

## **THURSTON COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD (VAB)**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

April 17, 2017

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Josh Clark, Matt Huot, Keith Looker, Donna Lowery, Gary Walker, and Casey Wegner.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Daniel Miller, Sean "Smitty" Smith.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Robert Clark, Steve Kirkman, Sarah Luna, Linda Loyle, John Moysiuk, George Sharp, and Schelli Slaughter.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Schelli Slaughter, the newly appointed Director of the Public Health & Social Services Department was introduced. Schelli has followed VAB activities and thanked the members for their service.

The Mayor of Lacey, Andy Ryder, the City Manager, Scott Spence, Steve Kirkman, Casey Wegner and Gary Walker presented a request to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) that the Veterans Assistance Fund (VAF) be moved to the Lacey Veterans Services Hub and requested funding for .50 FTE at the Hub. Steve Kirkman said that the administrative staff from the City of Lacey and Thurston County have not met to work out funding for the Hub. There is a verbal understanding that the BoCC will provide some funding. Keith Looker, Hub Manager said that VAF services to veterans may be moved to the Hub prior to the end of the year.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**The minutes of the January 23, 2017 VAB meeting were unanimously approved.**

### **TRANSPORTATION FORUM**

Sarah Luna with South Sound Military and Community Partnership reported on the Transportation Forum that was recently held at the Lacey Veterans Services Hub. A panel discussion by Intercity Transit, Pierce Transit and Uber provided information on transit resources in Thurston and Pierce counties. The possibility of the Thurston Regional Planning Council going forward with transportation planning for veterans was discussed.

It was decided that a VAB transportation sub-committee would be formed to include board members Matt and Josh, Bob Clark and perhaps also include Steve Kirkman, Gary Walker and staff of the Thurston Regional Planning Council.

### **Update Lacey Veterans Services Hub**

Keith Looker reported on the Hub. There are 32,000 veterans in Thurston County. The Hub is focusing on 5 areas including employment, housing, education, health care and nutrition. There are two large housing projects that are opening soon. They are Catholic Community Services SW, Devo II and the Billy Frank Jr. apartments.

The profile of veterans seeking services at the Lacey Hub is changing. Initially it was long term homeless veterans. Now more recently discharged veterans are seeking services. The Hub is planning to expand services by focusing one day a week on each of the following: housing/homelessness; employment; 9-Line and veteran services officers; and education. The Hub is interested in attracting more veterans and has received feedback to increase their marketing efforts. In addition, expansion of services to outlining areas and transportation services are being considered.

Since October 2016, 700 veterans have come through the doors at the Hub and 1900 appointments have been booked. The Hub is concentrating on the development of services so that when veterans visit the office multiple needs can be addressed.

### **VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND PRESENTATION**

Linda provided an overview of the VAF and last year's program outcomes. In 2016, total actuals expended from the fund were \$301,555 and 449 veterans were served.

### **CULTURE AND TRANSPORTATION**

The VAB discussed best ways to move forward on culture related issues. It was suggested that board members prepare to brainstorm ideas regarding culture at the next VAB meeting.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Keith Looker has resigned from the VAB. He discussed his resignation with the BoCC. He will focus on the management of the Hub and will attend VAB meetings.

Without further business, the meeting adjourned.

Submitted By,  
Linda Loyle, Community Program Manager  
Veterans Assistance Fund