

Title: Veteran's Services Advisory Board

20 September 2018



From: Veteran's Agent

Subject: Meeting Minutes

1. The fifty-second meeting of the Veteran's Services Advisory Board (VSAB) was called to order at 6:00 p.m., 20 September 2018, in the Selectmen's office.

**2. Members in attendance were:**

Mr. Ray Janke  
Mr. Vincent Viglione  
Mr. Bill McClure

**Members Absent were:**

Selectman Archie Archible	Mr. Bill Bowen
Mr. Larry Raines	Ms. Jan Jourdain
Mr. Joe Currier	Mr. Robert Vigneault

**3. Old Business:**

a. The past Memorial Day activities were reviewed. Based on comments, the guest speaker and event were successful. **(CLOSED)**

b. Mr. Janke briefed that the Town Common speaker project was approved via a Community Preservation Grant. The system has been installed on the Gazebo on the common. **(CLOSED)**

c. Mr. Janke briefed that Face book access to the Veteran's Agents office has been established thru the web site. **(CLOSED)**

**4. New Business:**

a. The board reviewed upcoming Veteran's Day activities and the scheduled guest speaker is available. Clergy is being sought. **(OPEN)**

**5. Public Input/Concerns/Comments:** None

**6. Good of the VSAB:**

a. See attachments

7. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m. All documents that were provided during the meeting will be attached to the original minutes on file in the Town Clerk's office. The next meeting is scheduled for 18 October 2018.

Vincent Viglione  
VSAB Recording Secretary



Approved



Ray Janke  
Veteran's Service Agent  
Co-Chairperson

Cc: Town Clerk  
Town Administrator  
Board of Selectman  
Committee members





## Veterans' Services Advisory Board Meeting Notice

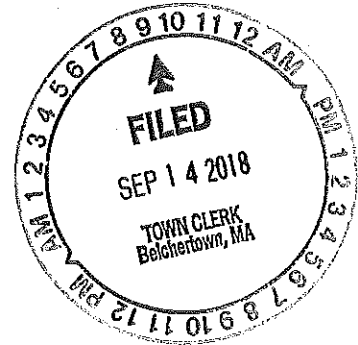
**Meeting Date: 9-20-2018**

**Time: 6:00 pm**

**Location: Selectmen's Meeting Room**

**Agenda:**

- #1 Old Business
  - #1a Memorial Day review/comments
- #2 New business
  - #2a Veterans Day planning/coordination for 2018
  - #2b Veterans Day press release review
- #3 Public input/concerns
- #4 Good of the VSAB



## VETERANS DAY PROGRAM

- ◆ 90-120 days in advance: send invitations to all government (federal, state, local) officials to attend.
- ◆ 60-90 days in advance: procure guest speaker. Coordinate with B'town HS/Superintendent re: need of auditorium, coffee (Large pot), juice (5 gallon container), and janitorial cost...
- ◆ 30-60 days in advance: coordinate with B'town Police, EMS, A.L. Auxiliary for food distribution
- ◆ 1 and 2 weeks in advance: run articles in The Sentinel, Gazette, and Republican. (TV stations too; channel 22, 40, and 5)

## DAY' PROGRAM

**0900:** Gathering at the Town common for a short ceremony.

**0930:** Start short ceremony at the Town common to remember and salute the veterans no longer present because of their supreme sacrifice. (Flag full staffed, short speech: Today we give thanks for the Veterans that gave their lives/are fallen...and, TAPS played)

