

# Clark County Veteran's Resource Committee

*An advisory board to the Clark County Board of Commissioners*

## Clark County Public Service Center

1300 Franklin St, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Ste #679

Vancouver, Washington

April 10, 2013

## Meeting Minutes

**Chair: Robert Nichols**

**Vice Chair: Lou Basté**

**Secretary: Open**

**Meeting Called to order by Bob Nichols @ 1400**

**Roll Call: [Bold script indicates presence at meeting]**

### POST

40 et 8  
American Legion #14  
American Legion #27  
American Legion #44  
American Legion #168  
American Legion #176  
American Legion #189  
American Legion #208  
American Veterans #6  
DAV Chapter #4  
Korean War Vet Assoc #321  
Marine Corps League #826  
VFW #4278  
VFW #7824  
VFW #12028  
Vietnam Vets #512

### PRIMARY

**Jerry Keen**  
**Jerry Keese**  
Elisa Cotton  
Jim Moore  
**Robert Nichols**  
**Michael Gibson**  
Dick DeWald  
**George Hunt**  
**Richard Alvarez**  
**Frank Hyatt**  
**Thomas Dombeck**  
**Lou Basté**  
John Russell  
Roy Billings  
**Ray Saranto**  
Greg Whitson

### SECONDARY

Emily Stoutsenberger  
Wes Forgey  
Darren Wertz  
Richard Langenbach  
Jonathan Frederick  
Don Taylor  
Bob Blevins  
Richard Gabriel  
Michael Riley  
**Robert Sumril**  
**Florin Zeviar**  
Gary Dowler  
**Bruce Maas**  
Skip Bengé  
**Odis Warren**

### Members at Large

Kevin Lawson

**Roll Call: American Legion posts #27, #44 and #189 have not been in attendance for the last 4 meetings. Bob Nichols, as Chair, has requested the county send letters to the above named Post Commanders requesting member attendance or they will be removed from the Veteran's Resource Committee. Jim Moore is no longer representing America Legion Post #44. John Russell has resigned and will be removed from VFW #4278 when a new LOI is submitted.**

### **CLARK COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES**

**Samantha Whitley**

## **GUESTS**

**Tina Hernandez – HSC; Morris Giesler – Visitor; Michael Langsdorf (2:40) – CCVAC**

**Change in procedure: Bob Nichols informed the committee that meetings do not need to be formal, therefore, seconds are not needed for motions. This will take effect from this point forward.**

**Meeting Minutes:** (unknown speaker) Women's Veteran Summit will be the 28<sup>th</sup>, not the 15<sup>th</sup>. Correction noted and the minutes will be changed. **Jerry Keen motioned to accept the minutes as corrected from the March 13, 2013 meeting; Motion was passed.**

### **Veterans Assistance Fund Costs**

Bob Nichols has determined that the Veterans Assistance Fund can save costs by changing the order of the appeals/waiver process. Current process has County staff receiving the appeal/dispute from the Service Officer and forwarding the information to the Appeals Committee for a decision. The final decision is sent to the Service Officer by County staff. The new process will have the Service officer send the appeal/dispute, with all supporting documentation, to the Appeals Committee, who will ask any questions, if needed, and make the final determination. The Appeals committee will inform the Service officer of the final decision. The Service Officer will send the final decision to County Staff for funding approval or a legal determination. The current appeals/dispute form will be updated to address this change as well as Policy 5.1. The email address in the form will be removed. Ray Saranto requested that forms and documents sent for appeal be clear and legible. Ray also requested that the Policies and Procedure committee add verbiage to Policy 5.1 showing the path of custody of the appeal documents to mitigate the possible appearance of impropriety.

