

Frederick County Veterans Advisory Council Minutes

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Attendance

Voting Members	Present	Absent	Excused
Deb Childers	X		
Sharon Jacko	X		
David Kaye			X
Rachel Nachlas	X		
Fred Schumacher			X
John Lynn Shanton		X	
Fred Wood			X
Ex-officio members			
Dee Harrison	X		
Michelle Day	X		
Andrea Walker			X
Michael McLane		X	
County Councilman Steve McKay		X	
Delegate Carol Krimm	X		
Nan Mann	X		

Guests: Stephanie Puliver, Doug Silvern, Joyce Anne Sundergill-Schmid (for Andrea Walker), Logan Isaac.

Staff: Linda Bergofsky

Welcome and Introductions

Sharon Jacko opened the meeting by leading the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Establishment of a quorum: After a review of attendance, Sharon Jacko determined that a quorum of voting members was not present.

Approval of Meeting Agenda: Due to the lack of a quorum, the meeting agenda was not approved.

Old Business

Approval of the September 21, 2019 meeting minutes: Due to the lack of a quorum, the meeting minutes from September 18, 2019 were not approved.

Chair's Comments: Sharon Jacko remarked about the November 18 groundbreaking for the Veteran Center. The event was well attended by Veterans' group as well as state and local officials. The project is expected to be a model for other counties. There was some discussion of a bond bill that will be

proposed in the upcoming General Assembly session as well as other funding issues. Sharon also remarked that she gave a talk to the Rotary on women Marines.

Presentation:

Enhancing Every Veterans Experience in the VA: Lt. Col. Laurie Barone (USA, retired) prefaced her remarks with a brief history of the Veterans Experience Office, which began as a singular effort by the VA in San Diego to address issues through community partnerships. The model was then expanded across VA in 2013 and is now headed by Dr. Lynda Davis. Laurie retired from the Army in 2013, and after a brief stint in the Department of the Army, she joined the Veterans Family and Community Engagement Directorate within the VEO. This directorate aims to bring community partners together to talk with each other on common issues through Community Veteran Engagement Boards or CVEBs. The CVEB functions as a forum for sharing around Veterans' concerns, which are then brought to the attention of the appropriate VA administration for resolution. Laurie supports CVEBs in Maryland and West Virginia. Currently, there are five that she works with —Frederick County, Washington County, Chesapeake (Baltimore area), Martinsburg and Huntington. The VEO also sponsors Veteran Experience Action Centers, which are community events similar to claims clinics but on a much larger and robust scale.

Laurie is aware that Frederick County has not only a CVEB, but the VAC and the Frederick Veterans Service Network and separate initiatives from VSOs, as well. While it can be confusing as to the roles and area of focus for each organization, she noted that there appears to be a demonstrable level of collaboration and coordination among these groups when it comes to meeting individual Veteran requests for service or support. However, she did note it may not be as clear who to go to on a bigger issue.

The VAC engaged with Laurie on a number of issues, including how best to effectively coordinate across different organizations, the anticipated role of Mission United, gaps in military cultural competency among community providers, and the importance of engaging with relevant program staff at Martinsburg to address challenges in access to services.

Public Comment

Logan Isaac shared information on USC Title 18, Section 1389 which treats attacks on members of the US military and their family members as a de facto hate crime. This statute relates to the Hate Crime Prevention Act of 2009. Mr. Isaac is trying to gain support for an advocacy campaign that would require the US Department of Justice to promulgate guidance for local law enforcement to apply when prosecuting cases. He has crafted a letter for members of Maryland's congressional delegation to sign.

Stephanie Puliver, USN shared her interest in establishing a Veterans Advisory Council in Washington County. The VAC noted that similar efforts are underway with other individuals and shared their contact information with Ms. Puliver.

Sub-committee Reports

Speakers: Linda Bergofsky distributed the tentative topic list for 2020 VAC meetings. Currently, there are topics and speakers lined up for every meeting except November, which has Veteran Entrepreneurship as a place holder. As a means of better engaging with Veterans in the community, several of the meetings are scheduled to be held outside of Winchester Hall. To that end, Rachel Nachlas has already begun planning for the May forum —with a focus on younger Veterans to be held at Frederick Community College —by holding conversations with her counterparts at Hood College and Mount Saint Mary's.

Bylaws: The bylaws have been approved by the County Executive's office and have been posted to the VAC website.

New Business

Coordinator's Report: Linda Bergofsky gave the Coordinator's Report. Her primary focus this past month has been developing the meeting schedule for next year. She also reported that the VAC participated in Congressman Trone's workshop, where almost 300 individuals attended. Additionally, the VAC was represented at the opening of the Veterans Art Show and at many Veterans Day commemoration events.

With Fred Wood not in attendance, a discussion of opportunities for collaboration between Frederick Community College and Frederick County Workforce Services was deferred.

Carol Krimm reported on a presentation she heard from Montgomery County regarding its efforts to achieve functional zero homelessness among Veterans. She asked Linda to invite the Veteran homeless program coordinator and Dana Burl from the State to our meeting in January to be part of the discussion.

Announcements

Dee Harrison announced that another virtual claims clinic will be held on January 16 at the Ft. Detrick CBOC. Information will be posted on the VAC website.

Sharon Jacko reported that United Way is continuing its discussions with Home Depot in support of Mission United.

Adjournment

Upon completion of business the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Next Meeting:

January 15, 2020 at 6:30 pm, preceded by an Executive Committee meeting at 6 PM. The meeting will be held in Winchester Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room. The meeting will focus on

Veteran homelessness; speakers will include representatives from the Community Action Agency and the Homeless Programs at Martinsburg VA.

Submitted by Linda Bergofsky

Approved