

SELECTMEN'S MEETING

September 6, 2016

5:00pm

The Chairman invited Vincent Cheney, Ethan Cheney, Taylor Watson, and Riley Watson to lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

He then announced that before convening the regular Selectmen's Meeting, a special presentation would be made for the Veteran's Cemetery.

Jim Driscoll made the following statement:

“Welcome to Acton, we are here to celebrate a community working together for our Veterans and we are pretty proud of the outcome.

I think back to when I was on different town committees, when weighing budget articles, I would always ask myself, what would the town get back for what they are spending as tax payers? In other words, what is the return on the investment of \$1000.00 that the Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery asked for? I guess my feelings would be, for one, we are here tonight, free to have an open meeting and to speak our minds. Two, we are not speaking German. We have the freedom to agree or disagree respectfully on any issue. Free to wear what we want, drive what we want. Free to be who we are and for all of those freedoms we should thank our Veterans.

This whole turn of events in regards to, should we fund the “Beatification” Memorial Walkway, the MIA monument, Prisoner of War monument and flower beds and tree plantings within the Southern Maine Cemetery, was a discussion and a disagreement between free people. The decision was made at a Special Town Meeting and a vote of the people. The bottom line is the Southern Maine Veterans cemetery was not funded the full \$1000 because many of us who were in favor of supporting the donation were not at the meeting to support the \$1000 and it failed. I apologize for not being there and promise that next year I will be.

But, what great lessons and experiences have come full circle because of this. What an amazing country we live in. What an amazing community Acton, Shapleigh and the surrounding towns and people that have come forward to support the fundraiser for this Veterans cemetery. At the end of the day, on a positive note, we will end up donating somewhere around five times the original amount requested.

The objective of Ron Rivard the President and Jim Batchelder and the SMVC committee is to extend and complete the memorial walkway, plant flower gardens, and have individual monuments for the MIA and the POWs along the walk way. Our efforts have helped in what will be a substantial fundraising effort.

Not only did we raise funds for the cemetery, but one young Veteran just back from Afghanistan came to the yard sale and we were able to supply him with pots and pans and dishes, furniture and household goods – all for free, from the donations of so many within our community. He was thrilled.

The group of people that stepped up for our Veterans and organized, the Party at the Pond, bake sale, the yard sale, cookout and of course, our four little heroes selling lemonade on several eighty to ninety degree days. You won't find any of these people marching in a Memorial Day or Veterans Day parade, hugging up to our vets looking for a vote. Instead you will find these people honoring, visiting and caring for our veteran's graves all year round.

In fact almost all have been actively involved in caring for cemeteries and graves for years. Their concern is genuine and from the heart out of respect for our Veterans. Although the Veterans may no longer be here physically, they consider them and their grave sites a part of our community and for their families and friends left behind, the graves are a healing ground. We have 25 Acton families with family members buried at the Southern Maine Cemetery. I visit the cemetery twice a month with my good friend Bob Berube to visit his wife who is buried there. Bob is 80 years old this week. He is a 30 year military man and a Vietnam Veteran. During one of our visits, it happened to be the day that Jimmy Waterhouse from Acton was being buried. There had to be 20 people from Acton around Jim's grave. Since that day and during my monthly visits with Bob, I have seen Jimmy's son a couple of times sitting alone at his father's grave. I can only imagine that he is searching for peace or that he also finds his father's grave as a healing ground.

The folks that made this fund raiser happen, just stepped up and worked together. Just to name a few:

The four Acton children that stood for several days in the heat working their lemonade stand to raise funds; their mother, Carrie Cheney visits the Southern Maine Cemetery often to see her grandfather's grave, a Vietnam Veteran. For Carrie and her children, his grave is a healing ground. Her children: Vincent Cheney, Ethan Cheney, Taylor Watson, and Riley Watson.

Lois Michaud ran the cookout fundraiser for the vets. Lois has been putting flags on Veteran's graves for over 40 years, every year, since she was a little kid. Lois has a few uncles that were Vietnam Veterans, two have passed and at one time one was MIA. So, it brings her comfort and thanks for her three uncles and all Veterans. Her cousin Hanna Phillips also has been placing flags on Veteran's graves for 40 years, every year. A few days before Memorial Day this spring, a few of us went to visit different cemeteries in town to mow, clean up and weed whack and such. I stopped at the one right up the street on the H Road with my mower around 10 or so in the morning to mow and Hanna was already there with a three or four year old little girl, both of them with a fist full of American flags putting them on Veterans' graves. The last time I went out with Lois and Hanna putting flags on Veteran's graves my daughters were 3 and 5- today they are 23 and 25- and Hanna and Lois are still visiting the graves every year.