AT BHS AUDITORIUM 11:11 a.m. SHARP--4 rings of bell

- ★ MC—"Please Stand and remove your hats", commands "Present the Colors", Colors, EXCEPT BRANCH FLAGS proceed (in formation at right shoulder arms) from rear of auditorium to station in formation in front of stage. Color Guard remains at attention at right shoulder arms.
- ★ "STAR SPANGLED BANNER"-CHCS Band
- ★ Opening prayer- Belchertown clergy
- ★ MC- "Please join together in our Pledge of Allegiance"--
- ★ MC command "Secure the Colors". Colors placed in floor stands, Color Guard retires to seats. MC- "Please be seated"
- ★ MC acknowledges dignitaries in attendance:
- ★ MC opening statement
- ★ Presentation and stationing of U.S. Military SERVICE FLAGS.
  - MC invites veterans in audience--"Today we join together as a family in thanks to those that answered the call of their country to serve in military service. At this time I would like to introduce some of these Americans. I ask that if you served in the service of the flag presented as its song begins, please stand, and remain standing, as the CHCS choir under the direction of **Mr. Josh Guerraz** sings "The Armed Forces Medley" and the service flags are stationed."
  - Choir Song-US military branch song medley w/ branch flags stationed. Song Order; 1.US Army, 2.USMC, 3.US Navy, 4.USAF, 5.USCG, 6. Merchant Marine  
(Correct formal order to station/position flags: 1.US Army, 2.USMC, 3.US Navy, 4.USAF, 5.USCG, 6. Merchant Marine)
  - Pause—MC —"Lest we forget- there is one more flag, please stand"
    - Song- "**AMAZING GRACE**", POW/MIA flag stationed UNANNOUNCED
- ★ MC invites audience to stand and join together in singing - "GOD BLESS AMERICA"
- ★ MC "Please be seated"
- ★ MC's- introduction of CHCS band- under the direction of **Mr. Jason Mosall** praise/thanks
- ★ MC introduces Guest speaker: **Raymond Janke, Belchertown Veterans' Agent**
- ★ MC Closing and thanks. Invitation to refreshments in cafeteria served by members of the Belchertown Veterans Council.
- ★ Closing prayer- by Belchertown clergy
- ★ MC--"Color Guard, station to Colors"
- ★ MC —"retire the colors" (Color Guard depart auditorium with flags).
- ★ Departing song by the CHCS choir.

Estimated time of ceremony 45-60 minutes

# Changes coming to Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program

Posted: July 3, 2018

Effective August 1, 2018, the entitlement available under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) program will be reduced from 45 months to 36 months, but in October, the monthly allowance for eligible recipients will increase.

These changes, part of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, aka "Forever GI Bill," were passed by Congress last summer.

The DEA program offers education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or of Veterans who died while on active duty or from a service-related condition.

DEA benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeships and on-the-job training. Surviving spouses can use benefits for correspondence courses and remedial, deficiency and some approved refresher courses.

What you need to know now:

- If you're already taking classes, or will start taking classes by July 31, 2018, you remain eligible for up to 45 months of education entitlement benefits
- Beginning Oct. 1, 2018, all students will see a significant increase in the monthly benefit

Eligible DEA recipients will be entitled to a monthly allowance of:

- \$1,224 for full-time coursework, compared to \$1,041 currently as of Oct. 1, 2017
- \$967 for three-quarter time coursework, compared to \$780 currently as of Oct. 1, 2017
- \$710 for half-time coursework, compared to \$519 currently as of Oct. 1, 2017

These increases go into effect Oct. 1, 2018.

To find out more about DEA benefits, please visit the [DEA page](#) on our website.

**Call us if you have questions!**

If you have further questions about your entitlement or eligibility, please call 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551). If you use the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the federal number is 711. You can also visit the Forever GI Bill website at [FGIB website](#).

# VETERANS' DAY CEREMONY

## ORDER OF EVENTS

### BELCHERTOWN HIGH SCHOOL VETERAN'S MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

Sunday, NOVEMBER 11, 2018

- 11:00 AM RINGING OF THE BELL
- POSTING OF THE COLORS
- "STAR SPANGLED BANNER" – CHCS Band directed by Mr. Jason Mosall
- INVOCATION PRAYER – Reverend XXXX, I shall offer prayer. (Ray Janke)
- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- OPENING REMARKS – Ray Janke, Belchertown Veterans' Agent
- Any Government Officials: XXX opening remarks
- ARMED FORCES MEDLEY – CHCS Chorus directed by Mr. Josh Guerraz
  - PRESENTATION OF SERVICE FLAGS
- "AMAZING GRACE" – CHCS Chorus
  - PRESENTATION OF MIA FLAG
- Any Government Officials: XXX additional remarks
- "GOD BLESS AMERICA" – CHCS BAND
- KEYNOTE SPEAKER – XXX XXXX
- "SALUTE TO AMERICA" Combined CHCS Band & CHORUS
- BENEDICTION – Reverend XXXX, I shall offer prayer. (Ray Janke)
- CLOSING REMARKS – Ray Janke
- RETRIEVAL OF COLORS

*Estimated time of ceremony 45-60 minutes*



**For Immediate Release  
October 18, 2018**

**Contact: Ray Janke  
Phone: 413-323-0409**

**\*\*\*Press Advisory\*\*\***

**2018 Belchertown Veterans' Day Events:**

Belchertown Veterans' Day Ceremony set for Sunday, November 11, 2018

The Belchertown Veterans' Agent announces the 2018 Veterans' Day ceremonies will take place on Sunday, November 11, 2018. The Town ceremony will start at 9:30 am taking place at the Town Common to honor the veterans who are memorialized there. At 11:00 am there will be a ceremony in Veterans' Memorial Auditorium at Belchertown High School to honor all veterans. All citizens of Belchertown and the surrounding communities, especially all those who have served in the military and/or the merchant marines, are invited to attend to pay tribute to our veterans. The Chestnut Hill Community School Band and Chorus will perform. Guest speaker will be XXX XXXX. Light refreshments will be served after the ceremony.

