

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: May 21, 2019

Time: 2 p.m.

Location: American Legion Post #31, 2 Sycamore Street, Westminster

Veteran's Advisory Council Mission Statement: To evaluate, develop and promote new and existing programs and services for Veterans and their families within Carroll County.

Veteran's Advisory Council Vision Statement: That Carroll County offers our Veterans quality services and programs to ensure the enrichment and enhancements of life for our men and women and their families.

Council Present: Jack Curran, Bill Murphy, Bill Nash, Commissioner Ed Rothstein (Ex-Officio), Mick Schmidt, Elaine May Stem, Commissioner Richard Weaver (Ex-Officio), Steve Whisler

County Staff Present: Francine Hahn, Jim Hillman, Mike Messina, Stacey Nash, Celene Steckel, Gina Valentine, Leslie Wagner, Chris Winebrenner, Shannan Zepp

Other Present: Kim Benson, Adam DeLauter, Bob Eney, Mike Gallagher, David Galloway, Greg Kahlert, Bill McKenna, Ted McNett, Keith Midberry, Todd Mitchell, Barbara Ringrose, Gary Scarbeau, Christine Schiller, Gary Saylor, Jean Trawinski, Charles Wheatley, Alex Whitney

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair's Comments (Elaine May Stem) – Elaine opened the meeting with a welcome. Everyone went around the room and introduced themselves. A special thank you to the American Legion for hosting today's meeting.
- b. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Elaine May Stem.
- c. Commissioner's Report (Commissioners Weaver and Rothstein) – Commissioner Weaver reminded everyone to educate our younger generation this coming weekend about the real reason for Memorial Day. Commissioner Rothstein announced that the Community Media Center will be interviewing veterans on June 8th as part of their Oral History Collection Day. He also shared that Carroll County is a model for the state and region on local veteran services and programs. He shared that last month New Freedom Lions Club had Secretary George Owings who spoke on the model of Carroll County but encouraged everyone to continue to do more for our veterans.

2. Old Business

- a. A quorum (6 + voting members) was established with 6 voting and 2 ex-officio members present.
- b. Approval of Minutes (Elaine May Stem) – Draft minutes from the April meeting were reviewed. Bill Nash made a motion and Bill Murphy seconded. All were in favor and April's minutes were accepted.
- c. Monthly Program Reports (Veteran Services Staff) – Brief written summary and monthly numbers served.
 - i. Veteran's Program Coordinators' Reports (Jim Hillman) – April 2019:
 1. 23 new representations
 2. 82 claims submitted
 3. 11 home visits
 4. 82 in-office contacts

5. 1,095 telephone contacts
6. Return on investment, based on known awards: approximately \$628,783.00 for compensation and pension (monthly); approximately \$14,630,309.00 since inception of the program (October 2013)
7. Jim reported that there is usually a higher demand during the summer months. Mike Messina is now on board to assist as well. Calls are returned within 48 to 72 hours and priority goes to the claims they are already working on. Administrative support has been given to program which assists in their ability to work with clients.
 - ii. Veteran's Shuttle Report (Stacey Nash) – April 2019:
 1. 25 veterans were served, with 1 in wheelchair and 17 home pick-ups
 - a. Baltimore – 13 veterans – 34 trips
 - b. Loch Raven – 2 veteran – 2 trips
 - c. Fort Detrick – 4 veterans – 4 trips
 - d. Washington, DC – 1 veteran – 1 trip
 - e. Martinsburg (one way – 1 hour and 40 minutes) – 6 veterans – 10 trips
 2. Total Cost = \$8,000.00
 3. Stacey reported that during the summer months the ridership increases.
 - iii. Employment Initiatives for Veterans Update (John Veney) – No report.
- d. Update on Veteran Direct Home and Community Based Services Program Grant (Francine Hahn) – This program is funded by the VA and provides personal care for Veterans to remain in the community. Each county has the capacity to provide services to a maximum of 5 Veterans. Carroll County currently has four Veterans in the program with one opening. This program is run through Maryland Department of Aging and their Fiscal Intermediary (contracted 3rd Party) is changing. They are waiting on the State for referrals; however, there has been a delay. This has traditionally been a difficult program to manage. In this program the veteran served becomes the employer as they cannot hire through an agency. Commissioner Rothstein said he will discuss with Secretary Owings to see if any improvements can be made.
- e. Updates on Veteran Services Program Grant (Shannan Zepp) – Currently four veterans are being served: one will be moving to an apartment this week, another is waiting on a voucher, another has met with Adam from the VA regarding HUD VASH and another is in need of a vehicle for work. Food cards, rental assistance, gas, electric assistance, bus tickets and transportation have been provided to those Veterans seeking help. Jim was able to assist a veteran with vision benefits and navigating the VA in regards to new prosthetics. Thanks to Hampstead American Legion and Westminster Elks for assisting with cleaning a veteran's apartment while in medical rehab.
- f. Update on Carroll County Veterans Independence Project – CCVIP – Elaine announced there is a Car Show fundraiser on August 3rd at Len Stoler.
- g. Update on Friends of Disabled American Veterans in Carroll County (Bill Murphy) – Bill reported that they have had over 26 pick-ups for veteran appointments and donations. Recently they were able to donate a scooter to the widow of a veteran, worked with Mission of Mercy in Taneytown for transportation to their dental van, received power wheelchair and hospital bed donations, had serviced three 5-liter oxygen concentrators, made a video presentation of their organization, and advertised in the Merchandiser. They are currently accepting used cars, trucks and vans that are still in working order for donation to local veterans. They have applied for a Kahlert Foundation grant to secure funding for a newer used wheelchair accessible van

