

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: December 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, Jack Curran, Marc Fisher, Bill Murphy, Bill Nash, Mick Schmidt, Elaine May Stem, John Veney, Commissioner Richard Weaver, Steve Whisler

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

Other Present: Linda Bergofsky, James Duncan, Bob Eney, Greg Kahlert, Keith Midberry, John Pomory, Gary Saylor, Gary Scarbeau, Chris Schiller, Elaine Scott, Charles Wheatley, Jerome Williams Sr., Tom Williams

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair's Comments (Marc Fisher) – Marc opened the meeting. Seventeen cemeteries in Carroll County participated in the Wreaths Across America this year. Thanks to Babylon Vault for their work on this coordinated effort.
- b. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Elaine May Stem.
- c. Commissioner's Report (Commissioner Rothstein/Weaver) – Commissioner Weaver attended Wreaths Across America at Deer Park Cemetery, their third year participating, and 154 wreaths were laid. Special thanks to Mel Blizzard for bringing this event to Carroll County three years ago. Commissioner Rothstein welcomed the Frederick County Veterans team. Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah to everyone.
 - i. Commissioner Rothstein announced that the Carroll County Veterans Services Program received the Academy of Excellence Award at the Maryland Association of Counties Winter Conference. Celene Steckel thanked the Veterans Advisory Council, Greg Kahlert for the Kahlert Foundation's grant, and the Veterans program staff for the great work they do everyday on behalf of Carroll County veterans.
- d. Public Comment – None.

2. Old Business

- a. A quorum (6 + voting members) was established with nine voting and one ex-officio member present.
- b. Approval of Minutes (Marc Fisher) – Draft minutes from the November meeting were reviewed. Bill Murphy made a motion and Bill Nash made the second motion. All were in favor and November's minutes were accepted.
- c. Monthly Program Reports (Veteran Services Staff) – Brief written summary and monthly numbers served was distributed. The numbers are as follows:
 - i. Veteran's Program Coordinators' Reports (Jim Hillman) – November 2019:
 1. 27 new representations
 2. 72 claims submitted

3. 15 home visits
4. 72 in-office contacts
5. 1627 telephone contacts
6. Return on investment, based on known awards: approximately \$678,330.00 for compensation and pension (monthly); approximately \$21,080,320.00 since inception of the program (October 2013).
7. Jim noted that the VA is piloting a program, not in our region, that will open up benefits for dental. The program has been given a lot of support in Congress. Disability claims have been taking 125 days; Pension 210 days and DIC have been inconsistent. Regarding the Mission Act there has not been much feedback from veterans. There is only one provider in Westminster that is accepting VA. Commissioner Rothstein recommended letters to the editor in the newspaper to encourage more providers.
- ii. Veteran's Shuttle Report (Stacey Nash) – November 2019:
 1. 28 veterans were served and 15 home pick-ups
 - a. Baltimore – 15 veterans – 40 trips
 - b. Martinsburg – 8 veterans – 11 trips
 - c. Ft. Detrick – 7 veterans – 11 trips
 - d. Walter Reed – 1 veteran – 2 trips
 - e. Shepherdstown – 1 veteran – 1 trip
 2. Total Cost = \$8,063.00
 3. There weren't any no-shows this month.
 4. Commissioner Rothstein was wondering if new customers could be tracked.
- iii. Employment Initiatives for Veterans Update (John Veney) – Locally three veterans were served last quarter. He is interested in planning a veterans job fair in 2020. Possibly added to the Veterans Resource Fair.
- d. Update on Veteran Direct Home and Community Based Services Program Grant (Gina Valentine) – Currently four out of the five spots are filled. Referrals are made by Maryland Department of Aging.
- e. Update on Veteran Services Program Grant (Shannan Zepp) – Currently one veteran is housed in a hotel, one is at his parent's, one applying for HUD-VASH, and one widow has been diverted from homelessness. A lot of coordination is done with donations and services between community partners and staff.
- f. Executive Committee (Gina Valentine) – The Executive Committee met in December and created the agenda for today's meeting, discussed the Veterans Resource Guide and Resource Fair. Carroll Community College's Great hall is being vetted for the Resource Fair and the possibility of having the Veterans Job Fair at the Resource Fair was discussed.
- g. Resource Guide Update – The guide will be incorporated in the annual Bureau of Aging & Disabilities Resource Guide and model the state VA guide.
- h. Monthly Column in the Carroll County Times – Ideas should be forwarded to Gina or Leslie. Topics can include human interest, questions and answers as well as events, services and benefits. The County's Communications Director reviews and approves the articles.
3. New Business – None.
4. Announcements:

- a. Charles Wheatley announced that the video of the Korean War dedication at his home will be shown on the local Comcast channel sometime in January. He is also creating a STEM park at his home.
 - b. Larry Burbank and Sondra from AARP donated gifts to our veterans that were collected at their statewide meeting.
 - c. Keith Midberry announced that Frederick Regional has changed to Frederick Health Hospital. Frederick Hospice will be moving into the State Farm complex in January 2020.
 - d. Mick Schmidt personally thanked the Board of County Commissioners on their donation to the Korean War Memorial to be built in Washington, DC.
 - e. Steve Whisler announced that the Defense Authorization Act will be cutting funding by 22% for Military Hospital Facilities.
5. Next Meeting: January 21, 2020 at 2pm – VFW Post #467, 519 Poole Road, Westminster.