

APPROVED  
4-8-15 eb

Veterans' Affairs Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 11, 2015

- I. Committee meeting call to order by Chairperson Michael Quinn at 8:04 AM
- II. Roll Call  
Members Present: Michael Seals, Michael Quinn, Bill Becker  
Members Absent: Audree Morrison, Michael Jones  
Others Present: Aaron Edlefson, Dr. Gillian Stoltman, Beth Ridge, Courtney Davis
- III. Review of previous month's meeting minutes  
Motion made to accept the meeting minutes from February 11, 2015 as presented.  
Seconded.  
Carried.
- IV. Citizen's time  
Chairperson Michael Quinn opened the floor for sharing. No comments, questions or issues were brought forward. Citizen's time was closed.
- V. Old Business  
Veterans Service Specialist Candidate Presentations:  
Presentation Topic "How Does Poverty Impact Veterans and Their Families"  
All Candidates received 10 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for Q&A  
  
Brien Brockway "Poverty: The Visible and Invisible"  
  
Dustin Lounsbury "How Does Poverty Affect Veterans and Their families"  
  
Dorothy Steffey-Wagner "How does Poverty Impact Veterans and Their Families"
- VI. Executive Session  
Motion made to move into an Executive Session for the discussion of Veterans Service Specialist Candidates and for committee appointment decisions.  
Motion Seconded by Bill Becker  
Motion Carried by unanimous vote.  
  
Executive Session Commenced at 9:03 AM  
Executive Session concluded and general meeting reconvened at 9:17 AM.
- VII. General Meeting Reconvenes

Committee members shared decision to offer position of Veterans Service Specialist to Mr. Brien Brockway.

General Discussion ensued in regards to fair and competitive compensation rates for both Veterans Service Officers. This will be important to retain high qualified and high quality staff.

Motion made by Commissioner Michael Seals to formally, officially and permanently appoint Aaron Edlefson to the Veterans Service Coordinator position, removing the "interim" status.

Motion Seconded by Bill Becker

Motion carried by unanimous committee vote.

Discussion ensued about future needs of the Veterans Service Office including a need for a 3<sup>rd</sup> staff in an administrative assistance capacity. Committee asked HCS administration present to keep this in consideration for the 2016 budget. May also include a committee request to the County Commission to impose a millage/tax for the Veterans Service Office. HCS Administration was asked to put together a more formal financial report on the potential monetary impact this would have for the office and how this would be utilized in Veterans Service Programs.

#### VIII. FINANCIAL REVIEW

VSO Financial Analyst, Beth Ridge, will provided quarterly financial reports for overall office and program status.

Program review was provided by Veterans Service Coordinator, Aaron Edlefson. Recent trends for burial benefits have shown an increase in WWII Female Veterans.

Committee requested that the Service Office work to include Female Veterans in community remembrance and memorial events as their service is not often a focus.

#### IX. NEW BUSINESS

Veterans Service Coordinator Report:

Burial Benefits Implementing Procedures and Policy was shared with committee.

Notifications will be sent out to area Funeral Homes in the upcoming weeks and the Policy will be effective June 1, 2015. Revisions were made to bring the policy current to State and Federal laws and guidelines.

Aaron sought the committees input on having a Veterans Service Office Volunteer. A State employee, Kay VanDrunen, has been working at Kalamazoo to help with the Staffing shortage, but will be reassigned in Mid April. Sue Weir has since offered to volunteer in the

office 1-2 days a week and would be very helpful with her knowledge and history with the office. All committee members present were very supportive of this decision.

- X. Chairperson Quinn addressed the issue of committee member Audree Morrison having low attendance. Committee asked that the Chair send a notice letter of low attendance to address the need for member participation.
  
- XI. Adjournment  
Motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting of the committee.  
Chairperson Quinn adjourned the committee at 10:00 AM.