

Kent County Veterans Services



82 Ionia NW, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
Phone: (616) 632-5722 e-mail: kcdva@KentCountyMI.gov
www.accesskent.com/VeteransAffairs

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Paul Potter, Chair
Fred Chambers
Mary Johnson
Harold Mast
Mel Bauman

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 5, 2015 – 8:30 a.m.

82 Ionia NW, STE 380

MINUTES

Present: Mary Johnson, Fred Chambers, Harold Mast, Mel Bauman, Carrie Roy, Richard Goodrich, Sawyer Reedy

Guests: Theresa Robinson, Jerry Dennis, Simeon Switzer

Absent: Paul Potter, Wayman Britt

- 1. Call to Order** – Fred called the meeting to order.
- 2. Open Introductions/ Pledge:** Fred led in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3. Public Comment:** Theresa talked about the current transportation issues and asked for the board to develop a transportation service for our Kent County Veterans. Theresa had mentioned that Elena had put out surveys for Kent County Veterans and where their transportation needs are most needed. Carrie had mentioned the idea of mailing out surveys with return postage regarding transportation needs and also mentioned the idea of asking the County for their help in providing vans. These vans would be driven by volunteers and would help in the transportation needs of local Kent County Veterans for medical purposes only. Fred had proposed to get more information on this situation and a better plan for next month's meeting. Fred motioned to move the transportation issue to the Strategic Plan for April. Motion was seconded by Mary. Motion was passed by Fred. Theresa also made a comment regarding the line item for veteran's scholarship in the AFF report. She stated that this was not mentioned during the millage campaign, however, transportation was talked about frequently but there is no line item for transportation. Carrie explained that the budget was submitted on schedule with the county's process and is changeable.
- 4. Approval of Agenda/Minutes:** Approve minutes of February 5, 2015. Fred motioned to approve minutes. Motion seconded by Mel. Motion passed.
- 5. Directors, Monthly Operational Update Report:** Carrie reviewed a one page summary report for the committee. She reported that in the month of February, the department accomplished the following:
 - Claims: 45
 - Burials: \$3,900
 - Markers: \$0
 - MVTF: \$3,474.13

"Kent County . . . where diversity and inclusion matter"

- SSR: \$15,137.32
- Monthly Awards: \$12,435

There were five outreaches at assisted living facilities for the month of February.

6. Team Reports:

• Community Outreach: Team – Roy, Potter, and Bauman

- A. Mel had mentioned that Lisa’s good plan of placing four billboards on the four corners of Kent County along with placing signs on city busses. Lisa worked out a plan with IHeart Media. We will receive three weekly spots with Wood Radio, 1300, and 106.9 on Sundays. Monday through Saturday we will receive a total of 24 spots for \$1,100.
- B. The grand opening is coming along well and is on March 26 at 10:30 A.M. We will have Jr ROTC and bagpipes. We will recognize the veteran of the year at our next Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting. The furniture is in the new building and we are wrapping up the final touches. Carrie has received about 250 surveys back from local veterans. There was confusion of us being the Outpatient Clinic. Other than that, we had positive feedback.

7. Strategic Plan: Team – Roy, Ophoff, and Mast

• Community Rebuilders

- A. Carrie and Harold met with Vera Beech about having a focus group with local veterans so we can personally hear their needs and how Kent County Veteran Services could better serve them. Carrie provided the committee with a statistical data report of how Community Rebuilders housed veterans. Project costs:
 - The four scheduled groups: \$2,800
 - Analysis and Reporting: \$3,000
 - Subtotal: \$5,800
 - If additional two groups are needed: \$1,200
 - Grand Total with Groups: \$7,000
- B. 60% of Community Rebuilder’s reporting veteran clients are eligible to receive SSR. Carrie mentioned that Community Rebuilders has veterans that are waiting on housing and that there is an unmet need. Carrie will forward more statistical data on this issue once it is received. Harold motioned approval for Carrie to go forward with the hiring of Community Rebuilders to do a focus group. Motion was seconded by Mel. Motion Passed.

8. Veteran College Aid and Assistance Scholarship: Team – Potter, Johnson, and Switzer. Reporting, Director Carrie Roy

- Carrie defined the scholarship more in depth. The tentative annual budget for this program is \$112,000. This budget will cover 40 scholarships, for the amount of \$2,800 each scholarship. The scholarship award will pay \$700 per month towards the recipient’s rent or utilities for four months, paying the vendor directly. The key to success for this scholarship would be the mentorship program. This scholarship would consist of five mentors from the committee to better help, assist, and guide the student veteran. Harold mentioned the possible issue of not having enough time to mentor a student with having a full-time schedule. Harold also proposed the idea of cutting the budget and student

number in half for the first year to see how the scholarship would play out; \$56,000 annual budget and 20 students. Harold also proposed the idea of renaming the program to Student Assistance and Mentoring Program. Fred made a motion to approve name change. Motion seconded by Mel. Motion passed. Mel proposed the program description be changes to Harold's suggestion to cut the program in half. Mel also added that we look to see if there is interest on the United Veterans Counsel to mentor student veterans as well. Mary motioned to cut the program in half based on Mel's input and Harold's suggestion. Motion seconded by Mel. Motion Passed. A redefined proposal will be written up by April 2 for next month's meeting.

9. Veterans Transitional Housing: Study Team – Chambers and Johnson.

Reporting Mary Johnson

- Mary mentioned the idea of not renting a trailer in a trailer park due to a fire hazard. She recommended a duplex or a housing division. Fred had mentioned a side-by-side duplex and not a two-story duplex for a one year lease. Mary stated that the idea that the location is a key factor. The duplex and/or housing facility needs to be in a nice neighborhood to help mentor a way of life. Carrie had suggested getting a hold of some property managers to get more details on how everything would work. Fred mentioned that there will be inspections of the property to make sure it is being kept up. Fred and Mary discussed an appropriate date for another meeting with Carrie to go over details of how this could work.

10. New Business: N/A

11. Around the Table: N/A

12. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:00 am. The next meeting will be held April 2, 2015 at 8:30 am at 836 Fuller Ave NE.