

# Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

An advisory board to the Clark County Board of Councilors

February 12, 2015

1300 Franklin Street, Room #680

Vancouver, Washington

Chair: Bruce Maas

Vice Chair: Thomas Kula

Secretary: Mike Gibson

Meeting called to order by Bruce Maas @ 1400 hours

Roll Call: [Bold script indicates presence at meeting]

## POST

40 et 8

American Legion #14

American Legion #27

American Legion #168

American Legion #176

American Veterans #6

DAV Chapter #4

Korean War Assoc. #321

Marine Corps League #826

VFW #4278

VFW #7824

VFW # 12028

Vietnam Vets #512

Member at Large

## PRIMARY

**Sam Grooms**

**Dixie Hotaling**

**Elisa Cotton**

**Robert Nichols**

**Michael Gibson**

Richard Alvarez

**Thomas Kula**

**George Raynor**

**Lou Basté**

**John Raynor**

**Bruce Maas**

**Skip Bengé**

**Greg Whitson**

**Kevin Lawson**

## ALTERNATE

Dean Collins

Shawn O'Neil

Richard Langenbach

**Jonathan Frederick**

Bubba Conway

**Frank Hyatt**

**Ron Brandon**

Gary Dowler

Dale Rex

Dave Barton

**Joseph Fettig**

## Clark County Representatives

**Samantha Whitley**

## Guests

Judy Russel, Sharon Tyre (Clark County Veterans Assistance Center); Davis Wilkinson (Student); Andy Silver (Council for the Homeless); Marie Peterson (PeaceHealth); Lisa Fix, Gretchen Alexander (Clark Public Utilities)

## January 8, 2015, Meeting Minutes

The January minutes were revised to reflect the attendance of Skip Bengé and Ron Brandon, and to edit dates of events detailed in the Open Forum. **Bob Nichols moved to approve the January minutes as corrected; Thomas Kula seconded. Motion passed.**

## Clark County Draft 10-Year Homeless Plan

Andy Silver provided copies of the draft Clark County Homeless Action Plan, indicating community input is requested. Though significant improvement has been made, maintenance and change need to continue. The Plan identifies goals to accomplish over the next two-to-three years, focusing on families with children, youth, and those who are chronically homeless. In 2014, 387 households were placed into housing by the Housing Solutions Center. The number of veterans who are homeless is collected through the Point-in-Time count and the Housing Center. These will be provided to the Board when available.

**Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**An advisory board to the Clark County Board of Councilors**  
**February 12, 2015**

**Clark Public Utilities Heating Assistance Programs**

Gretchen Alexander of Clark Public Utilities (CPU) explained the types of energy assistance available to low-income households:

- LIHEAP requires an appointment to obtain assistance for all heat types. The interview asks questions to connect clients with other resources as well. LIHEAP is seasonal, from October through June. Veterans are encouraged to go thru LIHEAP before seeking assistance at the Veterans Assistance Center.
- The Guarantee of Service program enables customers to make 12 monthly payments on their electrical bill. Any balance remaining at the end of the 12 months is dismissed.
- The Senior Rate Credit program is available to people 62 or over with at least a year of residency in the County. It provides a credit up to 50 percent on the January to April bills. Participation in the program must be renewed annually.
- Operation Warm Heart assists families that may not qualify for other programs.

CPU works with customers to avoid terminating service. Posts may call CPU at 360-992-3245 to coordinate assistance for clients. This is not a public number.

**Committee Reports/Assignments for 2015**

**Appeals**

The appeals committee is now comprised of Mike Gibson, Skip Benge, Elisa Cotton, and Kevin Lawson. Five appeals were approved in January. This includes landline phone assistance, three gas vouchers, and a sewer bill payment.

**Policies and Procedures & strategic planning**

Dixie Hotaling, Bob Nichols, Elisa Cotton, and Sam Grooms volunteered to join this committee.

**Nominations**

Joe Fettig, Frank Hyatt, and Bruce Maas agreed to serve on this committee.

**December Contractor Reports and County Fund Report**

The Veterans Assistance Center supported 394 veterans in December. This was accomplished with the assistance of 536 volunteer hours, valued at \$12,173. In January, 48 food boxes were supplied. Monitoring of the Center in February identified no deficiencies.

The Free Dental Clinic served six veterans in December. In 2014, the Fund paid \$12,578 of the total \$20,396 value of services.

The Veterans Assistance Fund disbursed \$22,633 to 74 veterans. Forty-six veterans received food vouchers, nine were provided with rental assistance, and eight received help with utilities. Vouchers are provided through Fred Meyers, which often gives discounts on clothing to Veterans.

Tax revenues credited to the Fund in 2014 totaled \$370,614. The Fund expended \$467,859.

**Veterans Assistance Center Update**

Judy Russel shared that the Republican Women's Association has donated blankets, gloves, and other items to the Center. They also bring sandwiches weekly. The landlord of the Center's current location has agreed to lease half of the upstairs to the Center and remodel the downstairs for \$3,000/month. Rental of the entire building is \$3,900. The Board has previously approved funds for up to \$3,176. **Thomas Kula moved the Board approve the additional funds to enable the Center to expand into the entire building. Sam Grooms seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
*An advisory board to the Clark County Board of Councilors*  
**February 12, 2015**

**Washington State Guard Letter of Support**

A letter expressing the Veterans Advisory Board's support for the Washington State Guard was drafted. **Bob Nichols moved to send the letter; Thomas Kula seconded the motion. The motion carried on a majority.**

**Gift Baskets for High School Project**

There was no discussion on this item.

**Old Business**

Bruce Maas invited interested members to talk with County staff regarding the effects of the change of County structure on the Board.

Discussion on any changes to the regularly scheduled meeting time is referred to the Policies and Procedures committee.

**New Business**

The Stand Down is on August 12. It will not interfere with the August 13, meeting. Voting on the 2016 contracts and budget will occur in August.

A discussion on Agent Orange, Gulf War Syndrome, and the burn-fields, is scheduled for Wednesday, February 18, at 4:00 p.m. at the Armed Forces Reserve Center. Contact Joe Fettig for more information.

HB 1213, to simplify the definition of veteran for the Veterans Assistance Fund, has been introduced to State legislature. It will have little impact on Clark County.

The draft Annual Report details all assistance provided in 2014. This includes 1,042 services to 745 households. Direct veterans assistance totaled \$406,000.

**Adjournment**

**Greg Whitson made a motion, seconded by Thomas Kula to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned.**

**Next Meeting**

March 12, 2015, at 1400 hours, in the Councilors' Hearing Room.