

APPROVED
-11815 CID

Kalamazoo County Veterans' Affairs Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2015

- I. Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Michael Quinn at 8:31 AM
- II. Roll Call
Members in Attendance: Bill Becker, Michael Quinn, Michael Seals
Others in Attendance: Don Jarzembeck, Annette Littlejohn, Lucinda Stinson, Beth Ridge, Courtney Davis
- III. Candidate Interviews
Presentation topic provided ahead of time to each candidate: "The development of a work plan to improve outreach for the HCS Veterans Service Office – The How To."
(20 Minutes for presentation & 5 minutes for Q & A)

Mr. Mike Hoss

Began with his background; outline his approach to thinking about the question and how he would help the office to achieve increased and consistent outreach. Addressed how to approach the "It's not for me" attitude. Sees office as a hub for linkages, not a resting place for all services. Grant application would be an important addition to office funding and outreach capabilities.

Committee members and attendees engaged in Q & A with Mr. Hoss

Mr. Curtis Allen

Summary of presentation provided; career & family background; Outlined work plan by looking outreach venues/types, potential obstacles, timelines, office efficiencies); Addressed short-term needs & long-term goals; focus on volunteers for the office & communication (serving all veterans and social networking)

Committee members and attendees engaged in Q & A with Mr. Allen

Mr. James Brenneman

Outline plan through the focus of "Show us how to improve HCS –VO outreach for Kal. county's Veterans"; work plan outline personal experiences, veteran interaction and 5 step process; important to identify who are Veterans are; Important to set a system to measure improvement (have to measure to improve outreach); looked at alternatives for outreach; take away the wonder of the office; idea of "bulletin" board platform for communication

Committee members and attendees engaged in Q & A with Mr. Brenneman

Committee Discussion ensued following candidate interviews. One more candidate to present at a later date before final decisions will be made. Committee discussed their goals for the office and what a successful candidate would show: leadership ability, empathy, heart, passion and ability to meet veterans at any level (life and military rank); accessibility is key; ability to be liaison to the County Commission; building foundation for office outreach anew.

Time discussed for last candidate to present – tentatively set for Wednesday, June 17th at 8:30 AM. Follow-up email will be sent to committee members and then meeting will be publically posted.

- IV. Review of previous meeting minutes from May 13th meeting of the committee.
Motion made to approve the minutes as presented from the May 13th meeting by
Commissioner Seals
Seconded by Bill Becker
Carried by unanimous vote
- V. Citizen's Time
Chairperson Michael Quinn opened the floor for sharing. Community member Annette Littlejohn introduced herself to the committee – was in the military for 20 years. No further comments, concerns, issues for discussion were presented. Citizens' time closed.
- VI. Financial Review
Beth Ridge, HCS Sr. Financial Analyst, presented monthly financial statement and year to date information to the committee - including information about the Stand Down & the Flags and Markers distributed to the municipalities.
Burial Policy approved earlier in the year is now active; as of June 1st
- Committee discussion ensued. Members would like to send a thank you and appreciation letter to those who were involved in the planning and execution of the Stand Down event. A motion was made for a formal letter to be sent out on behalf of the committee from the Chair for this purpose.
Seconded.
Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
- VII. New Business
- Mr. Quinn shared the voice recording currently on the Veterans Office phone; members were not pleased with the lack of information and courtesy given to those who were calling. HCS Deputy Director, Lucinda Stinson, agreed on behalf of the office and department and assured members it would be changed immediately and a better system would be set-up to address veterans calling the office. Discussion followed about alternative ways to support the office during this transition – DVA would be a source to begin; temporary employee, volunteers.

Commissioner Seals shared the experience of a community veteran who was suffering from PTSD; individual recently was sentenced to Jail for 40 days because he was missed in the court system and not correctly rerouted through CMH for mental health assistance; example of what happens when we do not work together. Discussion underway about the creation of a Veterans Court in Kalamazoo County; this needs to be a renewed focus for the office – other counties already have this established. It is an example of what a millage for veterans could support. There is a great need for having an internal process for identifying these cases; not missing veterans suffering from PTSD.

- VIII. Motion made to adjourn. Seconded. Motion Carried. Chairperson Quinn adjourned the committee meeting at 8:56 AM