



Kent County Veterans Services

836 Fuller Ave NE

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Phone: 616-632-5722 Fax: 616-632-5723

KCVS@kentcountymi.gov

DRAFT minutes 7-18-19

Present: Mel Bauman, Mary Johnson, John Baxter, Randy Tharp
Absent: Harold Mast, Trish Sexton, Shane Scherer
Guests: Sandra Ghoston-Jones, Mary Sumner, Theresa Robinson, Paul Ryan

1. Meeting called to Order – The meeting was called to order by Veterans Services Committee Chair Mel Bauman at 8:33am
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Committee Vice Chair Mary Johnson led those in attendance to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Approval of Minutes –
 - a. Committee Member John Baxter made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee Vice Chair Mary Johnson seconded. UNANIMOUS
4. Introductions-

Sandra Ghoston-Jones in attendance on behalf of the Administrators Office.
5. Managers, Monthly Operational Update Reports – Veterans Services Supervisor Ryan Grams went over the Monthly Activity Report
 - a. Supervisor Grams also wanted to propose a couple of changes he'd like to make to bring a little more life to the reports.
 - i. Add the amount of bus passes that are given out
 - ii. Take off the amount of time the staff is on the phone
 - iii. Add graphs
 - iv. Change the format to more functional
 - b. Committee member John Baxter suggested to google dashboards to view different formats, Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett suggested that Committee Member Baxter and Supervisor Grams work together with the lay out to achieve the best possible outcome
6. Old Business –
 - a. Assistant County Administrator Matthew VanZetten sent over a new proposed budget worksheet
 - b. Mary Sumner with Kennari Consulting wanted to give a brief update, that she had met with all of the staff and committee members. She still needs to meet with Matthew VanZetten and Wayman Britt, the meetings have been set. There will most likely be a retreat of some sort.

7. New Business-
 - a. Veterans Services Staff Andrew LaPres gave a presentation on the Soldier and Sailors Relief Program, going over policies and procedures.
8. Survey Responses – 24 for June
9. Around the Table
 - a. County Administrator Wayman Britt wanted to thank everyone for having him to the meeting.
 - b. Committee Chair Mel Bauman wanted to add on to Britts sentiments saying he is thankful for the Count and this committee and the public that attends these meetings and the work that they are doing for veterans in Kent County. Britt in turn thanked Chair Bauman for his leadership.
 - c. Committee member Trish wanted to share that she and Anthony Torres helped a veteran in Ottawa County, she wondered if they had a Veterans Services Department. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett said we would get the information for her.
 - d. Committee member John Baxter wanted to share that he called in on June 6th and did not receive an answer, and was routed to a system. Baxter would like to know if we can have someone always available to answer the phone. Baxter also appreciated getting an up to date budget report.
 - e. Committee member Harold Mast gave a brief update on the 65 page report that came out regarding the new Home for Veterans. There was quite a few discrepancies in what was owed to the veterans and what was reported and had nothing to do with anything being taken from current or past residents, just dealing with the County and reconciliation. Mast also wanted share that he met the new Director that has been hired for MVAA, Zenata Adams. Mast would like her to attend one of our meetings.
 - f. Committee Vice Chair Mary Johnson wanted to share how great the Womens panel was at the Hidden Wounds of War, she shared she really enjoyed being a part of it.
10. Public Comment –
 - a. Paul Ryan shared with the committee that there will be a quality of life resource fair at the Freedom Cruise on September 22nd at the 5/3rd Ballpark. Veterans Services Manager, Martha Burkett is on the planning committee.
 - b. Paul Ryan also wanted to invite everyone in attendance to the Veteran of the Year Banquet on November 2nd, and to the Veterans Day Parade on November 11th. Veterans Services Committee Vice Chair, Mary Johnson will be the Key Note Speaker at the Parade.
 - c. Committee Member John Baxter wanted to verify that Veterans Services Staff is staggering their lunch hours to have coverage for the phones. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett advised that has been done starting in December.
 - d. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett shared that she went with Tony Torres with the Veterans Treatment Court to meet with the Veterans Services Director in Muskegon. They spoke of developing a mentoring program for a treatment court there. Burkett also spoke of offering them space here in Kent County for their Pilot.
 - e. Burkett also wanted the committee to be aware she asked for an additional \$20,000.00 to be used at the department’s discretion. She is interested in mentoring women and families specifically
 - f. Committee Chair Mel Bauman wanted to take a moment to thank everyone in the room for their dedication to all of the veterans in Kent County, and all of Michigan.

11. Adjournment –Veterans Services Committee Chair Mel Bauman adjourned the meeting at 9:37am
12. The next Veterans Services Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, August 1st, at 8:30am in the Veterans Services front conference room.