

THURSTON COUNTY VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

August 19, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mimi Fields, Thom Stoddert, Robert Thompson, Gary Walker, Casey Wegner

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Nakamura and Sean Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Clark, LIHI; David Hodgeboom, Department Commander American Legion; Rose Hodgeboom, American Legion 4th District Vice Commander; Bob Jones, Travis Sayers, WDVA; Joseph Worsley, VFW Lacey Post 11402 and Linda Loyle

PUBLIC COMMENT

Andrew Clark, LIHI, Fleetwood Apartments said that permanent supported housing is going to be built on property adjacent to the Fleetwood Apartments. Also, a new multi-use building is going to be built in downtown Olympia to help serve veterans with families. It will include 16 VASH vouchers. Another 17 VASH vouchers will also become available in Thurston County.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of May 19, 2014 were unanimously approved by the VAB.

INTRODUCTIONS

July 31st the VAB made a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners. The presentation was part of the Public Health & Social Services budget presentation. During the last 10 to 15 minutes, Gary presented a VAB budget proposal. The presentation included recommendations on how the program might operate in the future.

The recommendations included continuing with shelter contracts and cash vouchers for first and second year program recipients. Collected data shows that in 2013, 39% of the veterans receiving assistance were first time recipients and 61% were repeat recipients of the fund. Sixty-nine veterans have received assistance for over five years and 25 have received assistance for over 10 years.

The advisory board has looked at how best to serve veterans who have received assistance for multiple years. The advisory board recommended to the BoCC that there are no cash vouchers for long term recipients. Veterans who have received assistance for multiple years will receive referral services and assistance applying for other benefits. The advisory board also recommended that five percent of the funds be used for emergencies to be utilized at the discretion of the Veterans Assistance Fund staff and service officers.

Don Sloma, Director of PHSS and the BoCC agreed the VAB can establish a non-profit. Bob Jones is here to help with that process. The BoCC agreed to endorse a Vet Center and another service provider's

conference, probably after the first of the year. Some other counties utilize non-profits to supplement the VAF.

The difference between the Health Department's proposal and the VAB's proposal was that the VAB felt it is important to keep the VAF funded position for collaboration and coordination. Don Sloma had good words regarding the advisory board including praise that the VAB came with recommendations and took the budget problem on. The BoCC would like to see more collaboration in the county. The advisory board is free to pursue areas of collaboration.

NON-PROFIT

Creating a 501C3 was discussed. The VAB probably wants a few large benefactors. It costs money to start a 501C3. The American Legion is a 501C19. Some donors can only donate under a 501C3. The following was discussed:

1. File an application, this will show how it will be governed
2. Include VAB and other board members on the 501C3
3. Find board members who have experience and can donate their time
4. Bob Jones will provide a template and the tasks that need to be accomplished
5. A capital campaign might be a good idea
6. Look at partnerships
7. Create a foundation to support the VAF
8. It was suggested that the charitable foundation respond only from recommendations from the VAB
9. VAF distribute the funds
10. In the articles of incorporation outline that this is a fundraising board
11. Policy developed by VAB, VAF administer and disburse funds based on policies
12. Look at issues of overhead for the 501C3
13. The Madigan Foundation disburses 95% of the funds to beneficiaries

A sub-committee was formed to outline next steps for the formation of a 501C3. The individuals on the sub-committee include, Chair, Thom Stoddert, Rose Hodgeboom, Bob Jones (he will help but will not be on the committee) and Andrew Clark. The sub-committee's first report will be at the October 20th meeting.

OUTREACH PLAN

Gary will take responsibility for developing and implementing an outreach plan to the local community.

VET CENTER

The Federal Way and Tacoma Vet Centers are evaluating space in the area. They are looking for donated space two times a month. This will replace the mobile van. The Vet Center is the easiest way to access VA services.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Gary, Linda and Mark Freedman attended a conference this month put on by the WDVA for county program managers and VAB chairs.

Initial plans are to host the 2nd service providers' conference in January 2015. WDVA will help host. A sub-committee has been formed including Gary, Linda, Sean, Mimi, Casey and Donald Lachman from WDVA. The conference will be for individuals who want to work together collaboratively to solve identified problems.

Casey will bring information to the October VAB meeting regarding DRC training.

Thom, Andrew Clark and Bob Jones will work on articles in local newspapers regarding veteran issues.

Dave Hodgeboom discussed sharing information with other counties in the state. Travis Sayers will assist with outreach efforts.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Submitted by,
Linda Loyle, Community Program Manager