

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: March 21, 2017

Time: 2 p.m.

Location: Carroll County Department of Social Services

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, Ed Rothstein, Mick Schmidt, Frank Valenti, Commissioner Richard Weaver

County Staff Present: Mike Chandler, Rosemarie Glowack, Sara Ruckles-Handwerger, Faith Hayes, Commissioner Doug Howard, Keri Keefer, Scott Singleton, Celene Steckel, Gina Valentine, Leslie Wagner

Other Present: Tammy Black, Audrey Cimino, Marvin Frush, Michael Gallagher, Roslyn Jones, Bryan Lyburn, Jim Maness, Mary Maness, Todd Mitchell, Bill Murphy, Bill Nash, John Patterson, Tom Shaffer, Wilson Thomas, John Veney, Charles Wheatley, Crystal Winebrenner, Jason Zick

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair's Comments (Frank Valenti) – Frank welcomed everyone and those attending went around the room and introduced themselves.
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Commissioner's Report (Commissioner Weaver) – Update on Armory facility – Last week Charles Wheatley, Commissioners and County Attorney had a conference call with GSA office in Atlanta. The good news is that we do not need to re-deed the Armory, however we do need to complete an application to amend the deed for a new use. This needs to be done in the next 90 days and Frank is looking for volunteers to assist in completing the application. A sign-up sheet was passed around. Commissioner Weaver also shared that John Rill of Hampstead American Legion will be turning 100. He is the oldest living veteran of that post and served at the Battle of the Bulge. You can join Commissioner Weaver and many others as they celebrate John's birthday on March 26th at Arcadia Fire Hall.

2. Old Business

- a. Approval of Minutes (Frank Valenti) – Larry Burbank made a motion to approve the February 2017 minutes, second by Ed Rothstein. All were in favor and the February 2017 meeting minutes were approved as written.
- b. Monthly Program Reports (Gina Valentine) – Brief written summary and monthly numbers served.
 - i. Veteran’s Program Coordinators’ Reports (Gina Valentine) – In the month of February 2017, 19 new representations, 54 claims submitted, 6 home visits, 64 in-office contacts and 198 telephone contacts. The return on investment, based on known awards: approximately \$322,633 per month for compensation and pension (monthly); approximately \$5,165,049 since inception of the program; and for the Veteran Directed Care Program approximately \$33,695. A new brochure is being created and will be ready in time for the Seniors on the Go Expo. In the last month Veteran Services Program staff gave presentations to Carroll Hospital’s Navigation Team, the Healthy Aging Leadership Team, Carroll Lutheran Village and Mike Chandler presented on PTSD to Hostage Negotiators and Carroll County 911 staff. Approximately 110 people attended these presentations. Keri Keefer will be attending Taneytown American Legion’s Auxiliary meeting later this month to accept a donation for the Veteran Services Program and share information about the services provided by the program.
 - ii. Veteran’s Shuttle Report (Crystal Winebrenner) – There are 238 vets registered to use the shuttle. In February 2017, 30 veterans were served with 84 trips totaling \$4,031.30. Location breakdown as follows: Baltimore – 23 veterans/46 trips; Loch Raven – 0; Fort Detrick – 8 veterans/18 trips; Glen Burnie – 2 veteran/4 trips; Martinsburg – 8 veterans/16 trips. There has been an increase in different destinations and they were able to accommodate all. Alternate destination requests are reviewed and approved by the Bureau of Aging & Disabilities. In addition they were able to re-configure the inside of the shuttle to accommodate a veteran with certain needs. Flyers promoting the shuttle can be distributed via email so that everyone can publicize this free service.
 - iii. Veteran’s Job Report (Todd Mitchell) – Things are going well.
 - iv. Subcommittee Reports (Access, Mentoring, Outreach)

1. Outreach – Steve Yinger created a logo for Carroll County Veterans and car magnets have been made. Gina handed out to all present, and reported that they were sent to the Commissioners, Fort Meade and will be distributed from the VAC booth at the Seniors on the Go Expo.
- c. Update on Veteran Direct Home and Community Based Services Program Grant (Gina Valentine) – This program provides services to veterans to remain in their homes. Perry Point directs veterans to the Maryland Department of Aging and they then forward to Gina. This program serves a maximum of 5 veterans, who are assessed and given a monthly budget to purchase needed services such as personal care. Currently 4 veterans are being served, and they received a 5th referral this week. Kudos to program staff who have had to adjust to the constant changes of the policies and procedures overseeing this grant.
- d. Update on Veteran Services Program Grant (Gina Valentine) – In the month of February four Veterans were assisted with expenses related to gas, food, housing, furniture and vehicle repairs. Kahlert Foundation grant is split into 3 funds – Housing, General Emergency and Job Training/Educational Opportunities. Gina reported that most of the Veterans seeking assistance need help with emergency housing, services/funding to divert them from homelessness, food, gas, car repairs or minor home repairs. To date, no Veterans have utilized the \$19,000 in the Training/Educational part of the grant as there are resources available (VA; BERC) . Mike updated the council that the VA offers vocational training in addition to the GI bill. The amount is dependent on each case. To that end, Gina requested that \$10,000 of the Training/Education fund be transferred to the Housing and/or General Emergency funds. Frank reported that \$5,000 of Gina’s request was approved.
- e. Update on Veteran Friendly Business initiative (Todd Mitchell) – Todd is looking for nominees for Veteran of the Year and Veteran Friendly Business of the Year. The recognition will take place in November but he is collecting nominations now. Also, see Memorial Day Observance under New Business.
- f. US Army Recruiting/Reserve Building Project (Frank Valenti) – Bill reported that the video is now being shown on Channel 19. You can go to Community Media Center’s website, under Channel 19 and see when it is airing. A URL link will be emailed to everyone as well.

