

Clark County Veteran's Resource Committee

An advisory board to the Clark County Board of Commissioners

Clark County Public Service Center

1300 Franklin St, 6th Floor, Ste #679

Vancouver, Washington

March 13, 2013

Meeting Minutes

Chair: Robert Nichols

Vice Chair: Lou Basté

Secretary: John Russell

Meeting Called to order by Bob Nichols @ 1430

Roll Call: [Bold script indicates presence at meeting]

POST

40 et 8

American Legion #14

American Legion #27

American Legion #44

American Legion #168

American Legion #176

American Legion #189

American Legion #208

American Veterans #6

DAV Chapter #4

Korean War Vet Assoc #321

Marine Corps League #826

VFW #4278

VFW #7824

VFW #12028

Vietnam Vets #512

Members at Large

PRIMARY

Jerry Keen

Jerry Keesee

Elisa Cotton

Jim Moore

Robert Nichols

Michael Gibson

Dick DeWald

George Hunt

Richard Alvarez

Frank Hyatt

Thomas Dombeck

Lou Basté

John Russell

Roy Billings

Ray Saranto

Greg Whitson

Kevin Lawson

SECONDARY

Emily Stoutsenberger

Wes Forgey

Darren Wertz

Richard Langenbach

Jonathan Frederick

Don Taylor

Bob Blevins

Richard Gabriel

Michael Riley

Robert Sumril

Florin Zeviar

Gary Dowler

Bruce Maas

Skip Benge

Odis Warren

CLARK COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Samantha Whitley

GUESTS

Michael Langsdorf – CCVAC; Colleen Kuhn and Tina Hernandez – HSC; Dave Moore- CFTH;

Michael Burton - Visitor

Meeting Minutes: Jerry Keesee noted that Tom Bombeck was listed as attending the February 13, 2013 meeting. He was not in attendance and will be removed from the minutes. Jerry Keesee

motioned to accept the minutes from the February 13, 2013 meeting; Motion was seconded by Richard Alvarez and passed.

Veterans Assistance Fund Costs

Bob Nichols was asked by the commissioners to trim costs and it was determined that there will be only one county representative who will attend future meetings. Sam presented an estimated budget for 2013 for the County's administrative work.

Policies and Procedures Clarification

- 3.7.1 Gasoline- add requirement that the required documents were issued in the state of Washington.
- 2.3 Eligibility- Bill has been approved in the Washington Senate and is awaiting governor signature allowing General Discharge under Honorable Conditions to be included in the state RCW. This will be included in the program requires.
- 3.5.3 Shared Dwelling- The veteran in a shared dwelling can only get a pro-rated utility payment and the utility be in the veteran/client name. Colleen Kuhn raised the question about having utilities included in the rent, with the utility not in the veteran name. The proposed change above will not allow the veteran to get assistance. The veteran would have to produce a lease/rental agreement showing the utility amount. This question will need to be addressed/clarified at a later date.
- Appeals process- Colleen drafted a new appeal form. Bob requested to accept the new form. Tina requested that the title of Veteran Service Officer be changed to County Veteran Assistance Officer and the email address on the form be updated. Ray Saranto requested that the Veteran Resource Appeals Committee Statement have the last statement, within parenthesis, be removed.

The above changes were approved with a motion by Jerry Keese, second by George Hunt. Approved.

- Additional topic- DSHS assistance as income and limit benefits due to the assistance awarded. Bob suggested that this method not be adopted because the benefits awarded are very small and food stamps do not count as income. Mike Gibson restated Bob's opinion that any assistance from DSHS should not be counted as income. Tina asked Bob if he is stating that if someone qualifies for DSHS benefits, then the veteran would qualify for assistance with the fund. This would reduce the administrative costs and work load. She also asked if the reverse was true: a DSHS denial would be a denial with the fund. Colleen stated that would not necessarily be true, since DSHS looks at assets. This item will not be voted on today.
- Additional topic- Licenses assistance needs clarification on what type of license.
- Additional topic- Self-sufficiency is in the Policies and Procedures. If a veteran receives over \$800 in assistance outside of rent they need to fill out the self-sufficiency plan. Colleen asked what the repercussions are if they do not follow through with the personal plans. Bob suggested that Chris Horne give a legal opinion regarding the options the committee has if the veteran does not follow through with the plan. The Policies state that if the veteran does not make progress on his self-sufficiency plan, he can be denied assistance. Mike Gibson asked who determines progress and who tells the committee. It is the job of the county veteran assistance officer to assist the veteran and inform the committee of failure.

