

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: September 17, 2019

Time: 2 p.m.

Location: VFW Post #467, 519 Poole Road, Westminster

Veteran's Advisory Council Mission Statement: To evaluate, develop and promote new and existing programs and services for Veterans and their families within Carroll County.

Veteran's Advisory Council Vision Statement: That Carroll County offers our Veterans quality services and programs to ensure the enrichment and enhancements of life for our men and women and their families.

Council Present: Larry Burbank, Marc Fisher, Bill Murphy, Bill Nash, Mick Schmidt, John Veney, Commissioner Richard Weaver (Ex-Officio)

County Staff Present: Francine Hahn, Jim Hillman, Mike Messina, Stacey Nash, Commissioner Ed Rothstein, Celene Steckel, Gina Valentine, Leslie Wagner, Shannan Zepp

Other Present: Kim Benson, Linda Bergofsky, Chris Hotaling, Greg Kahlert, Gary Scarbeau, Chris Schiller, Elaine Scott, Delegate Haven Shoemaker, Frank Valenti, Charles Wheatley, Tom Williams

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair's Comments (Marc Fisher) – Marc opened the meeting with a welcome.
 - i. Welcome to Delegate Haven Shoemaker who is a member of the Veterans Caucus in Annapolis. He has a packet of information with outcomes on Veteran-related legislation during last session. He is open to any topics or proposed legislation in relation to Veterans.
- b. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Bill Murphy.
- c. Commissioner's Report (Commissioner Weaver and Rothstein) – Commissioner Weaver noted that while speaking with veterans, many do not understand the value of having a VA ID, whether they need it now or not. He would like everyone to encourage veterans to apply for the VA ID and to refer to our local Veteran Services Officers. During the next Veterans Forum/Resource Fair, we can have computers available for veterans to apply for VA IDs.
- d. Public Comment – None.

2. Old Business

- a. A quorum (6 + voting members) was established with 6 voting and 1 ex-officio member present.
- b. Approval of Minutes (Marc Fisher) – Draft minutes from the August meeting were reviewed. Mick Schmidt made a motion and Larry Burbank seconded. All were in favor and August's minutes were accepted.
- c. Monthly Program Reports (Veteran Services Staff) – Brief written summary and monthly numbers served was unavailable for the meeting but will be emailed to the Veterans Advisory Council email distribution list following the meeting. The following stats were forwarded via email.
 - i. Veteran's Program Coordinators' Reports (Jim Hillman) – August 2019:
 1. 27 new representations
 2. 81 claims submitted
 3. 17 home visits
 4. 81 in-office contacts

5. 1,172 telephone contacts
 6. Return on investment, based on known awards: approximately \$640,817.00 for compensation and pension (monthly); approximately \$19,106,054.00 since inception of the program (October 2013)
 - ii. Veteran's Shuttle Report (Gina Valentine) – August 2019:
 1. 35 veterans were served and 17 home pick-ups
 - a. Baltimore – 21 veterans – 47 trips
 - b. Loch Raven – 2 veterans – 2 trips
 - c. Fort Detrick – 5 veterans – 7 trips
 - d. Washington, DC – 1 veteran – 2 trips
 - e. Martinsburg – 7 veterans – 9 trips
 - f. Other – 2 veterans – 2 trips
 2. Total Cost = \$7,617.00
 - iii. Employment Initiatives for Veterans Update (John Veney) – So far this quarter, 4 veterans have found employment. There will be a Job Fair on October 3rd from 10am to 1pm with over 25 employers. According to John Veney, the Veteran unemployment rate is 3.4%, which is below the national average for non-veterans. This is the 12th consecutive month that the Veteran unemployment rate has been below the national average.
 - d. Update on Veteran Direct Home and Community Based Services Program Grant (Francine Hahn) – One new family has been added with two openings still available. Referrals are still being sought.
 - e. Updates on Veteran Services Program Grant (Shannan Zepp) – Currently three are in a hotel, with one new today and another two applying for HUD VASH. Throughout the month the program has assisted in replacing a transmission, paying for notarization of paperwork, electric bill and transportation. The needs noted are furniture for those who are moving into permanent housing. Jim Hillman asked that everyone spread the word and listen for stories of veterans, their families and spouses who may have unmet needs so that the program can assist. Gina reported that the county has applied for an additional 10 HUD VASH vouchers. The Veteran Services Program of Carroll County has recently met with VA staff, continuing to strengthen that relationship.
 - f. Executive Committee – The Executive Committee met on September 3, 2019, with the Outreach to Veterans Census Workgroup meeting prior to the start. They will meet again in October. The Executive Committee is changing the structure of the VAC meeting so that all appointed members can contribute to the discussion, conversation and ideas of the group at large. They are seeking other marketing opportunities where they may host an informational table. They are also interested in combining a resource fair to the January 2020 Veterans Forum. This could be an opportunity to apply for VA IDs.
3. New Business
 - a. Guest Speaker – Ray Narwol, Senior Army Instructor at Winters Mill High School – Ray reported that they are looking for ways to build partnerships throughout the year by providing opportunities for students to participate in Veterans Day and other community events.
 - b. Review of By-Laws (Gina Valentine) – Possibly include other Carroll County Veteran organizations such as 29th Division Association and Catholic War Veterans. Review the by-laws for further discussion at the October meeting with a possible vote.
 4. Announcements:

- a. Linda Bergofsky, Coordinator of Frederick County Veterans Advisory Council invited everyone to attend their monthly meetings – 3rd Wednesday, 6:30pm, Winchester Hall in Frederick.
 - b. Frank Valenti of Carroll County Veterans Independence Project reported they are exploring property on John Street. They are under negotiations with Westminster City Zoning. Their Red, White & Blue Gala is November 16th.
 - c. Kim Benson of Carroll Hospice announced they are having a luminary event honoring lost veterans on October 6th.
 - d. Grandparents Conference will be September 21st and the annual Caregiver's Conference will be October 19th, both at the Westminster Senior & Community Center.
 - e. Annual Veterans Luncheon will be November 12th at 12pm at the American Legion Post #31.
 - f. 100th Anniversary of American Legion Post #31 is Sunday, October 13th.
5. Next Meeting: October 15, 2019 at 2pm – VFW Post #467, 519 Poole Road, Westminster.