



Kent County Veterans Services

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DRAFT minutes 3-7-19

Present: Mel Bauman, Mary Johnson, Harold Mast, Trisha Sexton, Shane Scherer

Absent: Randy Tharp, John Baxter

Guests: Theresa Robinson, Dan Ophoff, Paul Ryan, Jerry Dennis

1. Meeting called to Order – The meeting was called to order by Veterans Services Committee Chair Mel Bauman at 8:30am
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Committee Vice Chair Mary Johnson led those in attendance to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comment –
 - i. none
4. Approval of Minutes – Committee Member Harold Mast made a motion to approve the minutes, once amended of his around table comments from Februarys meeting. Chair Mel Bauman seconded. UNANIMOUS
5. Introductions- no introductions needed
6. Old Business –
 - a. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett reported that the MVAA Grant has passed the Finance Committee, and will go in front of the Board of Commissions next week to post for the new VSO (Veterans Service Officer) position, using additional funds to update software.
7. Managers, Monthly Operational Update Reports – Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett went over the Monthly Activity Report
8. New Business-
 - a. There will be a Career Development Expo on March 30th. It is not just for Veterans but for their spouses this time as well. As of today there are 25 employers registered to attend.

- b. Manager Martha Burkett shared an update with her idea to use Uber, stating that she had, had a conference call with them, there is a possibility to set up some sort of an account, using our department as a middle man between the veteran and Uber, still working on key questions to ask, and setting up possible pilot program. Committee member Trisha Sexton moved to pick an amount and do a pilot program, Chair Bauman seconded, UNANIMOUS.
- c. Hidden Wounds of War Conference is May 23rd. There will be a key note speaker and break out sessions, clinical in nature, but the attendees will get to pick and choose which to take part in.
- d. Veterans Treatment Court has 4 graduates, the ceremony will be held at the Wyoming Public Library at 10:30am instead of the Courthouse.
- e. Senator Peters to improve Burial Benefits for Veterans, more information to come.
- f. Legal Assistance Summit on the horizon; Bob Skilton, a semi-retired attorney is interested in helping veterans with bad discharges to get them upgraded, pro bono. The Veterans Bar Association is also interested in helping. Veterans Services wants to be another resource to help Veterans with legal situations.
- g. Manager Martha Burkett wanted to report about Des Nelson who is retired Navy, she teaches a Project Management Course at GVSU, Martha would like to invite her to present to the committee what she is doing and possibly have her teach the course out of this office.

9. Survey Responses – attached

10. Around the Table

- a. Committee Member Harold Mast wanted to remind everyone in attendance about the annual Golf outing on June 4th, put on by the Friends of the Veterans Treatment Court and United Veterans Council
- b. Committee Vice Chair Mary Johnson wanted to share that she saw a segment on Good Morning America about a brave Airforce Veteran, Senator Martha McSally who spoke about her rape in the Gulf War though she did not report it at the time. Mary wanted to bring this up because there is a 50% increase in reporting cases, and she wanted to bring awareness.

11. Public Comment –

- a. Jerry Dennis reported that the Memorial Day Parade will be May 30th, a Thursday this year.
- b. Administrative Specialist Rachel Wustman wanted to suggest changing the days of the June and July meetings due to Holidays and Conference Travel. Will send out updated calendar times.
- c. Friends of the Veterans Treatment Court are facilitating travel for 6 veterans in the Court Program to Maryland for a National Conference, the court is looking forward to it.

12. Adjournment –Veterans Services Committee Vice Chair Mary JOHNSON moved to adjourn the meeting. Committee Member Shane Scherer supported. UNANIMOUS. The meeting was dismissed at 9:40am

13. The next Veterans Services Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, April 4th, at 8:30am in the Veterans Services front conference room.