

USSVI – Charleston Base Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2019

Meeting called to order at 1800 by Base Commander Ralph Rohrsen. Attending were Board of Directors members, Mike Ciesielko, Rick Wise, Larry Knutson, Harry Nettles, Rick Sparger, Carl Chinn, Nick Nichols, Ed Stank, Bill Kennedy, Tom Lawson, Ken Hutchison, Bill Freligh, Gordon Long and Gordon Williams.

Base Commander – Ralph Rohrsen:

- Ralph welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly discussed the Valentine's Day issue. The subject had been discussed between BOD members prior to the meeting of whether to change the day of Base Meeting. The decision to keep continuity of schedule had won out – the meeting will remain on Thursday. Also then, paying interest to continuity, Ralph turned control of the meeting to Vice Commander Mike Ciesielko, who has been handling the meetings in his absence for the past several months.

Public Affairs – Rick Wise

- Has not yet completed the invitation letter to the boy who wrote about the Clamagore, but will ask for a review of the wording prior to it being sent. The Amberjack ceremony will be held in April. Rick Sparger asked what Newsletter expenses were in the report. Rick Wise stated that it was for printing and mailing.

Comptroller – Rick Wise

- Rick talked about Charleston Base Standing Rule 6-14, being also read by Nick Nichols for clarification, which states that the Base shall provide annual donations equal to at least \$250 to Victory House for the use of the veterans. Rick said that money given cannot actually be guaranteed that it will be used for the veterans. Ed Stank, who had been going to the Victory House each month for the last several years, stated that no money has ever been given, but rather supplies of various kinds. Carl Chinn made a motion, with Ken Hutchison seconding that we should remove this Standing Rule 6-14. In discussion, it was noted that this change does not keep Charleston Base from making Victory House donations in the future, but removes the annual requirement to do so. The motion was passed by a vote of the Board. The Base membership shall be notified of this change.

Membership – Larry Knutson:

- Larry sent out Final Notice emails to several members concerning unpaid dues. He has been concentrating on those who have unpaid National dues. As of today, we now have 272 members according to National. Nick Nichols emphasized the importance of encouraging phone calls to missing members, but each one of the members must contact Larry if there is a question of the individual's status. The National and Base annual dues totals to \$40.

Hunley/Housatonic Memorial – Harry Nettles:

- The memorial service is scheduled for February 17 at 1900. He still needs men to make presentations. Uniform for presenters is Charleston Tuxedo (blue blazer/khaki pants/dolphin or dark tie).
- Rick Wise requested that we have someone record the Charleston Base portion of the Hunley/Housatonic Ceremony to show the membership at a meeting to promote attendance.

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Special Events – Rick Sparger:

- Nothing to Report

Scholarship – Carl Chinn:

- The scholarship fund is debt-free with a current balance of \$1,612. The new Charleston Base challenge coins were paid for from the scholarship fund and are now currently available for sale. Carl passed the coin around for everyone to see.
- The raffle to be held at the February Base meeting will be a Valentine's Day related gift bag. Carl summarized the contents, which was quite an array of items.
- The next raffle is a set of 76 Navy DVDs which were donated by Paul Viering's wife. The drawing will be at the March Base meeting.

Chaplain – Nick Nichols:

- Beginning at the next base meeting, he will not be reading all of the information that has been put out via email, but only anything that is new. This should help keep the meeting time shorter.
- USSVI National Chaplain, Bill Dixon, is doing much better after his heart attack. The Carolina Piedmont Base Chaplain, Ray Fritz, is filling in for him until he is able to resume as National Chaplain.
- Pat Davis' 2nd eye surgery went well! He can see really well now, but still need glasses to read and work on the computer. Seeing all the colors is wonderful and everything is clear and crisp!
- Jimmy Kimbrell has been in and out of the hospital since the last meeting. He is now home after his latest bout with pneumonia and the complications from it. Still on meds for another week but he's breathing better.
- Joe Lunn was in Trident COBS (close observation) all of last week. He had chest pain and left shoulder pain. After many tests, bloodletting and a heart catheter, they believe it was all due to an infection in the urinary tract. EKG and BP are normal.
- Lee Young's bronchitis flared up again in mid-January. He was taken by ambulance to Summerville Medical Center ER. After a few days stay he went back to the Crossings.
- Ken Curtis is still not feeling well. He had a VA appointment today where he found out he is not having a pulmonary (breathing) problem but a cardio (blood oxygenation) problem. He'll be having further tests.
- Gordon Smith's cancer has returned. Nothing can be physically done at this point.
- Art Hance has been diagnosed with stage 2 aggressive prostate cancer. He had surgery on January 8th and is recovering well. He will be going in at a later date for blood work to check if all the cancer was removed.
- CC Cager had the skin graft on his ankle and, even though it didn't take, the surgery activated some wound self-healing. He has a rib that has not healed properly and is causing significant pain. Also a routine CAT scan was taken which showed a brain abnormality. He will be going in for a MRI in the near future.
- There are several shipmates and family members who have given me information which they wish to be kept confidential at this time.
- Nick stated that each Board member needs to be walking around greeting the Base members and visitors.

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Webmaster – Nick Nichols:

- The board approved Steve Brock from Denizens of the Deep base to come and have a book signing in a future meeting. He has been sent a message asking him to attend a future meeting. His book is: "Bubblehead: The Med Run". A signed copy of the book was provided to the Scholarship Committee Chairman.
- Nick notified the Board that he has compiled all of the changes to the Base By-Laws in one document and has provided it to the Secretary and PAO for review.
- Nick introduced Lewis Leal as our new Social Media Coordinator. He will mainly deal with setting up Instagram and Twitter accounts on behalf of Charleston Base. He will be the only administrator for those two accounts.