- Additional Topic- Abusing the funds and getting barred for a year. Bob would like to include a line in the Policies and Procedures that would allow the committee to bar someone for either life or until the assistance given was paid back if they admitted or were found presenting fraudulent information. He would also like to have added that if someone is abusive to the staff, then they would be banned for one year. Colleen suggested creating a new form similar to the appeal form when they are requesting the committee barring someone for a year or life. **Mike Gibson made motion to include this addition to the Policies and Procedures, seconded by Richard Alvarez. Ray Saranto suggested that this motion be tabled and taken to the Policies and Procedure committee to review and solicit legal opinion from Chris Horne.**
- Jerry Keen has requested to have his name removed from the Policies and Procedures committee. A new chair needs to be placed as soon as possible. The committee currently is Bob, Odis, Ray, Mike Gibson and Greg Whitson.
- Samantha Whitley stated that the policies approved and discussed to date have not been presented or approved by the Commissioners and have not taken effect. Another meeting will be schedule to discuss the changes and suggestions.

Committee Reports

Appeals: No appeals at this time.

Review and approval of January Contractor Reports and Fund Balance Report

CRMHS: Samantha reviewed reports from January. The following is the information: 116 veterans received services for a total of \$22,651.

VAC: The Veterans Assistance Center served 70 veterans (60 of which signed in but did not need assistance) with the help of volunteers donating 692.65 hours with a value of \$14,982.19.

The Free Clinic: Four veterans were served. The total amount of the treatments came to \$1,332.00; however they only billed \$1,169 in January.

VAF Revenue & Expense: January expense was \$7,197.77 and the current balance is \$668,357.53.

Old Business: Mike Langsdorf- (cannot hear his comments). Bob stated John Russell resigned from the Veterans Committee as of today. Bob wants to meet with Vanessa and Sam to discuss the issues Mike mentioned.

New Business:

- Nominations for the new Secretary will be voted on at the next meeting.
- Odis would like to know about Tuition Assistance. Mike Gibson said that the Army, Marines and Air Force have stopped/suspended Tuition Assistance due to the sequestration. Members are to contact their units to see if the funding has been suspended. National Guard gets state funding, so is currently not affected.
- Colleen Kuhn- HSC- Saw 130 veterans and processed about 9 applications in February. Food assistance was not set up with Fred Meyer until after the second week in February. Twenty-five veterans were given food boxes and referred to food banks until the account with Fred Meyer was set up. Four veterans came in for gas vouchers, one application not completed, one was denied. Several applicants are waiting on information from Columbia River Mental Health. As of March 11, HSC has processed 25 requests for assistance. One veteran's service officer

submitted his resignation effective March 25th. Colleen has requested to be at the VAC Monday through Thursday and be at the CFCH on Fridays.

- The VAC is no longer using the HMIS system. How are people tracked? How is fraud checked? The decision was made by the County to discontinue using the HMIS system because of the cost and the time entering people into the system. All of the veterans who enter the assistance center get entered into the HMIS system. Bob suggested that this be revisited with Vanessa and how this impacts the local veterans. David Moore, Council for the Homeless, suggested sending those veterans who indicated that they are homeless to the Shelter Clearinghouse and get tracked that way.

Open Forum:

- Bruce Maas- June 15th, Women's Veterans Summit will be held in Tacoma.
- Jerry Keen- CMAC will perform the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Vancouver Barracks and a new flag pole will be installed before the event.
- Samantha Whitley mentioned the Financial Peace University on Camas on March 24th.

Jerry Keen motioned to adjourn, could not hear the second. Meeting adjourned at 1535 hours.

Next meeting: April 10, 2013 at 1430 hours.