

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: June 18, 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: Larry Burbank, Jack Curran, Marc Fisher, Bill Murphy, Bill Nash, Mick Schmidt, Elaine May Stem, Commissioner Richard Weaver (Ex-Officio), Steve Whisler, Tom Woerner

County Staff Present: Francine Hahn, Jim Hillman, Christine Kay, Mike Messina, Stacey Nash, Celene Steckel, Leslie Wagner, Chris Winebrenner

Other Present: Kim Benson, Bob Eney, Alison Malachowski, Gary Scarbeau, Elaine Scott, Gary Saylor, Chris Schiller, Ray Sims, Charles Wheatley

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair's Comments (Larry Burbank) – Larry 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. There will be a table at the door so that attendees can sign in and also pick up copies of the agenda, draft minutes, as well as any flyers or paperwork relevant to Veterans.
- b. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Elaine May Stem.
- c. Commissioner's Report (Commissioner Weaver) – Commissioner Weaver announced that Bill Murphy with Friends of Disabled American Veterans in Carroll County is an applicant for the Carroll Business Challenge run by the Chamber of Commerce. Bill is competing against 46 other applicants for a \$5,000 prize.

2. Old Business

- a. A quorum (6 + voting members) was established with 9 voting and 1 ex-officio member present.
- b. Approval of Minutes (Larry Burbank) – Draft minutes from the May meeting were reviewed. Bill Murphy made a motion and Elaine May Stem seconded. All were in favor and May'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) – May 2019:
 1. 34 new representations
 2. 75 claims submitted
 3. 21 home visits
 4. 97 in-office contacts
 5. 1,199 telephone contacts
 6. Return on investment, based on known awards: approximately \$639,844.00 for compensation and pension (monthly); approximately \$17,407,180.00 since inception of the program (October 2013)

7. Jim reported that there is usually a spike during the summer months. Mike Messina has finished his accreditation training and is waiting for approval. The return on investment trend has not plateaued but has continued on a positive slope. When a veteran passes away their compensation and pension is removed from the monthly and since inception totals.
 8. Jim reported that application processing for veteran death benefits for spouses has increased from approximately three months to six plus months. If it is mailed and scanned to electronic files it can take an additional four months. Since the criteria has changed and claims have been returned for revisions, the additional time has become burdensome.
 9. Francine Hahn reported that they have been working with the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program on a case involving a veteran's surviving spouse and a possible involuntary discharge from a local assisted living facility.
- ii. Veteran's Shuttle Report (Stacey Nash) – May 2019:
 1. 39 veterans were served and 18 home pick-ups
 - a. Baltimore – 26 veterans – 52 trips
 - b. Loch Raven – 3 veteran – 3 trips
 - c. Fort Detrick – 4 veterans – 7 trips
 - d. Washington, DC – 1 veteran – 3 trips
 - e. Martinsburg – 8 veterans – 10 trips
 - f. Shepherdstown – 1 veteran – 1 trip
 2. Total Cost = \$8,700.00
 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 – No report.
 - e. Updates on Veteran Services Program Grant (Mike Messina) – Currently four veterans are being served with hotel housing. Two have applied for HUD-VASH and one will be paying for their own housing. Food cards, gas, water assistance, and a service animal have been provided to those Veterans seeking help.
 - f. Update on Carroll County Veterans Independence Project – CCVIP – Marc Fisher reported that he was asked to assist with locating commercial property for this project. CCVIP has already looked at properties owned by the county and none have been suitable for the project. With the shelter component, the commercial property must have certain zoning. The Continuum of Care is looking to rearrange their shelter system and there may be a way to incorporate Veteran shelter beds. Citizen Services will be meeting with Human Services Programs of Carroll County and CCVIP shortly to discuss this possibility. The need for shelter beds in Carroll County right now is for families.
 - g. Update on Friends of Disabled American Veterans in Carroll County (Bill Murphy) – Bill reported that they have had over 32 pick-ups for veteran appointments and donations. Bill presented veteran Ray Sims with a power wheelchair that had been donated. They are currently accepting used cars, trucks and vans that are still in working order for donation to local veterans. Their Hampstead Walmart fundraiser collected \$1,170 and recruited three new drivers. They have applied for a Carroll Hospital Foundation grant for two AED's and they have received a \$45,000 grant from the Kahlert Foundation, which will be used in part to purchase a used van with wheel chair ramp. A special thank you to Carroll County government for their support.

- h. Executive Committee – Marc Fisher reported that at June’s Executive Committee meeting the structure of VAC meetings was discussed to include streamlining and making reports short and concise. They also discussed having a presence at upcoming events including the 4-H Fair and Fall Fest. Volunteers will be needed.
3. New Business
- a. Votes for Chair and Co-Chair (7/1/2019-6/30/2020) – Nominations were Larry Burbank and Marc Fisher for Chair and Elaine May Stem, Mick Schmidt, and Marc Fisher for Co-Chair. Marc was elected Chair and Elaine May Stem was elected Co-Chair. A thank you was given to Larry Burbank for his commitment to Veterans in Carroll County and his service to the Veterans Advisory Council as Chair for these past few years.
 - b. Articles in Carroll County Times – The veteran focused column titled “Veteran’s View” will be published the 1st Tuesday of every month, beginning July 2nd. Topics include the Veteran Services Program of Carroll County, Veterans Advisory Council, Hospice, Veteran experiences, etc. The column will be 525 to 650 words and would be submitted for editing and review. Please reach out to Gina or Celene with ideas.
 - c. July Meeting – A vote was taken and due to the high number of Council members that are unable to attend, the meeting in July has been canceled.
 - d. 4-H Fair – Gina will make application for the Veterans Advisory Council to have a booth at the Fair. Marc has requested that the booth be next to his so that he can assist with coverage. He will be putting together a list of busy times so that an email can be sent out for booth coverage during those times.
 - e. Mission Act – Jim Hillman gave a handout and report of the VA Mission Act of 2018. This Act ensures Veterans will receive the best care possible, whether in a VA facility or through a community provider. There are eligibility requirements and the VA Care Network will most likely not be established until November 2019. It was also noted that Carroll County does not have a lot of providers in the VA Network. Jim reported that there is a meeting at the VA tomorrow to finalize the details of the Act and would provide more information.
 - f. Phil Munley will be attending the August 20, 2019 VAC meeting.
4. Announcements:
- a. Charles Wheatley is seeking Korean War Veterans for a Memorial Flagpole Service on June 22nd at his home.
 - b. Jim Hillman and Bob Eney participated in the Memorial Day Parade and carried the Veterans Advisory Council banner.
 - c. Carroll Hospice is still looking for Veterans to volunteer for their “We Salute You” program.
 - d. VFW Post #467 is hosting Friday night care shows throughout the summer.
5. Next Meeting: August 20, 2019 at 2pm – American Legion Post #31, 2 Sycamore Street, Westminster.