

Thurston County Veterans Advisory Board
Lacey Veterans Services Hub
15 April 2019

Members present: Sean “Smitty” Smith, Bob Clark, Bill Adamson, Lisa Narciso, Bill Powell, Matt Huot and Gary Walker

Members absent: Cesar Morales and Casey Wagner.

Others Present: Keith Looker and Steve Kirkman

Meeting opened at 6:03 pm by Chair “Smitty” Smith.

Chair’s Opening Remarks: Smitty announced that Gary Walker would be stepping down as the secretary and a new secretary would be needed starting with the next meeting.

Introductions: All attendees introduced themselves and gave a little background about themselves

There were no public comments.

Minutes: 15 October 2018 and 14 January 2019 minutes were reviewed and approved.

SSMCP Update: Board Member Bill Adamson gave a very good updated on the South Sound Military Community Partnership. See Attached PowerPoint slides.

Veterans Assistance Fund Program Update

Ashley Strauss, VAF program manager, gave an updated on the program

- Board of County Commissioners approved
 - Revisions to VAF policy and procedure manual
 - Payment level increases
 - 200% of federal poverty level
 - \$1000 for single veteran
 - \$2000 for veteran plus one or more

Affordable Housing and Veteran Suicide Discussion

Gary Walker lead a discussion on the issue of affordable and attainable housing in our local region. See attached handouts.

- SSMCP taskforce – Bill Adamson offered to expand taskforce to include veterans. He will send info to Smitty.
- Keith Looker – housing is too expensive for most veterans. He is meeting with Cohen organization on 23 April 2019 on this topic.
- Bill Powell – Sidewalk’s veteran clientele can’t afford local rentals.
- Matt Huot and Ashley Strauss – some veterans need help clearing legal background issues. Certain convictions and evictions are really tough to overcome. NW Justice Project is overwhelmed.

- Lisa Narciso offered to share SDVA data at next meeting.
- Bill Powell – suicide at risk veterans should call VA 800 number or call 911.
- Ashley Strauss offered to share Thurston County data on suicide and affordable housing at the next meeting.
- Keith Looker – VA access is very difficult for at risk veterans. The system is flooded.

Mayor's Gala

Keith Looker shared that it will be on 31 May at 6:00 pm and cost is \$50.00 per person.

Lacey Veterans Services Hub Update for 4th Quarter CY2018

- 232 new veterans
- VSO and legal assistance are two programs on the rise
- Employment is steady
- Other programs are down
- Mental health for 1st calendar quarter: ?
- Vet Center has signed lease
- \$2m requested by City of Lacey to state legislature for building upgrades.
 - Vet Center to expand to take main floor
 - Hub will move downstairs
 - Hub will have computer lab and 19 offices
 - Congressman Heck working to have 10-12 similar operations opened nationwide based on Hub model.
 - ADA upgrades
- Point in time vet count is down from last year
- Home Depot repairs
- Music for vets
- SOAR training and operations
- American Legion National Commander dinner
- Part time employee, Shane Sullivan, hired.

Around the Room

No comments

Meeting closed at 7:33 pm.