

Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services  
Veterans' Affairs Committee  
January 13, 2016

- I. Call to order by Chair, Michael Quinn at 8:09 AM
  
- II. Roll Call  
Members Present: Chad Dillon, Tom Burton, Mike Quinn, Bill Becker, Mike Jones  
Members Absent:  
Others Present: Mike Hoss, Brien Brockway, Beth Ridge, Courtney Davis, Commissioner Mike Seals
  
- III. Review of previous month's minutes  
Motion made by B. Becker to approve the minutes from the meeting on December 9, 2015.  
Seconded by T. Burton. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
  
- IV. Citizen's Time. Chair M. Quinn opened the floor for citizen's time. No comment, issue or discussion was brought forward. Citizen's time was closed.
  
- V. Committee Elections.  
Chair M. Quinn remaindered the committee that committee elected positions were for a one year term and that there was need to elect committee positions for the 2016 year.  
  
A motion was made by B. Becker to re-appoint Mr. Michael Quinn to the position of Chair.  
Seconded by T. Burton. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.  
  
A motion was made by T. Burton to appoint Mr. Chadwick Dillon to the position of Vice-Chair. Seconded by B. Becker. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.  
  
A motion was made by B. Becker to re-appoint Mr. Michael Jones to the position of Secretary. Seconded by M. Quinn. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
  
- VI. Financial Review  
Financial Analyst, Beth Ridge, reviewed the preliminary year-end financial statements. There are no budgetary concerns of note. There may be a few expenses that still come in for 2015, specifically in the case of Burial Benefits. Any that come in prior to February 1<sup>st</sup> will be put accounted for in 2015 expenses. After that time they will become a 2016 expense. In December, \$4000 was transferred from the Burial Benefit account to that of SSRF to cover assistance expenses. Michigan Veterans' Trust Fund has some funding that will carry over into the 2016 year.  
  
Committee discussion ensued in regards to the 2016 budget. The SSRF will have \$5000 allocated by the County once the Office has demonstrated that there is a need for and a



consistent use of the funds. Additionally, there should be excess funding in Burial Benefits that can be utilized for SSRF assistance.

Brien Brockway provided an update about the Michigan Veterans' Trust Fund. A few applications have been approved by the State. Most recent, one was approved for bed bug extermination. Additionally, one application is waiting on State review and approval for a new Furnace.

Board discussed alternative ways and methods that could be implemented to support larger (more costly) needs for Veterans. An Idea voiced was a loan program or a partnership system established with other veterans' service organizations in the community; an overarching organization made up of all smaller veterans' service organizations in the community is a need to accomplish this.

Brief review of all office assistance programs was completed. Soldier and Sailor Relief Fund is seeing a quicker turn around on Food Vouchers which helps with the budget process, but the Office also saw an increase in requests during December and January. New standards will take place in the next few weeks. One Veteran with a family to support came in with a need for a 3<sup>rd</sup> voucher; M. Hoss gained approval from Chairman Quinn to grant this award.

#### VII. New Business

New Veteran Initiative was shared by Service Officer, M. Hoss. Having recently received a death certificate that was for a young veteran as a result of suicide, He is planning to start an independent group for veterans to come and talk to other veterans. It will be a place for veterans to share and talk outside of the formalized systems. This will be outside of the County regular programming, but has been seen as a need. The other initiative leader is Bob Short (who is a part of Buddy to Buddy); basically the group will be an outlet for Veterans to share, talk and listen to each other. Goal is to provide a resource for sharing and to connect veterans to other community resources. Committee discussion followed about how some veterans are still isolating and not involving themselves in group activities; perhaps this group can be a resource for identifying these needs and these individuals. Commissioner Seals recommended that Disability Network be sought out for involvement as well.

Committee discussed other needs of veterans, and expressed concern that many do not want to go to the VA or to another professional, but are in need of these services. Outreach to Veterans should include other service officers, Buddy to Buddy program, veteran organizations, churches, and colleges.

M. Hoss announced that the Veterans Stand Down will move back to September. An exact date will be determined on the availability of the Salvation Army building.

#### VIII. Commissioner's Time



Commissioner Seals shared that Mr. Neuzil has officially begun his role as the County Administrator and invited members to a welcome reception to be held the same evening.

An update on the Commission Chairs was provided. Commissioner Taylor is the Chair and Commissioner Heppler is Vice-Chair.

Update on location of the new HCS building was provided; DHS has expressed interest in leasing space from the County at the new location. RFP's for the drafting of plans will be issued soon. Additionally, the new Court House will be opening early in the New Year.

Judge Curtis Bell has notified Commissioner Seals that the Veterans Court Planning Grant has been approved. This is for a 6 month planning process to determine needs and create next steps for implementing the Veterans Court in Kalamazoo.

Committee requested future clarification on the role of the committee in relation to advisory or oversight roles. Committee also asked the Veterans Service Officers to put some thought into how they should fit into future department organizational structures. Focus should be on where best can the office serve veterans.

IX. Adjournment.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the committee by B. Becker. Seconded by M. Jones. Motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 9:13 AM

