

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: February 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, Mick Schmidt, Elaine May-Stem, Frank Valenti, Commissioner Richard Weaver, Steven Yinger

County Staff Present: Mike Chandler, Faith Hayes, Christine Kay, Celene Steckel, Gina Valentine, Leslie Wagner

Other Present: Bev Caperton, Aaron Chiusano, Rebecca Drayer, Roslyn Jones, Bryan Lyburn, Nancy McCormick, Sam Miller, Todd Mitchell, Bill Murphy, Tom Shaffer, Wilson Thomas, Richard Turner, Marion Ware, Jennifer Watson, Charles Wheatley

I. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair's Comments (Frank Valenti) – Frank welcomed everyone.
- b. Commissioner's Report (Commissioner Weaver) – Update on Armory facility – Currently we are in a waiting pattern. Since it is a Quit Claim Deed it must be re-deeded to GSA, then GSA re-deeds back to us so that the wording can be changed. This will take about 12 months. The County is working on it through legal channels with Tim Burke and through Annapolis with Senators. Commissioner Weaver also reported that Annapolis will be having a Day in Carroll County on May 11, 2017 and he is hoping to get the Armory facility on the tour. Elaine recommended that Secretary Owings be invited as well. Also, Carroll County has donated to the Memorial Day event at Gerstell Academy.

II. Old Business

- a. Approval of Minutes (Frank Valenti) – Larry Burbank made a motion to approve the January 2017 minutes, second by Mick Schmidt. The January 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 January 2017, 12 new representations, 44 claims submitted, 7 home visits, 25 in-office contacts and 152 telephone contacts. The return on investment, based on known awards: approximately \$312,522 per month for compensation and pension (monthly); approximately \$4,980,905 since inception of the program; and for the Veteran Directed Care Program approximately \$32,371. Two claims were awarded by the VA recently: one veteran had been working on a claim since 2007 and was finally awarded a retroactive \$95,000 payment, another claim was re-submitted as an appeal a \$69,000 retroactive award was granted. Gina also noted that Jeff Collins will be recognized for his service to Carroll County Veterans Thursday, February 23, 2017 at 10am by the Commissioners at Positively Carroll for the services he provided in the Veteran Services Program, his work on the Veterans Advisory Council and a letter he received from President Barack Obama. The Veteran Services Program received a donation from the Families of Tevis Oil in the amount of \$583.00. In March, the Taneytown Ladies Auxiliary will present the Veteran Services Program with a donation at their monthly meeting. Keri Keefer will be present to accept the donation.
- ii. Veteran's Shuttle Report (Crystal Winebrenner and Gina Valentine) – No one present from CTS. Gina has contacted them and received a report. There is a new director of CTS, Joe Everett, and a representative will plan to attend next month. There are 233 vets registered to use the shuttle. In December 2016, 56 veterans were served, totaling 108 trips and costing \$5,603.95. Location breakdown as follows: Baltimore – 29 veterans/58 trips; Loch Raven – 2 veterans/3 trips; Fort Detrick – 11 veterans/22 trips; Reisterstown – 2 veterans/4 trips; Martinsburg – 12 veterans/21 trips. For January 2017, 53 veterans and 1 in a wheelchair were served with 104 trips totaling \$4,895.15. Location breakdown as follows: Baltimore – 37 veterans/72 trips; Loch Raven – 0; Fort Detrick – 6 veterans/12 trips; Glen Burnie – 1 veteran/2 trips; Martinsburg – 9 veterans/18 trips. Christine Kay will find out the current funding totals and report back.
- iii. Veteran's Job Report (Todd Mitchell) – Keri has been giving Todd referrals and all have been helped but one who declined a job. Todd also contacted Stevenson University and was informed about a network of colleges that represent hiring veterans.

iv. Subcommittee Reports (Access, Mentoring, Outreach)