3. New Business

- a. Update on new Veteran Services Staff (Gina Valentine) – Keri Keefer has received her accreditation from Veteran Affairs. Faith, Sara and Mike are currently being trained and should receive their's shortly.
- b. Update on Armory (Frank Valenti) – The discussion continued regarding the application. Audrey Cimino, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Carroll County and Tammy Black, Executive Director of Access Carroll, were both invited by Frank Valenti since both organizations have the same 501(c)(3) status that is needed for this application and project. After discussion with both Audrey and Tammy, the final Armory project will have an Executive Director that runs the program with a governing board, much like their organizations. The relationship that the project will have with the county is that the armory is leased for \$1/year from the county. Everyone was reminded that the final project needs to run independent of the council, a separate entity would need to exist separate of the VAC. Essentially the application is Phase 1 of the process. Thank you goes to Point Breeze Credit Union and the Kahlert Foundation for their donations that will allow a site survey to be completed on the Armory. Ed Rothstein spoke with Secretary Owings who sees this as a model, as many Maryland reserve centers are antiquated but still usable for projects such as this. Ed also noted that this Armory program will tether well with the Fort Meade installation that he is currently working on. Everyone agreed that this can be a pilot program not just for local or regional purposes, but National as well. Senator Van Hollen is in support and many present are excited about the future of Carroll County's Armory project.
- c. Memorial Day Observance at Gerstell Academy (Todd Mitchell) – Todd reported that the fundraising has been great. \$27,000 has been committed and so far \$23,000 of that has been received. This event has received support from Carroll County Public Library, Carroll Hospital, local American Legions and VFW's to name a few. It promises to be a wonderful event honoring the 9,000 Marylanders killed or MIA since World War I.
- d. Celebrating America Weekend (Commissioner Howard) – Commissioner Howard passed out flyers promoting a Celebrating America weekend entitled "American Milestones: 1900-1919 Labor & Leisure" to include a Luncheon and Author event, celebration of the 100th anniversary of Fort Meade, historic Courthouse tours, General John Pershing presentation, Westminster Fire Department Museum Open House, historic costume contest, Tea with a storyteller on "Unknown Stories of 64 WWI Nurses from Maryland," and many other activities

and programs. This event will take place the weekend of May 19 and 20th throughout Westminster.

- e. Mick Schmidt, DAV – DAV is having a Veterans Seminar at DSS on Saturday, April 22nd 9am-3pm to assist in processing claims. Attending will be National, Chapter and Department Service Officers. Mick relayed to the Council that many Veterans do not think they are entitled to anything, even those who are disabled.
- f. Seniors on the Go Expo (Gina Valentine) – Veterans Advisory Council will have a booth at this year's Expo on Wednesday, April 5th. Bill and Larry have volunteered to man the booth. Crystal Winebrenner of Carroll Transit System/Veterans Shuttle requested brochures for the Shuttle for her booth as well. The actual mini-van will be present at the Expo to showcase this free service to Veterans.
- g. Scott Singleton of BERCC (Business & Resource Center) introduced himself and wanted to reach out to Veterans who may need training or to be assessed. He can be reached at 410-386-2521.
- h. Roslyn Jones introduced John Veney of DLLR, who is their new Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist. As a former Veteran, he is committed and understands the significant barriers to employment that disabled Veterans face. He can be reached at 410-215-2453.
- i. John Patterson, DAV Commander for Maryland, introduced himself. He has traveled all throughout Maryland and recognizes that other counties need the information that Carroll County has when it comes to serving their Veterans. Prince Georges County, which is all county with no large cities, is in the process of doing what we are doing and could benefit from the information that we provide. He reminded everyone that Veterans over the age of 80 can join DAV for free.
- j. Marvin Frush and Bill Nash of local American Legion's and VFW's explained that many area posts do not know about the Armory project or the services that Carroll County provides to Veterans. Commissioner Weaver will support the area American Legions and VFWs and accepted the offer of services that both posts and commanders can provide.
- k. Michael Gallagher of Point Breeze Credit Union reported that since their opening in Westminster, half of all new accounts are Veterans taking advantage of their

Military Service Value Package.

- I. Bill Murphy followed up on Richard Turner of Community Media Center's presentation at last month's meeting. The Hero board (Honor Roll) that will be run on CMC's channel is in the works and should be aired sometime in the next month or two.
4. **Next Meeting:** April 18, 2017 at 2 p.m. at the Department of Social Services.