA. Sherry was told we had to complete an application. Sherry emailed with someone at MOAA HQ. The MOAA HQ Board rep advised Sherry to look elsewhere. It was suggested to talk with USAA. Their insurance is also through subsidiaries. VCOC doesn't have a building. That discussion said, we're looking at Board liability and then, for any in person meeting issues. He forwarded this information to the vendor. In Virginia, there are two kinds of policies. If you deal with an insurance company that doesn't fulfill its plan, the state will back you. He recommended looking at the current policy to see if it covers the board. But you have to have a physical address to have an insurance policy. Monti Zimmerman offered to help Sherry on this research. Gary Powers said their Chapter had the same issue and decided to work with Philadelphia Insurance. He will send Sherry that information. Greg Frederick asks why we need insurance for the board. Sherry thinks it's because we're incorporated as a business. Monti said two parts – state of Virginia requires it for incorporated entities. The second is that, if we get sued, we need external protection to preclude individual liability. Vince Cammarata said that when VCOC rented a building, the venue required insurance. VCOC used his address as the Registered Agent. About 18 years ago, we wanted board insurance because a member of the board filed a sexual harassment complaint. It was able to be settled but that prompted the need for board insurance.

4. Standing Committee Reports

- **Communications and Public Affairs**

- Col Diana Kupchella, (USAF) (Ret) – Need the info submitted to Diana by the 15th of each month to update website. Otherwise, it will take longer.

- **Membership and Chapter Affairs**



- CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret) – About half of the semi-annual reports have been received. I noticed there's been a decline in membership. Mt. Vernon Chapter gained 5 people, bucking the trend. I'd like the rest of the reports. Ron Corson asked if John has his email address. Diana confirmed the reports are to go to her, John Prevar and Sherry Ferki. Request that Diana send a list of all emails to the Chapter Presidents of the email addresses.
- Next Semiannual reports due by 6 Jan 2025 – this was so we'd have it before the 1st Qtr's meeting and because the dues are predicated for the coming year on those end of year member numbers.
- **Legislative Chair - COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret)**
 - Thank you to Diana for taking the roll of President. Many may not understand how critical this has been as I've spent over 400 hours in leg advocacy since March.
 - State legislative Advocacy: Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Update - In November, there will be a ballot initiative for the Surviving Widow/Widowers to have property tax relief across the Commonwealth.
 - Surprise and a terrible thing – you might know that the way we work legislatively is a transparent committee process and in the end of the legislative session become law. The annual State budget reconciliation, through a committee process, they crushed the seminal cornerstone Veteran's and Survivor's Education Benefit. The survivors education benefit goes back to 1930, as the oldest veteran benefit. We expanded the benefit multiple times, with the most recent expansion being in 2019, which was the first piece of legislation I specifically advocated for. Someone decided it's costing too much, so they eliminated eligibility for this summer for those going to school this fall. I did several actions with the Governor, Legislature and others to keep this on the radar and fix it. The Governor was given an April line item veto in April; he kept this and returned it with funding; House took additional cuts and forced the Governor to sign it. There was then a grassroots movement and it had over 3,000 people. It got pushed through where the Governor was receiving so much contact that he invited a bunch of us to breakfast to create a commission. The House of Delegates said to repeal and restore the original language. Three Senators were holding out to not support but there is supposed to be a bill on 18th in both House and Senate to restore this benefit. Special thanks to Bruce Alandi(sp?) for mobilizing his Chapter. Monti warned that this has potential for any Virginia veterans benefit. Sherry commented that each of the Senate sessions cost \$40,000 per special session. Monti replied that there is nothing specifically listed to note the cost per session for this issue. In his opinion, this should be an opportunity to put pressure on legislators to not allow policy changes via budget lines only. Thanks to Bruce LaLonde from Portsmouth Area Chapter in bringing everyone on board but it's what grassroots advocacy is all about. Question: Is the 18th to defer this for two years? Monti – It remains to be seen and the goal is to repeal and restore the benefit. Ken suggests that sending the phone



numbers and Points of Contact for the legislators was very helpful. Monti – the numbers are expected for the next five years and then to decrease in eligible applicants. Sherry noted that a lot of the emails she sent was from the VMESDEP group. They are not going away, and we have to continue to be vigilant because we don't know what the Legislature will do. Looking through the available information is how the other groups found out. The other part is the repeal but looking at the data and then having a plan that isn't an abrupt cessation but, if really needed, have it done in a more orderly fashion. Monti noted the friends was an interesting group with whom to work. Another group wants to join the JLC. He noted that nothing is 'one and done'.

