

THURSTON COUNTY VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

January 13, 2014

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Nakamura,

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Clark, Melissa Crouse, Rob Donaldson, Debbie Capps.Bucy, Osman Huseny and Linda Loyle

Gary Walker called the meeting to order.

INTRODUCTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT

Andrew Clark is a Case Manager for LIHI, working at the Fleetwood Apartments. He works with the transitional housing program. Osman works as a Vet Corps Navigator. He is interested in learning about resources for veterans.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of November 25, 2013 were unanimously approved.

Values

Last summer a service providers' conference was held for organizations providing services to veterans in the community. Various needs were identified. Tonight the advisory board is going to look at where they want to go now. What does the board value and what impact will it have on the Veterans Assistance Fund budget? Currently there are deep financial concerns. What are the advisory board's recommendations to the BoCC?

The following are notes that were taken as the advisory board members and members of the public discussed values and program ideas:

Identify which population of veterans should have the highest priority; provide on-going identification of resources; program focus on immediate, short term assistance to help veterans reach sustainability; provide a hand up, not a hand out; provide financial planning; provide linkages to free resources that can provide needed services; conduct outreach services; provide communication and collaboration; educate veterans about benefits and resources off the street; minimize suffering; prevent homelessness; increase self-worth; keep families intact; instill empowerment; increase access to transportation services; fill gaps not otherwise covered; prevent abuse; consider different disbursement of actual funds; consider funds to veterans' organizations; increase revenue by conducting a financial

campaign; consider fundraising through a 501C; consider fundraising through private organizations; BoCC consider taking a leadership role in a fundraising campaign; and keep the fund solvent.

Following the identification of values the advisory board will look at how to fill the revenue gap and how to prioritize the identified values. Board members suggested considering accountability of the veteran.

Goals

A discussion regarding the Veterans Assistance Fund included the following:

Basic Needs with Requirements:

1. Applicants meet w/veterans' service organization representative
2. Applicants apply for VA benefits/claim
3. Applicants apply for VA medical
4. Applicants register for work and/or meet with a job service worker

Consider:

1. Consider how incarcerated veterans and shelter contracts fit in with basic needs.
2. Consider how currently most funds go to shelter. It may be the most immediate need and biggest priority. Consider if shelter needed, the applicant must do the following to receive assistance.
3. Consider coordination of services with veterans' service organizations and JBLM.

Large Areas:

1. Basic Needs
2. Shelters
3. Meet w/VSO and apply for veterans benefits
4. Coordinate services w/VSO's, JBLM
5. Communication, how do we keep communication going between peers and veterans?

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by,
Linda Loyle, Community Program Manager