

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
June 11, 2014

Meeting Minutes

Chair: Morris Giesler

Vice Chair: Greg Whitson

Secretary: Mike Gibson

Meeting Called to order by Morris Giesler @ 14:06 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 Benge
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

Rebecca Royce

GUESTS

Lainie Block Wilker – Treehouse Island; Marie Peterson – Peacehealth; Judy Russell, and Barbara Archer – Veterans Assistant Center; Milada Allen – Felida Neighborhood Association; John Russell.

May 14, 2014, Meeting Minutes

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

Treehouse Presentation

Lainie Block Wilker gave a presentation about Treehouse, an online, interactive training tool for high-demand tech jobs. Lainie shared success stories about veterans who received training through Treehouse and told the group that veterans only pay \$9 per month compared to the normal rate of \$24 to \$49 per month. Computing jobs are growing at twice the national average and pay 75% more than the national annual salary, with entry-level jobs paying \$45,000 to \$75,000 that don't require a degree. Treehouse has over 1,000 videos by experts in programming and is adding new programs continually. Lainie explained that Treehouse provides people the flexibility to complete the online training at their own pace. Some veterans have completed the training and were job ready in four to six months. Although Treehouse does not provide certificates, students can build an online portfolio to share with potential employers.

Committee Reports

Appeals: None

Policies and Procedures: Dixie Hotaling announced that the Clark County Commissioners had approved the Policies and Procedures changes and they became effective June 10, 2014. There was discussion regarding the 180-day eligibility for active duty. Morris felt this was something the Veterans Advisory Board may need to take to the Attorney General's Office in order to find resolution. *[Editor's note: Since this was changed in the Policies, there is no need.]*

Bylaws and Code Meeting: The Bylaws and Code meeting will be 08:00 to 09:30 hours on June 18, 2014, at the Center for Community Health, Bldg. 17, Second Floor, Room C210B. Morris informed the group that the committee had met on June 10th to discuss County code and on June 18th would clean up the bylaws language.

Strategic Plan Meeting: The Strategic Plan meeting will be 08:00 to 09:30 hours on June 17, 2014, at the Center for Community Health, Bldg. 17, Second Floor, Room C210B. Morris informed the group that the Strategic Plan had not been updated since 2012. Morris told the group they could access the 2012 Strategic Plan online by going to www.clark.wa.gov/veterans.

April Contractor Reports & County Fund Report

Rebecca Royce gave an update on the April reports. In April, the Human Service Council spent a total of \$16,320 on services for 38 veterans. There were nine denials and no appeals. The Veterans Assistance Center saw 198 veterans and had a total of 560 volunteer hours, a value of \$11,967. The Free Clinic saw 8 veterans, providing 1 extraction, 7 fillings, 5 restorations, and 7 x-rays. The value of dental service was \$2,002 and the fund was billed \$935. The revenue and expense report for the Veterans Assistance Fund showed \$145,099 in revenue from property tax payments and a fund balance of \$549,996.

Old Business

Advertising Veterans Advisory Board Meetings: Bob Nichols asked Morris if the Board still planned on advertising the Veterans Advisory Board meetings in the newspaper. Morris explained that Samantha Whitley has received quotes from different newspapers. Morris stated that the advertising was expensive; however, they would most likely go with The Columbian. Morris said they would also like to advertise on local television. Morris plans on contacting partnering organizations to see if they are willing to advertise.

New Business

Training to Help Veterans with Paperwork: Bob suggested that veteran organizations provide training and information to veterans who may not know how to access assistance from the fund or how to contact the County Service Officer. Volunteers could provide instruction on how to correctly fill out the necessary paperwork and what documents are needed to apply for veterans services so veterans are more prepared when they go to the Assistance Center.

Agent Orange: Bob distributed a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) application for benefits for children with disabilities caused by Agent Orange and told the group that the VA is asking that all Vietnam and Korean veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange register their children. Bob stated that there are many disabilities that can be passed on hereditarily and can affect up to six generations. Joe Fetting shared that he was planning Hometown Talks in Spokane and Vancouver to talk about Agent Orange and the types of disabilities it causes. He said it was important to have veterans and their families attend and share stories about how they have been affected by Agent Orange.

Veterans Stand Down: Joe gave an update about the Stand Down that is scheduled for August 13, 2014. Native Americans from Portland will be doing the opening ceremonies and will begin at 09:00 hours. At this time there are 23 vendors signed up with 10 more that have confirmed, including dental, medical services, Red Cross, haircuts, etc. The Columbian and Channel 8 will be covering the event.

Open Forum

Veterans Resource Fair: The Veterans Resource Fair has been cancelled and will be rescheduled sometime the week of October 12.

Heroes Night: Jerry Keen shared information on Heroes Night, an event sponsored by the East Vancouver Costco and Columbia Credit Union to honor veterans, active duty military, local police, fire fighters, EMTs, teachers, doctors, and nurses. The event will be held June 21, 2014, from 18:30 to 21:00 hours at the East Vancouver Costco in Camas. There will be discounts, a donation drive, veterans and vendor booths, a scavenger hunt and raffle prizes, kid's activities, and more.

New Brochure for Veterans Advisory Board: Rebecca distributed the new brochures for the Veterans Advisory Board. Morris told the group to make sure that organizations distribute the brochures to help educate people about the Advisory Board.

Meet & Greet the New Veterans Affairs Director: On June 16, 2014, at 08:00 hours, there will be a Meet & Greet with the new Director of the Portland VA Medical Center.

Hunting with Heroes: Hunting with Heroes will be happening the first week of October and will include guest Gunny Lee Ermey.

Operation Salmon: Operation Salmon will be held the last Saturday in September with over 100 veterans attending.

Home with Heroes: Home with Heroes, sponsored by Home Depot and Hunting with Heroes, is looking for veterans who are in need of home renovations. Last October they renovated a home in three days with 40 volunteers. The goal is to eventually do one home renovation per month.

Chef de Gare Elected: Jerry Keen was elected Chef de Gare at 40 et 8 for this coming year.

Oregon Military Support Network (OMSN) Presentation: The OMSN provides a presentation each month at the 40 et 8. The next presentation will be held June 12 at 12:00 hours, and someone from the Veterans Assistance Center will be speaking.

Felida Neighborhood Association 4th of July Picnic: Milada Allen, president of the Felida Neighborhood Association invited veterans to the 4th of July picnic at Felida Park. Food will be served from 11:00 to 12:30 hours. Milada thanked the veterans for their dedication and service.

Meeting adjourned at 15:48 hours. Next meeting: July 16, 2014 @ 14:00 hours at 1300 Franklin St, 6th Floor, Ste. #679, Vancouver, Washington.