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**Thursday, May 18, 2006
Full Membership Meeting
VA Medical Center
Northampton, MA**

Minutes

Present: Jeff Anliker, Dwane Coffey, Karen Regish, USDA-NRCS; Joanne Carney, VA Medical Center; Ronald Grzelak, Patrick Defalco, Doug Loux, SSA, Holyoke, MA; Monte Chandler, USDA-APHIS; Sandra Adams, USDA-FSA; Matt Mutti, Barnes ANGB; Richard Borden, NARFE, Northampton Chapter; Marie Bocchino, SSA-Pittsfield, Joseph McDanel, WARB.

Joanne Carney gave a brief history of the VA Medical Center. She also announced that they have chosen a new director to come on board in June. The VA has had 9 people retire this year and is working actively on filling those positions. They have many vacancies and urge other federal agencies to get the word out to help them fill the positions. She stated that the VA is a state of the art facility offering 167 beds and active substance abuse and PTSD program. They are also one of the first medical facilities to offer an all electronic medical file system with voice recognition for doctors to record patient records. They also have satellite office in Springfield, Greenfield, and Pittsfield.

Richard Borden, guest speaker from National Active & Retired Federal Employees, (NARFE) Association's Northampton Chapter handed out a packet explaining the benefits of joining the group. There is now a big push to get active federal employees to join NARFE.

Minutes-The minutes taken by David Levin at the last full membership meeting held at Barnes Air National Guard Base on March 16, 2006 were reviewed and accepted as written. These approved minutes will be posted to the FEAWM website.

Committee Updates-

Awards-Jeff commented that the awards committee met this week. The scheduled date for this year's ceremony will be September 28, 2006 at the Log Cabin Restaurant. Proceeding the awards will be a full membership meeting to be held from 9:30 to 11:00 with the lunch to follow at 11:30. The Awards Nomination Packet was sent out to all agency heads this week. It contained 13 categories which is the same as last year's packet.

Last years categories included the following nominees that were recognized:

Distinguished Federal Executive	2	Tech. or Scientific Emp.	5
Distinguished Federal Manager	3	Outstanding Fed Volunteer	1
Distinguished Federal Supervisor	4	Outstanding Individual	
Admin. Assist. Of the Year	9	Customer Effort	5
Support person of the Year	2	Creativity & Innovation	1
Outstand Service or Trade Employee	1	Outstanding Community	
Professional Employee of the Year	7	Service	2
Unsung Hero	5		

Jeff stated that FEAWM will be using the same award company as last year to purchase plaques. The same sponsors will be contacted for this year. Sponsorships will also be in the same amounts of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250. A suggestion was to increase vendor sponsorships.

Jeff commented that 3 outside judges from last year were interested in judging again this year. He also said that FEAWM is looking for a speaker for that day. A suggestion from Sandra Adams was to ask UMass Chancellor Lombardi to speak.

Activities- Patrick announced that June 10 was the date set for this year's annual FEAWM picnic. This year's goal was to have 100 people attend. They are planning more structured activities for this year's event. The cost was lowered this year to \$8.00 per person or \$20 per family. The activities committee is also gathering information to post wellness information to the FEAWM website.

Education-Doug reported the educational training session that was held on May 9 and 10th was a success. About 45 people attended each session. Next year they are planning to do an event on pre-retirement.

Federal Relations-The event that was due to take place in July will be re-scheduled for the fall.

Pay and Benefits-Jeff contacted Allen Hearn who was out of the office on a detail. He forwarded the Berkshire County Locality Pay proposal to him asking for feedback. Jeff suggests that we send a new proposal to OPM by July.

Other-Monte Chandler from USDA-APHIS reported that they are doing a National Multi-Agency surveillance of migratory birds to track the Avian Flu virus into this county. He has sent out an email asking federal agencies if they have warehouse space available to hold protective equipment used to combat the virus.

Matt Mutti from Barnes Air National Guard Base announced that they will host an air show on June 24 and 25th. He asked if FEAWM would like to have a table to display brochures. A email sign up will be sent out by Jeff for members that would like to work at the show.

Next meeting: July 20, 2006. Location to be announced.

Recorder: Karen Regish