

Thurston County Veterans Advisory Board  
Lacey Veterans Services Hub  
16 April 2018 Minutes

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Gary Walker, Sean “Smitty” Smith, Robert “Bob” Clark, Matt Huot, William “Bill” Adamson, and Cesar Morales.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Josh Clark, Casey Wegner

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Keith Looker, Charles Wetz, Ashley Strauss, Sarah Luna, and Jennifer Popchocklakim.

Meeting opened at 6:06 pm by Chair “Smitty” Smith

**Introductions** were made. This will be added to future agendas.

**Public Comment:** There were no public comments.

**Approval of minutes:** Bob Clark moved for approval, Bill Adamson seconded. There were no edits or changes. Minutes were approved.

**South Sound Military Community Partnership Presentation:** Sarah Luna and Bill Adamson made a joint presentation on the Partnership.

Bill gave an introduction and some background information. Partnership got underway in 2010 based on study on the establishment of the joint base and one of the study findings was the need for better community relations. They have received several grants for community and traffic development and are working on a proposal to make Madigan Army Medical Center a Level 1 trauma center.

Sarah talked about the Pierce County VAB and how it got re-established last year. Board meets on a monthly basis in November 2017. They are still learning about various services and best practices. They are working on establishing better accountability of the VAF funds. Their fund has over \$1m and they are learning/deciding how to best utilize these funds. They want to better serve the veteran population without duplicating other organization services. The VAF has 2 FTEs.

Sarah presented a resource kit that the SSMCP is developing and will be prepositioned in various communities. The kit will have information on housing, transportation, food, and other tools to assist veterans. It is meant to be self-empowering. The distributors of these resource kits will have mental/social counseling training. An AARP challenge grant was used to help pay for the kits. It will start as a pilot from June – November 2017 and then be evaluated. A total of 50 kits will be distributed.

Bill talked about the JBLM regional impact analysis. The focus of the analysis will be on payroll and its impact on the local communities. It is tracking how payroll funds are spent. Hopefully,

will have the results in May and be able to report back to board at the July meeting. It will be added to agenda.

Sarah also discussed telehealth. She identified several apps that can be used to track health of all family members. She will send the info on the top 3 apps and come back to present her info.

**Lacey Veterans Services Hub Update:** Keith Looker provided an update on what has been happening and shared some data on its services. The data for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter CY2018 is as follows:

- 631 veterans served
- 350 client hours
- 206 unique veterans, averaging 69 veterans per month
- Hub is experiencing a problem of lack of space for new providers
- Operation Goodjobs will host a job fair at the Hub in June and move part of their operations to the Hub as well.
- Pro Bono legal assistance will soon be offered at the Hub
- VA housing is at the Hub along with CCS and MDC.
- Social Security will soon have a paid employee at the Hub
- WDVA will place a substance abuse counselor at the Hub
- Insurance for Hub van is problem due to the drivers being volunteers and not paid staff.

**Veterans Assistance Fund:** tabled by Smitty

#### **Future Priorities of VAB**

- From Hub perspective, emergency services, food assistance, short term hotels, and vehicle maintenance are issues that need to be addressed.
- Another issue was education and other non-profit organization support

#### **Around the Room:**

- Memorial Day Events were discussed
- Information on Lacey's "Toast to Veterans" and Tacoma Veterans Community Partners events were discussed, and flyers shared.
- SSMCP: Elected Officials event coming soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for 16 July 2018 at 6:00 PM and will be held at the Lacey Veterans Services Hub.