and to help with operation costs. This Saturday, May 25th they will be hosting a fundraiser at the Hampstead Walmart. They are in need of volunteer drivers. There was a discussion on the possible savings their organization provides the Veterans Shuttle program. They are adding value to veteran services in Carroll County.

- h. Executive Committee (Gina Valentine) – There was no Executive Committee meeting in May. They will meet next in June.

3. New Business

- a. Nominations for Chair and Co-Chair (7/1/2019-6/30/2020) – Nomination forms were handed out. If nominated for either position, the council member must accept being placed on the ballot.
- b. Articles in Carroll County Times – The veteran focused column will begin in July. To submit an article for the column, please forward to Leslie or Gina. It must be between 600-650 words. Chris Winebrenner of the County's Communication Office will be proofreading for grammar and spelling. The purpose of the column is to spread the word on veteran related services in Carroll, as well as share veterans' perspectives, human interest stories, and healthcare related veteran issues, just to name a few.
- c. Veteran ID's (Veteran Services Program) – You can apply for a VA issued ID that can be used for receiving discounts at various businesses. It is a tedious process and the Veterans Services Program at Carroll County Bureau of Aging & Disabilities can assist you by appointment only. Since the application requires your social security number and DD214 information, there have been fraudulent vendors who have exploited this process. There will be a local event planned in the near future that will take applications. Once scheduled information will be forwarded to the group. American Legion recently had an event where they assisted 135 veterans with coordination from the VA. Follow-up appointments had to be made for those that had issues with the submission and it took about 9-10 months to receive in the mail.

4. Announcements:

- a. Carroll County Senior & Community centers will be hosting seminars on how to apply for the MVA's Real ID.
- b. Carroll Hospice celebrated their 20th anniversary and raised \$205,000 at their Taste of Carroll fundraiser.
- c. Leonard Kirk, a 95 year old WWII POW of France will be speaking at the VFW after the Memorial Day parade around 1pm in the pavilion.
- d. The Veteran Book Club is the 3rd Monday at 6pm in the Finksburg library. Last night they have 14 in attendance. Dinner is provided.
- e. Old Line Statesman will be performing the weekend of June 1st at the Carroll Community College with special pricing for veterans.
- f. A Korean Veterans Memorial will be held on June 22nd at Charles Wheatley's home with a rain date of June 29th. He also has a car available for donation, to be presented at the memorial.
- g. If you will be walking in the Memorial Day parade see Gina after the meeting.
- h. Steve Whisler announced that there is a change in the Tri-Care health care benefits for veterans.
- i. See Ted McNett if you are interested in a Luna moth life-sized sculpture.
- j. June and July meetings will be held at the American Legion while construction is still taking place at the VFW.
- k. Bill Nash announced that Haven Shoemaker will be presenting a D Day Proclamation at 1pm to the County Commissioners.

5. Next Meeting: June 18, 2019 at 2pm – American Legion Post #31, 2 Sycamore Street, Westminster.