Social Media – Lewis Leal:

- He needs to know what the goals are for the social media that he needs to work on. He understands that we want to present the Base to younger submarine veterans, represent the Base with community outreach and possibly as another means to get information to Base members. Lewis said that younger folks today are using Instagram instead of Facebook and that Snapchat is not a good fit for the Base. Facebook can be used for events, placing photos etc. The FB items can also be shared on Twitter. Mike Ciesielko mentioned the recent gun shoot and Nick said that promoting events such as the Amberjack Memorial could be done this way.
- Nick asked about the cost of the social media. Lewis stated that there will only be a cost if there are advertisements.
- There was a question about Instagram, whether we needed to have someone online to interact with people. The answer from Lewis was that he would get a notification and then he could check on it. Other members could also be provided this capability as well.
- Bill Kennedy inquired about how often the social media platforms are updated – giving an example of wanting to pass on notice of an upcoming Kaps-for-Kids event. Once Lewis has the Instagram and Twitter platforms configured, Nick can provide the procedures to the Base membership regarding setting up accounts in order to share pictures and other event messages. Remember, these are not platforms for sending jokes but is used to promote the Base. The Base website will soon have links to each social media platform, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Lewis gave examples of items which could be posted to the platforms and events that could be promoted.

KAPS-For-Kids – Bill Kennedy:

- The next Kaps event will be at MCLeod Hospital in Florence, SC on February 19.
- Bill wants to purchase a Kaps-for-Kids banner to hang at the hospital since he gets questions about who they are. The price will be about \$100.
- Bill said that a Certificate of Appreciation is being made for the hospital staff and described the reasons for such. This will be a small cost to the Base.
- Rick Wise asked Bill to provide an estimate for next year's budget but for now, the administrative budget can cover the cost of the banner and the Certificate of Appreciation. Bill Kennedy will pay for these items in advance and bring receipts.

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- Bill currently has 75 hats left. He quit counting coloring books at 75 and has plenty more along with crayons. These were previously donated by members of Charleston Base.
- Shriner's Hospital welcomed the Kaps-for-Kids back last year. Bill will be contacting them to make arrangements for this year.
- Bill made mention of a boy scout that is placing boxes in stores where people can bring their old flags so that they can be destroyed properly.

VA – Tom Lawson:

- The Base Website now has a link which will take you to the VA Website to obtain you VA benefits information. You can also go there and sign up if need be.
- Rich Alkire is home and enjoys having phone calls.

COB – Joe Lunn (Absent):

- Election Coordinator – No Report (Relayed by Ken Hutchison)

FRA – Ken Hutchison:

- Nothing to Report

Store Keeper – Ken Hutchison:

- Ken stated that the audit of the SubVet books are complete with no discrepancies.
- Ken ordered a Clamagore Patch for PAO award to be held at the Amberjack Ceremony. This has been given to Rick Wise. Ken will order a Clamagore hat as well.

Holland Club – Bill Freligh:

- There are eleven Holland Club inductees eligible at the next ceremony at the April 11 Base meeting. At least one is transferring to Charleston Base from up north. Some of them though, may not be current on their dues. Bill has tried to contact several of them and only gets a machine.

Recreation – Ed Stank

- Ed has contacted the Charleston River Dogs. They have three games each year for military appreciation and have tickets for \$5 anytime for military.
- Has contacted Rick Sessler about going to a Citadel Football game.
- The next Christmas party is scheduled for December 7 at Charleston Air Force Base. It is not yet booked, but Ed is working with CAFB.
- Sales of the cookbook that Ed is working on will support Kaps-for-Kids.
- The USSVI National Convention is in Austin, TX this year. The USSVI Regional Convention will be held in Cocoa Beach. Ed requested that information for both of these be put on the Base website. Nick stated that he has not received any information as yet.

Clamagore – Butch Bryar

- He is now doing tours of the Clamagore on Mondays and is getting help from the students at Nuclear Power School.
- If any boat reunions are upcoming, contact Butch about tours otherwise, Patriot's Point likes to charge extra for VIP tours.

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- The Preservation League is working with Butch. He has an upcoming appointment with a lawyer concerning the Clamagore.

Secretary – Gordon Long:

- Nothing to report.

Treasurer – Gordon Williams:

- Rick Sparger asked about the \$600 mentioned in the Treasurer's BoD report from the January Minutes. Gordon W. stated that the money is now added to the balance.
- Rick Sparger asked about the PayPal fee. Members are able to pay their dues via PayPal but there is a \$1.03 charge for each transaction. When members pay using PayPal, this amount is deducted but Charleston Base still has to pay National USSVI \$25. Nick Nichols stated that when the previous treasurer, Steve Morawiec set this up, the members who used PayPal were supposed to pay the transaction fee. Carl stated that if the Base members paid the Membership Chairman directly with either check or cash, there would also not be so much confusion about who has paid their National and Base dues. Nick requested the Treasurer to find out how much PayPal has cost Charleston Base by the next BoD meeting.
- There was discussion about National USSVI is possibly going to start taking member dues directly using PayPal and what effect that will have on how the Base Membership Chairman keeps track of whose dues are paid.
- Larry Knutson said that 14 of the 24 recent dinks paid using PayPal. Lewis Leal will obtain the formula for calculation of the PayPal fee.
- Gordon W. reported that the Treasurer's Report is in a new format and explained the differences between the previous report and current/future reports.

Vice Commander – Mike Ciesielko:

- Wayne Phillips from Denizens of the Deep will be at the Hunley/Housatonic Memorial and have asked to be part of the presentation.
- Mike has received only one nomination for Distinguished Submariner Award. More inputs are needed from Base members. Secretary will provide forms to have available at next meeting. This will also be listed in the Old Business section of the Base Meeting Agenda. The award will be presented at the April Base meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 1931.