

Thurston County Veterans Advisory Board  
Lacey Veterans Services Hub  
15 July 2019

**Members present:** Sean “Smitty” Smith, Bill Powell, Matt Huot, Cesar Morales, Casey Wegner, and Gary Walker

**Members absent:** Bob Clark, Bill Adamson, Lisa Narciso.

**Others Present:** Keith Looker, Steve Kirkman, Mark Moffett, Donald Lachman

Meeting opened at 6:10 pm by Chair “Smitty” Smith.

**Introductions:** All attendees introduced themselves and gave a little background about themselves

**Public Comment:** TBI Educational materials from the VA were made available to everyone and remainder were handed on to the Lacey Veterans Services Hub.

**Minutes:** 15 April minutes were reviewed, typos were identified, and minutes were approved as edited. Gary agreed to remain the secretary.

**Rural Veterans Teleservices Project:** Donald Lachman from *Westcare* provided a brief update on several of their programs to include working on training of service dogs and veteran services in prison.

The main focus on his presentation was on his organization’s rural veterans services project. This project will include:

- Video conferencing using rural libraries as a video site
- This will provide rural veterans with access to a wide range of veteran services
- Community connections café
- The project will help to address the high suicide rate for older veterans. Rural veterans have a huge problem with chronic health issues as well.
- Pilot starts in November 2019 with four (4) sites over four (4) months with support of Lacey Veterans Services Hub and American Legion Post 94 VSOs.
- His organization is also considering tele-law and tele-dentistry as well with a pilot in King County on the 211 system.

**Affordable Housing and Veteran Suicide Follow Up Discussion:** tabled until future meeting.

**Mayor’s Gala**

- Fund-raising and auction netted approximately \$30 K
- Participants included high school choir quartet and JBLM color guard
- Keynote speakers included U.S. Representative Heck and the 7<sup>th</sup> ID CG, MG Willard M. Burleson
- a large number of local leadership attended as well

- A motion to commend the City of Lacey for their hard work was made and approved unanimously.

### **Lacey Veterans Services Hub Update for 4th Quarter CY2018**

- Sound Vet Jam musical jam sessions are underway. Sessions are very popular.
- One Home Depot grant for a disabled veteran was approved in partnership with American Legion Post 94
- Parenting workshop for parents with PTSD and TBI to improve their skills being planned
- Intercity transport – employment program partnership will underway
- Pierce County VAB and Council have been meeting with Keith Looker to obtain ideas on improving veteran services there.
- AUSA chapter started meeting there on a monthly basis.
- VHOG has restarted and meets on Tuesday mornings.
- In partnership with American Legion Post 94, VSOs from the Hub are traveling to Stafford Creek Correction Facility on a monthly basis.
- Potential additional VSOs from DAV and VVA may start working at the Hub.
- BHR will start providing mental health services soon.
- Keith and one other volunteer from the Hub will be trained and certified to process social security applications for the SOAR Program.
- Telehealth project to include video counseling through the VA Vet Center is being considered
- There is a potential partnership with the Cohen Clinic.
- The Hub classroom will start being used by Goodwill for the Operation Goodjobs.
- It is anticipated that approximately 7-8K appointments will have been conducted at the Hub by the end of CY2019.
- There have been 1005 volunteer VSO and 399 housing volunteer hours
- Clientele coming to the Hub appear to be moving toward prevention type issues
- The point in time homeless veteran count for Thurston County is going down.
- There were 500 volunteer hours at the Hub last month.

**2020 Emergency Shelter Contracts:** Mark Moffett presented the contract bids for CY 2020 to the TCVAB for discussion and approval.

- The only two bidders were the Drexel House and the Salvation Army.
- Motion was made and approved to award both of them with contracts at the same level as CY 2019.
- The motion also included a provision that a contract increase could be made if the need arose.

### **Around the Room**

Steve Kirkman briefed everyone that the capital funding request for the Hub upgrades is looking positive as it moves the state legislative process.

Meeting closed at 7:55 pm.