Samantha requested that 2013 Administrative cost budget for the Veterans Assistance Fund be approved. Bob stated that he was waiting for a breakdown of the hourly costs for the county staff who works on the Veterans Assistance. Bob and Samantha will meet with Vanessa on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April to discuss the budget. **Jerry Keen moved to accept the Administrative cost budget. Motion passed.**

### **Policies and Procedures Clarification**

- Additional topic- DSHS Requirement- Bob requested that we not have DSHS benefits be considered when granting assistance from the Veterans Assistance fund.
- Additional Topic- Abusing the funds and getting barred for life or until the fund is repaid. Bob would like to have the policy state that someone can be barred for life or until the fund is repaid if they defraud the fund. Chris Horne will need to review this proposed policy and also the option to prosecute for defrauding the fund. Samantha spoke with Chris Horne regarding barring someone from accessing the fund and was told if the alleged abuse is very clear, documented, supported and proven, then debarment can take place.
- Additional Topic- Capping the amount granted in each category. Bob suggested that the Committee create a new Policy that will cap the amount granted to an individual in each category based on a four year history. Other categories will still be available. Tina reminded the Committee that administrative client history is only kept for 2 years and this would be additional tracking and administrative work. Also, there are many situations where someone

may need to access the fund repeatedly due to unforeseen life events.

- Additional topic- Verbal and physical abuse ban. Bob suggested a veteran be banned for at least one year for verbal and/or physical abuse.
- Additional topic- Combat pay and overseas pay. Bob suggested that the committee follow the IRS determination of income and not count combat pay, overseas pay and education benefits when determining a veterans' income. Samantha asked if all income the IRS does not consider income be excluded as income for the veteran. Ray Saranto also asked if all non-taxed income should be excluded as well. Bob clarified that he would like to only see combat and overseas pay and education benefit not be considered income. Tina suggested that if there is permanent change, the previous income should not be counted. Bob requested that Tina present that information to the Policy and Procedure Committee.

**The above items will be brought up at the next Policy and Procedure meeting.**

### **Committee Reports**

**Appeals:** Since 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 6 appeals. Two veterans were over income, one general under honorable conditions, one denied transportation, one denied for incorrect prescription and one appeal is pending.

Discussion (Ray Saranto and unidentified speakers) - Legislation allows for veterans who have received general, under honorable conditions for a medical reason to get benefits. How can the Appeals committee know this? How can the RE code help? A VA medical ID card does not indicate that someone is still eligible for the benefits. How can this be determined? There was also discussion about changing state law regarding discharge codes and qualification. Jerry Keen suggested that RE codes not be used to determine anything for the Committee.

- It has been requested for more members on the Appeals Committee
- It has been requested for more members on the Policies and Procedures Committee
- It has been requested for a new Secretary

### **Review and approval of February Contractor Reports and Fund Balance Report**

**Human Services Council:** Samantha reviewed reports from February. The following is the information: 8 veterans served for \$528.67 in benefits. Five were denied benefits. The CFCH saw 40 people at one day a week in March. The CCVAC saw 23 people five days a week in March. Tina stated these numbers may not be accurate. It is suggested that the CFCH hours may need to be expanded.

**VAC:** The Veterans Assistance Center saw 130 veterans, 79 were for the assistance fund; four did not need assistance, for a total of 209 veterans. There were 18 active volunteers, with 674.50 hours for a total of \$14,407.32 value in volunteer hours.

**The Free Clinic:** Seven veterans were served. The total amount of the treatments came to \$3,274.00; however they only billed \$1,122.36 in February.

**VAF Revenue & Expense:** February and March expense was \$7,466.72 and \$16,942.17; the current balance is \$399,307. **Jerry Keen motioned to accept this Revenue and Expense report. Motion was passed.**

**Old Business:** No old business

**New Business:**

- Jerry Keesee notified the committee that Post 14 will be sending a new LOI. Dixie will be the new alternate.
- Veterans Not to be Forgotten Ceremony, Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 12:30, Evergreen Memorial Garden, Army National and the American Legion. Public is invited.

**Open Forum:**

- Frank Hyatt- DAV Chapter 1 in Oregon will bring Dragon Boats over for disabled veterans and any other veteran. This will be on April 28<sup>th</sup> on Vancouver Lake.
- Frank Hyatt- Stand Down will be August 14<sup>th</sup> at the National Guard Center.
- Jerry- Operation Salmon will take out 100 veterans in July (date cannot be heard). Hunting with Hero's is looking for 60 veterans (details cannot be heard).
- Several comments regarding the above events cannot be heard.
- Stand down event will be the same day as the August meeting. This item to be put on the agenda for May.
- Bruce Maas mentioned that there are several upcoming veterans' events in Clark County and in Oregon.

Bob Nichols has given permission for County Staff to transcribe the meeting minutes.

**Bob Nichols closed the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 1515 hours.**

**Next meeting: May 8, 2013 at 1400 hours.**