- 2025 –
 - Working on making claim shark procedures illegal. If they hire someone, that person has to be certified by the VA and they can't charge the veteran. Monti talked with several legislators about this topic.
 - Restore the Guard education benefit to have the Guard manage it instead of having the person pay and apply for reimbursement.
 - Emergency duty (State Active Duty) – if you get injured, to make the process where you are allowed to be held on duty while you file a workman's comp claim.
- In April, Monti and Linc represented us at the Federal level. Under the MOAA website, you can see the MOAA priorities, including the shark claims. Monti, Linc and Sherry met with federal Representatives, covering the MOAA issues – pay parity, Tricare, and a third item. Diana was unable to participate because she was on a fundraiser for the Women's Military Memorial in DC.

5. Other Committee Reports:

Surviving Spouse: MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

- Let her know if you have not updated it, about your Surviving Spouse Chapter POC.
- The Surviving Spouse Corner on VCOC website updated frequently with articles of interest to Surviving Spouses.
- Encourage Chapter newsletter editors to include Surviving Spouse Corner from MOAA website in newsletter but without pictures.
- Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter Briefings encourage all chapters to have a yearly program about Surviving spouses.
- MOAA will send an email blast twice a year for the potential members in your area.
- MOAA will do either an in-person or virtual meetings on Surviving Spouses to the Chapters. MOAA is trying to keep people from dealing with the issues they dealt with themselves.
- Q: About pictures usage – there was a big discussion about copyright. If something is on the website, then people might take a photo from other sites than just MOAA, but this has a potential for copyright violation unless you get permission in advance.

6. Old Business:



- Discuss revised Quarterly Report to Biannual Report – Appear to be issues with this change in process. We appreciate the changes and the work on the new reports. We don't need to know every activity from the past six months under the last section so please highlight the big events.
- Directory:
 - Who is updating Directory? Ken App just volunteered to update the directory.
 - Directory Accessibility: Once the directory is up to snuff, we'll discuss this so defer it to the future.
 - Mary Lou Wassel was on the Board at one point and noted that, like the individual Chapters, the website is public. Since people's contact information is proprietary, we reminded everyone about sharing the updated data. We'd share, at the meetings, the password for people to update.
 - Ken App noted their Chapter has the leadership on a 'pull down' and there is a generic email to the newsletter director, so people contact that email, and it gets forwarded.
- Recruitment Strategies: Ron Corson noted they opened their meeting to all Williamsburg area 55plus communities in August. We were going to use that as a form of recruiting. Unfortunately, the speaker bowed out so that's being changed. In October, a specific recruiting event in Patriot's Colony will be occurring. Ken App noted there was a MOAA recruiting event and got five new members from that one meeting. Then it switched to October and had no luck. Diana notes that the MOAA blast (chapters@MOAA.org) to potential MOAA members in a given area for a MOAA presentation.

7. **New Business** –

- MOAA Vacation Cruise – A number of years ago, VCOC did a cruise to Bermuda out of Baltimore. I'd like you to think about it for 2025. Maybe the Chapter members might be interested. We'll talk about it again in October.
- MOAA Monthly Virtual Roundtable Meetings for Councils and Chapters – The topics vary and are a broad scope of topics. They are listed on the MOAA website under 'important dates for the year' under Chapters.
- Update VCOC logo – An email had the state with the correct MOAA logo which isn't currently at the top of the minutes. Sherry volunteered to cut and paste it.
- Minuteman Award – Diana noted that, for the VCOC, if we want to give that award, we can do that. I have acquired this award. It's supposed to be maintained by the Mt. Vernon Chapter. I've gotten a nomination for someone. This is deferred to the October meeting while Diana will send an email with the criteria and the nomination form.
- Monti noted that the annual nominations for Legislator of the Year will be coming due as well. Monti is considering suggestions on who he'll propose. Discussion will be forthcoming. Ken App noted we had both a State and a Federal Legislator of the Year awards.



Ken App made a motion to adjourn, Ruth McWilliams seconded. The meeting was adjourned by Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret) at 4:38 pm.

Respectively Submitted By: Ruth McWilliams, Captain, USA (Former), Acting Secretary, VCOC

Two Attachments:

- Updated Semi-Annual Report Form
- Updated Membership Report from 31 Dec 2024 as of 1 April 2024