1. Outreach – Steve Yinger updated the council on the Book Club. Celebrating America provides funding and tonight will be their 5th session out of 6, and it is catered. Veterans from Korea to Afghanistan as well as Gold Star families are participating. This has been a great partnership with Carroll County Public Library and they are reading and discussing one book a month. In addition, Steve has built an informal logo that has been circulated through the Council. He has used it on the Facebook page and is looking into having car magnets made.
- 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 this number has not changed from last month.
- d. Update on Veteran Services Program Grant (Gina Valentine) – Kahlert Foundation grant of \$80,000 ends June 30th. Frank will be meeting with the foundation next month and will be requesting the same amount. Gina reported that in January 2017 eight veterans were assisted. Money for food, gas, prescriptions, start-up rent, temporary and emergency housing were paid out. Three homeless veterans were able to secure housing last month. Carroll County Veterans Services Program is the primary contact for Shelter Intake.
- i. Christine Kay mentioned that the word is getting out into the community and we need to strengthen our vetting process before we distribute money or services. We don't want to turn anyone away but at the same time we don't want the program to be taken advantage. To help with that, veterans need to communicate their goals and be moving toward them. Department of Social Services has databases for background checks. If an encrypted email is sent to Frank with names and social security numbers then possible candidates can be vetted more thoroughly. Mike Chandler is the primary contact for the Kahlert Foundation Veterans Program and he can be reached on his work cell at 443-821-4135 or his direct line at work 410-386-3826.

- e. Update on Veteran Friendly Business initiative (Todd Mitchell) – Todd introduced Rebecca Drayer of Tri-County Roofing, a business that has assisted veterans with repairs. She presented the Veterans Mosaic Project – a creative journey documenting the voices and experiences of multi-generational Carroll County Veterans that she created and would direct. Information is attached. Nancy McCormack reported that EVAPCO in Taneytown will be expanding their building size and adding additional jobs this fall and they are very interested in hiring Veterans.
- f. US Army Recruiting/Reserve Building Project (Frank Valenti) – The video tour of the facility will be on Channel 19 beginning March 1st.

III. New Business

- a. Update on new Veteran Services Staff (Gina Valentine) – Currently the Program is fully staffed. New Veterans Services Program staff member Mike Chandler was introduced.
- b. Update on Armory (Frank Valenti) – Charles Wheatley announced that he has spoken with the regional director of the Mid-Atlantic and may be able to have the language of the deed mended. She sent suggested changes to Tim Burke and Scott in the County.
- c. Memorial Day Observance at Gerstell Academy (Todd Mitchell) – Todd reported that the flags have been ordered and received. Bob Ehrlich is the guest speaker with MC Alan Walden. Fox45 will be covering the event and Todd has hired a videographer to video the event. There will be a kick-off at Maggie's at 6pm the Thursday before. A representative of the Gold Star Families will be laying a wreath as well. Elaine recommended inviting Secretary Owings.
- d. Richard Turner, Executive Director, Carroll Media Center – Marion Ware, the History Project Coordinator of CMC introduced doing a celebration of Veterans, not as a part of Memorial Day, but instead where letters from veterans are read and individuals recognized. She has reached out to other groups and there are a lot of letters that can be used. She wanted to know what the Council thinks since it can be a sensitive topic. Bill mentioned speaking to the children of Mad Dog and how having that video of him helped them. Elaine suggested making an announcement on Channel 19 and Nancy added to also publicize in the paper. If you know of anyone who would like to share their letters, please get in contact with Marion. Richard then presented a video whereby creating an honor roll for Carroll County. Volunteers would be needed to do the data entry. Mick

reminded the Council of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial where names are displayed, as well as in Manchester, Hampstead and the local Wal-Mart's. Steve said they are breaking ground for the Westminster Veterans Memorial Park and there will be a memorial there as well. Todd has a roster of all Carroll County veterans from Vietnam and will forward that to Frank.

- e. Nancy McCormick, Taneytown – Mr. Kahlert came to see her about creating a one stop resource center in Taneytown where many services can be present to assist and direct local citizens, including veterans. They have found a building. Christine has a meeting scheduled with Nancy to discuss.
- f. Steve Holt, Project Manager, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization – Not present, will present next month.
- g. Sam Miller, Rehabilitation Specialist, Division of Rehabilitation Services – DORS works with individuals with disabilities, however they see very little Veterans. Would like to offer their services to perform assessments and evaluations at no cost because they have all the resources of the State. Celene invited him to register for a booth at the Seniors on the Go – An Aging & Disabilities Expo so that he can provide this information to the community.
- h. Mick Schmidt, DAV – DAV is having a Veterans Seminar at DSS on Saturday, April 22nd 9am-3pm to assist in processing claims. National Service Officers will be present.
- i. Roslyn Jones reported that she is now back in Carroll County and has replaced Bob Pelletier.

IV. **Next Meeting:** March 21, 2017 at 2 p.m. at the Department of Social Services.