

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

### **MEETING MINUTES**

July 18, 2016

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Keith Looker, Daniel Miller, Thom Stoddert, Gary Walker, and Casey Wegner.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Donna Lowery and Sean "Smitty" Smith

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Commissioner Blake, Dr. Mimi Fields, Bob Jones, Steve Kirkman, Sarah Luna, John Moysiuk, Jack Potter, Derek Revisky, Vicki Sprague, Robert Thompson and Linda Loyle.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Keith Looker is a newly appointed member of the VAB and is a service officer with American Legion Post 100.

### **RECOGNITION OF FORMER BOARD MEMBERS**

Commissioner Blake presented to Dr. Mimi Fields and Robert Thompson certificates of recognition for their service as members of the VAB. On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners he thanked the former board members for their service, dedication and hard work which has positively impacted soldiers and families in this area.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**The minutes of the April 18, 2016 Veterans Advisory Board meeting were unanimously approved with change in spelling for the name Dell Larson.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Moysiuk, WorkSource/ESD discussed plans for the Homeless Veterans Stand Down which is held yearly at the Washington National Guard Armory. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Stand Down and is being held November 18<sup>th</sup>. John is seeking funding from the Veterans Assistance Fund for the event meals. Other funds are available for booths and the job fair. There were 80 employers at last year's event. The Stand Down prepares veterans for jobs, haircuts and meals are provided. One of the goals of the Stand Down is to give dignity back to the veteran. Preparation is in the morning and employers attend in the afternoon.

Funding is needed for breakfast and lunch. The amount needed for the food is a maximum \$2,000. In the past, the Federal government, Veterans Assistance Fund and Pacific Mountain have funded the food and other event costs. Bob Jones, Thurston County Veterans Services offered to donate funds for the Stand Down and Jack Potter, Veterans Christian Charity said he would seek a donation from Costco for the event. Robert Thompson indicated his post may contribute.

**Move to approve up to \$2,000 for the November 18, 2016 Stand Down based on what others provide. The Veterans Assistance Fund to cover the remainder. Gary Walker moved and Casey Wegner seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Jack Potter with the Veterans Christian Charity said the organization will have an event on August 27<sup>th</sup> at Huntamer Park.

Bob Jones said Thurston County Veterans Services has severed relationships with the City of Lacey. He said the organization will be privately funded and offer services to veterans.

### **SHELTER INTERVIEWS**

Thom, Casey, Gary and Donna interviewed two bidders for the Veterans Assistance Fund 2017 shelter contracts. The two bidders were Catholic Community Services SW, Drexel House and Interfaith Works. Casey stated that Drexel House is a long term provider and only bills for a fraction of the veterans served at the shelter. Part of the services provided by the shelters is coordination with other agencies such as Drexel House and Sidewalk. Interfaith Works is a new contractor and has one bed available for a

veteran. They will consider reserving a bed for female veterans and perhaps request funding through the Veterans Assistance Fund. Catholic Community Services SW requested \$47,000 and Interfaith Works requested \$10,000.

**Move to accept the Catholic Community Services SW and Interfaith Works contracts for 2017. The Veterans Advisory Board recommends funding these two contracts. The motion was unanimously approved.**

#### **VETERANS RESOURCE FAIR FORUM**

Derek Revisky reported on planning for a Service Provider Forum similar to the 2013 Service Providers Conference held at the Thurston County Fairgrounds. The idea behind the forum is to focus on collaboration and networking since many organizations are doing many things, but may not know what others are doing for veterans. The discussion will include how to improve relationships.

Two or three subject areas will be chosen and may include domestic violence, mandatory reporting, transportation services, childcare for single parents, service animals, shelters, employers, child protective services, homelessness, military culture issues and legal issues.

Derek will report to the VAB in October regarding forum planning. Linda will send Derek the feedback from the 2013 conference.

#### **VETERANS OUTREACH CENTER**

The City of Lacey has established an advisory committee for the center. The committee meets Thursdays from 4:30pm to 6:30pm at the Lacey Veterans Services Office. The board is comprised of staff from organizations that have a certain amount of hours at the center and others who offer involvement including 2 or 3 seats for members of the VAB.

In the future, the City of Lacey will be hiring an office manager. The advisory committee will provide input to the office manager job description. There is interest in developing a coordinated entry system though how to implement it and a timeline for the implementation are being developed.

**It was moved and seconded that Casey, Thom and Gary will sit on the Veterans Outreach Center Board. The motion was unanimously approved.**

#### **LONG RANGE PLANNING**

Gary presented the following two questions: 1) what do you think is the role of the VAB? 2) what should the VAB be doing in 3 to 5 years? The discussion included the following:

Thom: consider a structure or center for communication; plans to deal with fluctuations in the military; classes for active military getting out including financial planning.

Daniel: find ways to do more with less; spend money wisely; changes needed at Federal level; bring people together; improve ways to let veterans know what is available; in 5 years hopefully where it is at with better communication.

Sarah Luna: discussed conducting transition classes off base, perhaps not the military doing the classes.

Mimi: will not be where we are now in 3 to 5 years; want hopeful growth.

Keith: consider skills obtained in the military including life skills.

Without further business, the meeting adjourned.

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