

Clark County Veterans Advisory Board
An advisory board to the Clark County Board of Commissioners

Clark County Public Service Center
1300 Franklin Street, 6th Floor, Room #679
Vancouver, Washington
July 9, 2014

Meeting Minutes

Chair: Morris Giesler

Vice Chair: Greg Whitson

Secretary: Mike Gibson

Meeting Called to order by Morris Giesler @ 14:00 hours

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

Morris Giesler

Dixie Hotaling

Robert Nichols

Michael Gibson

Richard Alvarez

Frank Hyatt

Thomas Dombeck

Lou Basté

John Raynor

Roy Billings

Skip Bengé

Greg Whitson

ALTERNATE

Jerry Keen

James Resleff

Richard Langenbach

Jonathan Frederick

Benjamin Long

Thomas Kula

Robert Sumrill

Ron Brandon

Stephen Stetson

Bruce Maas

Joseph Fettig

Members at Large

Kevin Lawson

CLARK COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Samantha Whitley

GUESTS

Lisa Biffle – Clark County Corrections; Judy Russell and Barb Archer - Veterans Assistance Center; Lisa Ross - House Representative Candidate

June 11, 2014, Meeting Minutes

Bob Nichols moved to approve the minutes as written, Thomas Dombeck seconded and passed.

Veterans Community Garden Project

Lisa Biffle and Judge Zimmerman reported on a proposed Veterans Community Garden. Veterans Therapeutic Court participants may tend the garden as part of their community service and other work crew members would provide upkeep as well. This program aids Veterans who will be the recipients of any foods grown in the garden along with helping offenders who can choose to work in lieu of jail time. Any flowers grown in the garden will be placed on Veterans' graves that are lacking them.

Veterans Strategic Plan Outreach

The next meeting for advisory board members will be held on July 15, 2014 from 8am to 10am; there is always room available for additional advisory board members. The meeting will be held on the second floor of the 1601 E Fourth Plain Blvd. which is the VA campus. The Strategic Plan will cover next year's VAF work priorities and will support the need for additional funding. The board needs to move forward to help more Veterans in Clark County.

Bylaw Discussion and Approval

The bylaw changes drafted by committee were sent out to board member for review. Bob requested that potential new members at large submit a Letter of Justification as to why they want to join the advisory board. Bob is troubled about the possibility of vets who want to join that have their own agenda; he believes that will hinder the board's work which is to help all veterans. It was agreed that potential members do need to be clear concerning the board's agenda and not join to create unrest. Meetings are always open to the public for anyone to attend and voice their opinion. Sam proposed adding a question to the Member at Large Letter of Intent inquiring why a veteran wants to become a member in lieu of changing the language in the bylaws: this was agreed upon. **A roll call vote was taken and the result was unanimous approval of the bylaws.**

County Code Discussion and Approval

Members reviewed County Code 2.29 and approved the code changes to be recommended to the county commissioners. There was a change made to allow membership appointees to have two year memberships for board members on even years. **Roll call vote was taken and approved unanimously.**

Sam explained that the process to change the county code. The county attorney will need to review it and then it will be presented at a BOCC public meeting for comment. Sam will notify everyone when that meeting is scheduled.

Committee Reports

Appeals: Mike Gibson is the appeals chair and reported that three appeals had been approved. There are three people on the appeals committee: Mike, Roy and Skip.

Policies and Procedures: Tom Dombek stated that there are no pending policy changes; however, Sam said that there had been a couple of concerns submitted. One of the concerns was regarding the length of time to track utility assistance. Four years created an administrative burden. Another concern was veterans needing assistance on the Ctran route could receive car repair but not gas assistance. These two items need further discussion and will be brought up at a future meeting.

May Contractor Reports & County Fund Report

Sam Whitley reported that the corrected reports for May went out last week. The Human Services Council has provided \$15,269 which assisted 48 vets; ten vets were denied in May. The Veterans Assistance Center saw 133 vets visits; volunteer hours totaled 397. Eight veterans received dental care in May for a value of services for \$1,540 with the VAF billed \$1,136. The balance on the Revenue and Expense report for the end of May is \$541,847; however, HSC still has lagging invoices that will need to be paid. **Sam's report was approved with a unanimous motion.**

There was discussion about having the Revenue and Expense report showing the actual amount given for Veterans, minus the operating and staff expense of running the program. Sam agreed to add separate lines in the next financial report to clearly show how much was paid to veterans along with a line to show the total expenses.

Old Business

Morris tried to get the July meeting announcement put in the Columbian's FYI section of the newspaper and although it is a free service the Columbian did not print it.

New Business

The upcoming Veteran's Fair needs to be scheduled for either Tuesday Oct 14th or Thursday Oct 16th. This Fair will inform attendees of all services rendered available to veterans; a chair for this event is needed. Elizabeth from the Armed Forces Reserve Center has people already gearing up for the Fair; every service organization should host a table at the fair. There are hopes that this will become a yearly event. After a suggestion that he be chairman for the fair, John Raynor said that he would consider it after checking into it further.

Jerry said that the Hero's Night event held a week ago at the Costco on 192nd was a big success. Donations such as sleeping bags and non-perishable items were collected; these will be given to Friends of the Carpenter for distribution. VAC brought in \$3,000 worth of clothing donations and received a fuel card for \$250. Costco plans to hold this event again.

On July 22nd Camas Meadows Golf Course will host an event called Concert for a Cause; the band is Abbey Road and this will be a fundraiser for Home with Heroes.

The Veterans Court meets on Wednesdays at 10am with Judge Sanger presiding. All vets are welcome to observe the proceedings; the veterans that come before the Judge are expected to go into a year program which has shown to greatly improve their condition and help them get back on track.

Veterans that have a 30% or more disability are eligible for free camping in WA & OR state parks; they can also receive a reduction in hunting and fishing licenses.

Open Forum

Is there a need for veteran's service organizations to have training or information given in order to access the Veterans Assistance Fund? Barb stated that the application explains everything needed so if it was readily available for veterans, it would suffice; this was agreed upon.

There is a need for more volunteers at the Veterans Assistance Center.

The Center is holding a golf tournament for CCVAC on August 21, 2014, at the Cedars Golf Course.

Meeting adjourned at 16:00 hours.

Next meeting: August 13, 2014 @ 14:00 hours at Armed Forces Reserve Center – same day as the Veterans Stand Down.