Lois's husband, Richard Michaud also helped out his wife with the cookout. Richard's dad was a Marine, he was buried with full military honors. Richard visits his father's grave for comfort and Lois visits her Uncles' graves. It's their healing ground a place to find peace.

Andy Brazier helped our fund raising efforts by lending his truck to move some of the yard sale items. For years Andy and his son Eric mowed and maintained the cemetery on Milton Mills Rd. Andy spent more on gas for his equipment than he was paid to care for the cemetery, but it mattered to him, his brother and his grandmother are buried there. For Andy, it was a healing ground and a place to find peace.

Terry Minihan organized the bake sale and the Party at the Pond fundraisers. She had her loyal assistants with her, Seth and Joy Hurd. All three great people and it would be difficult to put into words the sense of community and good these three people have given for years. Terry's faith and belief in good set the pace for our goals in helping raise funds for the Southern Maine Veterans cemetery. Terry promised only good would come out of all of this, and she was right.

Holly Mooney jumped right in when we needed help as a leader as she has done for years whether it be the PTG, or Acton Rec, coaching youth sports. Holly recently lost her Grandmother who meant the world to her. When she visits her Grandmother's grave, it's her healing ground, a place to find peace and talk to her.

Mark and Marita Lowell. Mark's a Veteran and he and his wife Marita are truly the definition of what community should strive to be. Mark, Marita, and Holly ran the yard sale.

Jennifer Roux who for the most part grew up on military bases and has always had a strong life connection and soft spot in her heart for our military families and Veterans. Jennifer always is there to help within our community.

Thank you to our firefighters that spent the day meeting and greeting people during the bake sale, cookout and yard sale.

And how about Gregg Martinez the owner of Iron Tails? Atleast \$2000 of donations came from the patrons at Iron Tails as Greg allowed the group to raise funds during Iron Tails events. All the folks that donated baked goods, like, the Acton Congregational Church, Kacey Brooks, Jana Robichaud, and so many more and the Party at the Pond.

And thank you to our Board of Selectmen for supporting the Veterans.

Mr. Rivard, 82 years old, a Veteran who is with us tonight, maintains and cares for 60 graves in Shapleigh all by himself. It brings him peace and comfort. He has several brothers that were Veterans also. Maintaining the graves in Shapleigh is a lot of work as they are spread all throughout the town.

What began as a group of us trying to raise a thousand dollars for the vet's cemetery, ultimately became a community involved mission. For everyone involved it has taken on its own meaning.

One of my favorite verses-

*O beautiful for heroes proved In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness,
And ev'ry gain divine!*

Thank you Veterans!"

Jim Batchelder asked the other members of the Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery Association to join him at the podium: Ray Parent, Former Chairman; Heidi Otis, Board Member; Candace Bright, Office Manager, Jo (unknown) Treasurer; Brad Hoffman, Representative of the Patriots Riders of America; Ron Rivard, Secretary, Roger Watson, Board Member.

He presented Mark and Rita Lowell with a Community Service Award which read:

"Community Service Award presented to Mark and Marita Lowell in recognition of the outstanding service to the Community this Sixth Day of September, 2016. Signed by Jim Batchelder, Chairman of the Association."

Mr. Batchelder also presented Lois and Richard Michaud, Holly Mooney, Terry Minihan, in her absence, Gregg Martinez, and Jennifer Roux with a Community Service Award.

Jennifer Roux presented a gift basket containing over \$500 worth of gift cards and other items donated by area businesses and community members. She asked Ethan and Taylor to come forward and draw the

ticket randomly and Linda Stanley was the lucky winner of the valuable basket. Additionally \$2075 was presented on behalf of the Cheney and Watson kids and \$3615 was presented on behalf of the other fundraising efforts to the Association.

Vincent Cheney made the following statement:

Good Afternoon, Honored Guests, Family, Friends and Honored Vets and our most Honored Savior, Jesus Christ. Our Parents and Grandparents have taught us that all good things come from Him. I hope you agree that this is a good thing. We need to tell you how this started.

We, the Cheney's / Watson's and our Mom, Carrie, my Dad, Mickey, my Sister, Taylor, my Brothers, Riley, Ethan and I have collected socks for the Veterans every year. My Mom learned that they had fallen short in their request for the handicapped accessible walkway. My Mom said, "Guys, Great-Great Grandpa Louis is buried there." Great-Great Grandpa Watson served in the same war that her Grandpa did. She told us that it would be a good idea to sell water and lemonade, like a lemonade stand to raise money for them.

