

# Kent County Veterans Services

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## VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Paul Potter  
Harold Mast  
Fred Chamber  
Mary Johnson  
Mel Bauman

## Department of Veterans Services Committee

April 2, 2015 – 8:30a.m.

### Minutes

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Meeting called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Chair Paul Potter.

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

Absent: None.

### SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

#### Veteran of the Year

The United Veterans Council of Kent County recognized Marion Graff as Veteran of the Year for 2013.

#### Open Introduction / Pledge

Marion Graff led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Public Comment

None.

#### Approval of Agenda / Minutes

March Minutes will be approved at the next month's meeting once noted changes are made.

#### Directors, Monthly Operational Update Report

Carrie reviewed a one page summary report for the committee. She reported that in the month of March, the department accomplished the following:

Claims: 42  
Burials: \$3,600.00  
Markers: \$0  
MVTF: \$6,232.00  
SSR: \$8,150.00  
Monthly Awards: TBD

Carrie had mentioned that it's been a challenge to get the monthly awards. She had also mentioned that she will ask some members of the Detroit Regional Office at the

next conference this month, if there's any way to run a report out of VBMS to show claim numbers that have been awarded.

Carrie went over the budget and pointed out the increase in SSR in terms of being able to reach out to more veterans and help those in need. Due to our increase in our veteran clientele, we believe we need to hire another full-time Service Officer. She had mentioned hiring our Work Study, Erin Lesnock, because she is already trained and does very well with her clients and had asked the committee to keep this in mind.

Paul had suggested making another line item for a Contingent Budget for extra funding from other budget lines instead of consistently moving money around. Carrie said that she will get with Fiscal to set up the Contingency fund.

#### Old Business / Status Updates

##### 1. AmeriCorps MOU

- a. Carrie mentioned that she had interviewed with the AmeriCorps volunteer, Tom Mousseau, and he will start training on Wednesday, April 8. Tom will use our office as a Home Base for his work. He will go out, not only to Kent County, but to all of West Michigan to inform other veterans of their benefits and where and how to get them.

##### 2. Community Rebuilders

- a. Carrie mentioned that she had spoken with Tom Dempsey and he doesn't believe that we need to go through a board process to hire Community Rebuilders to do a focus group. Once Carrie gets a follow up from Tom about whether or not we will need to go through the board process, she will contact Community Rebuilders to get the process started. Paul had asked Carrie to put together a contract for this process.

##### 3. Community Outreach

- a. We have four billboards up on the four corners of Kent County, signs on the city buses, and radio ads which have generated multiple walk-ins and phone calls regarding questions on what Kent County Veterans Services do.
- b. Lisa put together a quarterly outreach plan, meaning two weeks out of every quarter, there will be a constant flow of information with our billboards, bus signs, and radio ads.

##### 4. Strategic Plan

- a. Harold mentioned that Wayman had organized a meeting with one of his past strategic planning staff members at Steelcase, Dan Wilijen, to help. Harold suggested that Carrie send out a Performance Management Plan to all the members of the County Commission.

#### Transitional Housing Study

Fred mentioned that Theresa will be getting in touch with some realtors about leasing a two family unit house. Carrie said there is a meeting next Tuesday, April 7 at 1:00 p.m. regarding housing. As of now, we put veterans in America's Best Motel for temporary housing for those that have housing lined up. Paul mentioned the legal and reliability issues of renting a home to veterans and the possible outcomes.

Carrie had mentioned that we have six counties without a County Veteran Service Officer. She and Michael Smith had been to Ionia, Mason, and Lake County talking to their Boards of Commissioners and their County Administration going over the importance of having a County Service Officer.

Carrie suggested once the current issues are taken care of, we should better prioritize the work that needs to be done by doing one task at a time. Paul entertained a motion of prioritizing the work load. Mel seconded the motion and Harold supported the motion.

#### New Business

Carrie put together a schedule for committee members to come into the office for help when the team will be at their conference. Mary had offered to come in on Tuesday, April 21 and Friday, April 24. Fred volunteered to come in all week. Mel had volunteered to come in on Thursday, April 23.

Mary had asked the committee to consider the possibility of using SSR on particular circumstances that need immediate attention that the MVTF would usually take care of. She gave an example of purchasing a vehicle for a veteran in need.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 7 at 8:30a.m.