



## **Kent County Veterans Services**

836 Fuller Ave NE

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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

[KCVS@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:KCVS@kentcountymi.gov)

DRAFT minutes 1-9-2020

Present: Mel Bauman, Mary Johnson, Trish Torres, John Baxter, Harold Mast

Absent:

Guests: Dan Ophoff, Tony Torres, Jerry Dennis, Paul Ryan, Pamela Alderman, Eric Nelson

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 Chair Mel Bauman 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. Committee Chair Mel Bauman handed out a memo to all in attendance in regard to public comment moving forward.
5. Committee Chair Mel Bauman also talked about the Operational Guidelines, his term as Chair is only one year, therefore his term is over as Chair, but term as a Committee member is for another four years. Mel made a motion to bring Vice Chair Mary Johnson on as Chair effective today January 9, 2020, Committee Member Harold Mast seconded motion. Mel stated he would continue on with the meeting today, and Mary would take over starting February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
6. Success Stories-
  - a. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett wanted to share the first success story of the entire Veterans Services Committee. Back in October an auxiliary reached out to Veterans Services saying they wanted to sponsor two families with Thanksgiving baskets, and asked us to identify them with any food allergies, ages of children, etc. That was all accomplished. Approximately 2 weeks before Thanksgiving, Veterans Services heard from the auxiliary that they did not have the funds anymore and would not be able to sponsor the families any longer. At Martha's suggestion Administrative Specialist Rachel Wustman reached out to the committee and within 10 days from that e-mail, the Veterans Services Committee Meeting had generously donated enough goods and money so that two families, each with three children had Thanksgiving feasts and were beyond grateful.

7. Introductions-
  - a. Artist Pamela Alderman
  
8. Managers, Monthly Operational Update, Monthly Impact Reports –
  - a. Veterans Services Supervisor Ryan Grams went over a new format of not only keeping YTD numbers, but leaving the prior months numbers on as well for an easier look back- Committee consensus was to keep it that way moving forward.
  - b. When asked where he thought the department was making their biggest impact, Supervisor Grams answered with the Soldiers & Sailors Relief Grant, expanding that not only keeping the money with in Kent County, but being able to keep veterans heat on, or lights on makes the biggest impact on veterans and their families.
  
9. Presentations- Artist Pamela Alderman
  
  
10. Old Business –
  - a. MVAA Grant update- Martha went over how the process went last year with getting the grant, and how we were unable to use the money because of the small window of time. Martha has filled out a letter of intent for the Grant, but at this time does not think she will apply. Not sure of the dollar amount of this year allotted for each county. A lot of the smaller counties are trying to use this Grant to get programs started, Martha thinks it would be judicious of us to let them use the money, as Kent County is in a very fortunate position of having quite a lot of funds. That being said, Martha was very clear that if a program or event did come up, that she would apply for the Grant. Committee Member Trish Torres agreed that if there wasn't anything pressing, or something that we could be ready and waiting to execute the funds, she didn't believe it was a good use of Marthas time. Chair mel Bauman agreed.
  - b. Martha also shared that Committee Member John Baxter has been helping with the marketing pieces for the Art Prize projects. Martha also reassured the committee that everything has been run through the administrators office, and confirmed that she has had nothing but positive feed back from that office.
  - c. On track with software updates, we have gone through a demo for one company, but still have one more to go.
  - d. Hiring administrative staff update- Matthew VanZetten has been temporarily moved to bigger projects, so Stephen Duarte has taken over for him. Martha had met with Matthew and HR prior to that though and asked that Martha give some feedback on the position. HR sent Martha the process of filling out the proposal and submitting it, and then it will need to go back through Steve Duarte. At this point it's not impossible to have it happen at this time of the year. Committee Member Trish Torres brought up possibly asking to have it start as a contract position to show the need, Martha said she would definitely ask about that.
  - e. Committee Chair Mel Bauman brought up the Operational Guidelines that were put together at the Committee Retreat. It is still being reviewed by the Administrators Office, and once they are done it will be brought to the committee.

11. Committee Review-

- a. Rachel brought a list of dates for the 2020 year meeting dates they are as follows noting that only October will not have the Committee Meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday but on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday:

February 6th  
March 5th  
April 2nd  
May 7th  
June 4th  
July 2nd  
August 6th  
September 3rd  
October 8th  
November 5th  
December 3rd

12. New Business-

- a. Chair Bauman advised that as Vice Chair Mary Johnson will take over as Chair at the February meeting, she will also need to pick a Vice Chair. Vice Chair Johnson agreed that she would have communication with the committee member by the next meeting.

13. Survey Responses – 9

14. Around the Table-

15. Public Comment –

- a. Paul Ryan wanted to share of two events going on in February:
- February 15<sup>th</sup> Joint Services Ball at the Amway
  - February 29<sup>th</sup> West Michigan Veterans Coalition Hiring Fair

Paul Ryan also wanted to thank Admin Rachel Wustman and Supervisor Ryan Grams for their help specifically over the last few months of quick responses and help with some personal questions of benefits for family members as well.

- b. Tony Torres from Veterans Treatment Court- Graduated 17 veterans in the 2019 year, and are just under a 95% success rate. On track to graduate 12 veterans this year, 20 admitted and 3 waiting.

16. Adjournment –Veterans Services Committee Chair Mel Bauman moved adjourned the meeting at 9:45

17. The next Veterans Services Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, February 6th, at 8:30am in the Veterans Services front conference room.