

THURSTON COUNTY VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

August 12, 2013

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Greg Beck, Michael Wilson and Linda Loyle

Robert Thompson called the meeting to order.

INTRODUCTIONS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of April 8, 2013 were unanimously approved.

CANDIDATES FOR VACANT ADVISORY BOARD POSITIONS

The advisory board members discussed expanding the advisory board to eleven members. It was suggested to consider a creative voting membership until approval of an expanded board. This would include all four candidates for the two vacant positions attend meetings. Only the two members appointed by the BoCC would vote at the meetings.

MOVE TO APPROVE ALL FOUR CANDIDATE NAMES GO FORWARD AS PARTICIPATING MEMBERS, HOWEVER, UNTIL THE NUMBER OF BOARD MEMBERS IS EXPANDED ONLY TWO WILL BE VOTING MEMBERS. ONE APPOINTED CANDIDATE WILL BE A MEMBER OF A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED VETERANS' ORGANIZATION SO WITHIN RATIO. The motion was unanimously approved.

The two candidates who were unable to attend the meeting tonight will be notified when the next meeting is being held. The names of the four candidates will be forwarded to the BoCC for consideration. All candidates will be encouraged to attend meetings and volunteer their services where they see fit.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Mimi volunteered two years ago to chair the Veterans' Advisory Board. Robert Thompson read the by-laws where it is stated that elections will be held at the last meeting of the year in October. Mimi will chair the October meeting and at that time a chair and vice-chair will be elected.

Robert would prefer not to be elected to a position. The vice-chair will take over in the chair's absence and provide consultation. Members are encouraged to communicate with Linda as to the position they would consider for nomination. If someone does not have a strong opinion members will be nominated.

SERVICE PROVIDERS' CONFERENCE

There is now a van in Thurston County dedicated to transporting veterans to American Lake for medical appointments. The transportation point of contact at American Lake is available to help coordinate transportation services for veterans here in Thurston County. More volunteer drivers are needed.

It was suggested to create a status report by the end of the year or another anticipated end date consolidating information regarding the Service Providers' Conference. The report would give a snapshot of what was accomplished.

It was also suggested that the VAB be a focal point for information and the collection point for issues regarding veterans. Issues that emerge could be forwarded to the VAB and this group would voice those issues to the BoCC.

The VAB is interested in the organizations attending the conference to get to know each other and establish working relationships. The board is interested in participating in Veterans Day activities.

PROGRAM FUNDING

A Veterans' Assistance Fund, 2014 Financial Stability Proposal has been submitted to the BoCC for consideration. Due to submission deadlines the request has been submitted for consideration. Changes can be made to the proposal. This proposal is based primarily on what the advisory board recommended to the BoCC last January and suggestions from the June 2013 Service Providers' Conference. This is a proposal only and is subject to approval by the BoCC. The outcome of the approved 2014 budget will be known in November.

The Financial Stability Proposal includes increasing the dedicated millage rate from 1.125 cents to 2.25 cents; initiating a rapid re-housing program for approximately 50 eligible veterans; bringing three new community veterans' organizations on-line to assist veterans; holding a second annual veterans' conference; and initiating a professional services contract for a resource development specialist to win at least two major grants to address the needs of veterans in Thurston County. Alternatives to this proposal include reducing expenditures only or a combination of both increasing revenues and decreasing expenditures.

At this time the VAB could assist with this proposal by: 1) working with veterans' service organizations to set-up sites for assistance to veterans and 2) discuss grants, including the kind of funds the board is interested in pursuing, what board members would like to accomplish by using grant funds, and providing the names of possible grant writers. It would be helpful for the advisory board to meet two times before a planned meeting with the BoCC in February or March of 2014.

The Thurston County Veterans Council is working to organize a community meeting in October to discuss services to veterans. Hopefully, VAB members can attend to communicate mutual interests.

THE VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD MOVED TO RECOMMEND HOW PLEASED THE BOARD MEMBERS ARE WITH THE THOROUGH AND THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE VAF FINANCIAL STABILITY PROPOSAL FOR 2014. THE ADVISORY BOARD STRONGLY ENDORSES ADVOCACY FOR THE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE DEDICATED MILLAGE RATE FROM 1.125 CENTS TO 2.25 CENTS. THE BOARD WILL ACCEPT THE OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS, BUT PREFERS THE OPTION FOR INCREASED REVENUE AND PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS. THEY WISH TO THANK PHSS STAFF FOR THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE ON THIS REQUEST.

IN ADDITION, IF IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THIS PROCESS, THE BOARD WOULD BE GLAD TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAM AT THE BUDGET HEARINGS. The motion was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by,
Linda Loyle, Community Program Manager