

# VETERAN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: July 19, 2016

Time 2 p.m.

Location: DSS Conference Room

**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 that the enrichment and enhancement of life for our men and women and their families.

**Council Present:** Frank Valenti; Larry Burbank; Ed Rothstein; Elaine May-Stem; Steve Yinger

**County Staff Present:** Commissioner Howard; Commissioner Weaver; Jim Hillman; Erin Inman; Celene Steckel; Gina Valentine

**Other Present:** Beverly Caperton; Roslyn Jones; Todd Mitchell; Bill Murphy; Liz Riggs; Tom Shaffer

## I. Welcome and Introductions

- A. Frank Valenti called the meeting to order.
- B. Chair's Comments (Frank Valenti) – Frank presented information on the potential to use the US Army Recruiting/Reserve building at 412 Malcolm Drive, #102 in Westminster as a Veteran's Homeless Shelter & Veteran's Education and Training Center. The facility is currently being evaluated and assessed for suitability for several potential uses. The complete presentation is available upon request.
- C. Commissioner's Report (Commissioner Weaver) – Commissioner Weaver reported that a "Living Carroll" incentive package for Veterans moving into Carroll County is in development. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

## II. Old Business

- A. Approval of Minutes (Frank Valenti) – The June 2016 meeting minutes were reviewed and all were in favor to approve the minutes as submitted.
- B. Monthly Program Reports (Brief Written Summary and Monthly Numbers Served)

- 1) Veteran's Program Coordinators' Reports (Jim Hillman) – Jim Hillman shared that they were contacted by three homeless Veterans from outside of the county who were told that services are available to veterans living in Carroll County. Jim reported the average processing time for VA claims is between 7-10 months. Jim stated that they will assist Veterans who wish to write a letter to their representative in Congress when these timeframes have been exceeded. To date, 100% of the Veterans who contacted their representatives have been successful in getting assistance with their claims. Jim also reported on client distribution, performance statistics and return on investment for June 2016. The complete report is available upon request.
- 2) Veteran's Shuttle Report (Anita Farinetti and Gina Valentine) – Gina Valentine reported shuttle statistics as provided by Carroll Transit System (CTS). The statistics provided information for May twice and June statistics were not indicated on the report. Gina will follow up with Anita Farinetti at CTS to verify the statistics for June 2016. Gina also shared that there are currently 202 Veterans registered for the shuttle. Commissioner Howard inquired as to whether the Veteran's shuttle operates on Veteran's Day to offer veterans transportation to the various celebration events located throughout the county. Gina Valentine will follow up with CTS to verify if service is offered or could be offered on Veteran's Day.
- 3) Veteran's Jobs Report (Roslyn Jones and Todd Mitchell) – Roslyn Jones reported that she recently assisted another Veteran with his job search and the Veteran secured employment with Marriott. Roslyn also reported that the number of Veterans served by the Business Education Resource Center (BERC) continues to increase.
- 4) Subcommittee Reports (Access, Mentoring, Outreach)
  - a. Outreach- Steve Yinger reported that he continues to work with the staff at the Carroll County Public Libraries (CCPL) to establish a Veterans Book Club. Celebrating America donated \$1,000 to help purchase books for the club. Plans are in place for the Veterans Book Club to be held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Finksburg Library, starting September 20, 2016. A marketing campaign will be launched in August. Steve also shared that Celebrating America will host a storytelling event in November and they are looking for Veterans who would be interested in participating. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

5) Update on Veteran Direct Home and Community Based Services Program Grant (Jim Hillman) – Jim reported that the program is stable and remains at capacity.

C. Update on Veteran Friendly Business initiative (Todd Mitchell) – No report

### **III. New Business**

- A. Status of New Hires- Gina Valentine reported that interviews have been conducted for the two new Veteran's Services Program positions. The candidate selected for the Program Coordinator position declined the offer of employment and the position will be reposted. A candidate for the second position has been selected and an announcement will be forthcoming.
- B. Veteran's Services Program Staff- Gina Valentine announced that Jeff Collins submitted his resignation and his last day will be July 20<sup>th</sup>. Gina thanked the council, on Jeff's behalf, for their support during his time with the program. Jeff's resignation creates a second open Program Coordinator position which will also be posted.
- C. Vote on New Officers- Gina Valentine distributed ballots to voting council members. The votes were tabulated and Frank Valenti was selected as Chair. The votes for Co-Chair were tied between Jim Hillman and Larry Burbank. Jim Hillman deferred to Larry Burbank. Frank and Larry accepted the positions to serve as Chair and Co-Chair respectively.
- D. Applications were offered to anyone interested in applying for membership with the Council.
- E. Edward Rothstein and Beverly Caperton reported that missions team at Wesley Freedom United Methodist Church has decided to establish an initiative focused on building ramps for Veterans. They are calling it "Ramp it Up" for Veterans. Home Depot has agreed to provide the lumber and Wesley Freedom will provide manpower to build the ramps.
- F. Larry Burbank reported that the John Brown Veterans Cruise has been scheduled for October 1, 2016. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

**IV. Next Meeting:** August 16, 2016 at 2pm at the Department of Social Services.