Veterans' Day, originally Armistice Day, is a day established by the U.S. Congress as a national holiday to honor all Americans who have served in the U.S. military at any time, not just during a period of war. On this day Americans thank all living and deceased veterans for their sacrifices and service to their country.

Also, please attend the Belchertown High School Veterans' Day assembly honoring our veterans in the auditorium on November 9, 2018 starting at 9:00 a.m.



**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN  
VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



Lawrence Memorial Hall  
2 Jabish Street, Post Office Box 670  
Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007-0670  
(413) 323-0409

Raymond J. Janke  
Veterans' Agent

September 13, 2018

Mr. Paul Adzima, Inspection Services Director  
Lawrence Memorial Hall  
2 Jabish Street  
Belchertown, MA 01007

Re: Emotional Support Animals and Disabled Veterans

Dear Mr. Adzima,

Thank you for taking the time to gather information concerning emotional support animals and disabled veterans.

Of the 1000 plus veterans in Belchertown, I have had to advocate and educate various agencies and fellow Belchertown residents on this issue. The two areas I look for in establishing a valid use of an emotional support animal(s) are as follows:

- 1) Does the veteran have a mental health condition that the VA is treating?
- 2) Is there an ESA letter written by a licensed mental health professional who believes that the veteran would benefit from an emotional support animal(s)?

I believe that XXX XXXX has met the above criteria justifying chickens as emotional support animals to cope with a VA treated mental health condition.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Janke  
Veterans' Agent

# Emotional Support Animals and Disabled Veterans

<https://adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet>

While Emotional Support Animals or Comfort Animals are often used as part of a medical treatment plan as therapy animals, they are not considered service animals under the ADA. These support animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities.

<https://www.certapet.com/emotional-support-animal-laws/>

## Emotional Support Animal Laws: Understanding Assistance Animals

Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are animals that are specially designated to assist individuals with emotional or psychological disabilities. They are a type of assistance animal, and according to federal law, assistance animals can be distinguished in the following ways:

### Emotional Support Dogs and Other Animals (ESA)

ESAs are more specifically chosen as companions to individuals who are psychologically or emotionally disabled. These companions can range from a dog, a cat, or even a miniature horse. ESAs are not trained to perform tasks or recognize particular signs or symptoms but are distinguished by the close, emotional, and supportive bond between the animal and the owner.

### Who Can Obtain an ESA Letter?

*Individuals limited by an emotional and/or mental disability, such as depression or a similar condition, in which affect their mental well-being.*

**Emotional and psychological disabilities applicable to an ESA letter may include:**

- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Postpartum Depression
- Depression
- Phobias and Fears
- General Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder

- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Seasonal Affective Disorder

An ESA letter is written by a Licensed Mental Health Professional who believes you would benefit from an Emotional Support Animal.

While ESAs may become members of an individual's family, they should not be confused with traditional pets. ESAs provide a very specific service as an emotional support, and very specific laws govern their use.

An assistance animal is not a pet. It is an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Assistance animals perform many disability-related functions, including but not limited to, guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds, providing protection or rescue assistance, pulling a wheelchair, fetching items, alerting persons to impending seizures, or providing emotional support to persons with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support. For purposes of reasonable accommodation requests, neither the FHAct nor Section 504 requires an assistance animal to be individually trained or certified.<sup>5</sup> While dogs are the most common type of assistance animal, other animals can also be assistance animals.

EXCERPT FROM HUD NOTICE – ASSISTANCE ANIMALS ARE NOT PETS!

[https://www.martindale.com/labor-employment-law/article\\_2243644.htm](https://www.martindale.com/labor-employment-law/article_2243644.htm)

According to the lawsuit, the driver's psychiatrist "prescribed" an emotional support animal to help him cope with his disabilities.

Because **landlords** are not obliged to **accept emotional support animals** when processing your application in the same way they **have** to with service dogs, you may **have to accept** that some accommodation may be off limits to you if you **do not have** documentation or an ESA letter from a licensed therapist.