We were told that we had to raise a \$1,000 which seemed hard for us at the time but now we've raised double that with just the lemonade stand. Because of your generosity and everyone who bought lemonade, we raised \$2,075 plus some money we just raised that Taylor and Riley will present to you, the Springvale Veterans' Cemetery Association, and Ethan will give you the real money.

We would like to thank the hundreds of donors such as the Acton Trading Post, Irontails / Gregg Martinez, and the Veterans who keep us free. God Bless the U.S.A.

Ed Walsh, as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen presented Community Service Awards to Vincent Cheney, Taylor Watson, Riley Watson and Ethan Cheney stating that though it takes a village to raise a child, but it took four kids to show a village how community spirit should work. He noted that it started with a lemonade stand and over \$5,600 was raised for a good cause and that he is very proud to be a part of the community.

- 1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Moved by Bill Shields, seconded by Elise Miller, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion passed 3-0.
- 2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:** Moved by Bill Shields, seconded by Ed Walsh, to approve the Minutes of the meeting of August 30, 2016, as written. The motion passed 2-0-1. Elise abstained as she was not present at the last meeting.
- 3. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:** None
- 4. OLD BUSINESS:**
 - A. Tax Sale: Mrs. Roux reminded the Board that there were no bids submitted for the tax sale property offered at \$45,000. Consensus of the Board was to table the topic for about thirty days.
- 5. NEW BUSINESS:**
 - A. **Library Walkway Bids:** Mrs. Roux informed the Board that only one bid was received for \$5775, from Brick Block, Tom Drummey who lives on Stonewall Drive. The scope of the work proposed is to replace the existing wooden ramp and steps with granite and concrete product to include planters in the front; material will match existing walkway.

Consensus of the Board was to request that Mr. Drummey provide a sketch of the proposed work for their review.

B. Fire Station Roof Bids: Mrs. Roux noted that two bids for replacing the roof at the Fire Station were received:

Caron Roofing and Construction, Biddeford: \$23,975
Hall Brothers, Berwick: \$31,000

Because the bids were received up to 4:00 that afternoon, Mrs. Roux requested that the bid consideration be tabled to the next meeting so that she could compare the detailed description of the work, to check insurances and references, etc.

C. Exit Interview, Auditor: Mrs. Roux noted that the audit is complete and typically the Board meets with the Auditor without the Tax Collector and Treasurer present to have the opportunity to discuss any possible concerns. The Board set the interview for Tuesday, September 13th at 4:00 p.m.

D. Downeast Propane Contract: Mrs. Roux stated that this is one of the accounts that the Town doesn't usually put out to bid annually, but she noted that the contract hasn't been reviewed for about five years. Downeast has offered a fixed price of \$1.369 per gallon for an estimated total of up to 10,000 gallons for the Transfer Station, Fire Department and Townhall.

Moved by Elise Miller, seconded by Bill Shields, to approve the contract with Downeast Energy for \$1.369 per gallon for up to 10,000 gallons through May, 2016, The motion passed 3-0.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT: Lois Michaud thanked the Board for hosting the presentation from the Community to the Southern Maine Veterans Association.

8. ANNOUCEMENTS:

- A. Volunteers Needed for Recreation, Cemetery and Road Committee
- B. Flu Shots September 26, 12:00 – 1:00
- C. General Assistance Public Hearing - September 20th to discuss changes to application requirements.
- D. Mary Grant Events' Picnic in the Park on Saturday, September 10th at noon; Pumpkin Carving in the Park Saturday, October 22nd at 4:00 p.m.;

9. MEMBERS PRESENT: Ed Walsh, Bill Shields, Elise Miller

10. OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Driscoll, Amy Michaud, Richard Michaud, Lois Michaud, James Bachelder, Richard Barnaby, Anita Bergeron, Penny Mills, Linda Smilie, Bradford Hoffman, Yvan Landry, Patti Landry, Richard Hamel, Wayne Leach, Arthur Rocray, Bruce Knight, Karen Knight, Percival Lowell, Marita Lowell, Ron Rivard, Candia Wright, Raymond Parent, Rita Bruce, Sue Walsh, Vincent Cheney, Taylor Watson, Riley Watson, James Watson, Ethan Cheney, Carrie Crowe Watson, Rick West, Maureen West, Rollin Waterhouse