

Thurston County Veterans Advisory Board
25 January 2021
Meeting Minutes

Members present: Sean “Smitty” Smith, Jason Matheney, Brandon Frawley, Matt Huot, Fran Beard, Gary Walker

Others present: Anneliese Cole, Mark Moffett, and Ashley Strauss (Thurston County Public Health), Keith Looker (Manager, Lacey Veterans Services Hub), Jim Nutter (American Legion)

Meeting Opening

Meeting was opened at 3:32 pm.

October 2020 Minutes approved with Matt making recommendation and Lisa seconding.

VAF Large Balance

- There is a large balance of these funds and plan needs to be developed on how they should be used.
- Ashley will send an actual balance out to the board members or present it at the next meeting.
- One possibility was a VIP program type program. This would help with care payments, car tires, car insurance, work clothes, and work tools. The request would be deferred to other agencies first and need to be validated for legality.
- Ashley and Lis will research and report back at the April 2021 meeting.

COVID Impact on VAF

- COVID continues to impact the VAF. Ashley has gotten about 7-10 requests due to the COVID.
- Folks are behind on mortgage payments, utilities.
- No further revisions of procedures are needed. No unusual noted. Can do waivers.
- Inclusion of medical bills may not be a good idea.
- Purchase of Safeway gift cards may be an option once the Hub runs out.

TCVAB Communications Update – Fran and Jason

After a short update, they will report back at the April 2021 meeting.

Lacey Veterans Services Hub Update

Keith gave an update on the activities at the Hub. Here is a summary of the update for 4th Quarter:

New Clients: 203

Client Sign In's: 1,092

Client Appointments: 1,474

New Providers/Sponsors

Celtic Ranch, Graham

Gold Star Mothers

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

VeteranRites (Tukwila)

Healthy Gatherings (Lacey)

PTSD Foundation (Gig Harbor)

Washington Department of Veteran Affairs Veteran Suicide Program

PATRIOTlink ® Code of Support Foundation

Events

Outstanding Service to Veterans Award (Team Award) {Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC)}

Auburn Veterans Day Parade

Global Connections to Employment Hiring Event

Thurston County Stand Down (November)

New Services

Food Insecurity Program

Employment Security Division (Expansion)

Notary Services

Vet Café – Red Cross, Lacey Veterans Services Hub, Wounded Warrior Project, February 16, 2021 from 10 to 12

Board Elections

- Chair – Jason Matheny was elected but later had to decline due to work requirements
- Vice Chair – Matt Huot
- Secretary – Brandon Frawley

Around the Room

- Request to permanently change meeting time to afternoon was denied. Evening is better for everyone.
- VA American Legion is offering COVID shots now
- Mark announced COVID vaccine schedule for Thurston County.
- Fran felt that collaboration between board members needed to improve.
- Smitty gave an update on auditor interview. Auditor very pleased with process but suggested that board members take public meeting training.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 pm by Smitty.