

Veterans Advisory Board of Skagit County

Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, May 11, 2022, at 1300
1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA, 98273

Call to Order

- ❖ **April motioned that we start the May 2022 VAB meeting**
 - o **Ray seconded the motion**
 - o **Motion passed unanimously**
- ❖ Bob Stratton called to order the regular meeting of the Skagit County Veterans Advisory Board at 1304 on Tuesday, May 11, 2022.
 - o There were members attending in-person as well as some attending virtually.
- ❖ We have a quorum and can continue with business

Attendance – Total Attendees

1. Bob Stratton – VAB Board Chair / VFW 5056
2. Chris Diaz - Skagit County Veteran Service Specialist
3. Carmina Villalobos – Community Action of Skagit County / Vets Connect
4. Vernon Hunter – Community Action of Skagit / Vets Connect
5. Randi Bowman – Worksource / Veterans' Employment
6. *Susan Brisby – Community Action of Skagit County / Vets Connect
7. Sue Gregg – VFW Auxiliary
8. April Patterson – American Legion Post 91
9. Bob Garrison - VVA / American Legion Post 91
10. Ray Brown - American Legion Post 43
11. Bill - Elks Club
12. Bo Watkins - Skagit Valley College Veterans Club
- 13.
- 14.

**Members that attended virtually*

Meeting Minutes Approval

- ❖ April 2022 minutes were available for review
- ❖ **Ray motioned that we accept the minutes from the April 2022 meeting**
 - o **Bob Garrison seconded the motion**
 - o **Motion passed unanimously**

Reports

- ❖ Carmina Villalobos – Financial / Vets Connect Report
 - o Financial Report is attached
 - o April motioned that we accept the financial report as presented***
 - ***Randi seconded the motion***
 - ***Motion passed unanimously***
- ❖ Bob Stratton (VAB Chair / VFW 5056)
 - o The 2-year terms are expiring on October 31, 2022
 - Board Chair is open for nomination
 - First Vice Chair is open for nomination
 - o The VAB is currently scheduled to use this new location (1800 Continental Place in Mount Vernon) for the next six (6) months
 - We can stay at this location or discuss a new location at that time
- ❖ Vernon Hunter (Community Action Service Officer)
 - o New presumptive conditions added to burn pit list
 - See attached announcement from the VA
- ❖ Chris Diaz (Skagit County Veteran Service Specialist)
 - o Chris is now available at Vets Connect during the week
 - Vets can reach out through phone or email for an appointment
 - o Chris is working on getting a presence on the county website
 - Will be following up through email with more information
 - o Chris is working with the Skagit County Jail to connect with veterans that are incarcerated that might qualify for help
 - He has connected with a group that does this throughout the state. He will be working closely with them as he will act mostly as the local liaison to coordinate things for the veteran.
- ❖ Susan Brisby (Community Action / Vets Connect / VASH Coordinator)
 - o Currently working on increasing our voucher amounts
 - HUD determines amount
 - Susan is working on challenging these amounts
- ❖ Vet Center Update & Requests for Assistance
 - o We have a veteran that needs building material for a handrail
 - See attached email for more specific information
 - April and Bob Stratton are going to approach Home Depot about how we can make it easier for the board to purchase materials and have the county satisfy the invoice using the Veterans Assistance Fund
 - We will be reaching out to Home Depot to see what we can arrange
 - April questioned why the fund can't be used to simply go to Lowes or Home Depot and buy the material

- The fund is there for veterans' use. We need to stop relying on the local nonprofits to supply not only the manpower (or womanpower), but also the money needed to help veterans
- This is tax money that was meant to be spent. Let's spend it to help veterans!

▪ ***Bill motioned that the board purchase the building materials requested***

- ***April seconded the motion***
- ***Motion passed unanimously***

- The board would like to try and set up a petty cash account for situations like this. We should not be waiting to help veterans just because of a billing issue

Old Business

- ❖ Income Guidelines
 - Susan, April, and Bob are waiting on a response about increasing the income guidelines
 - We are working to make these guidelines match county program or VASH guidelines
 - Updates will come as soon as we know something



New Business

- ❖ The American Legion in Burlington is working on coordinating a stand down for October
 - April will send an email out to the board to let everyone know the date for that
 - We are also looking for dentists to volunteer for the dental van for the stand down
- ❖ We want to increase participation in our meetings by inviting more representatives from veterans service organizations
 - We are asking board members to extend an invite for any veterans service organization to send a representative to attend our meeting and become an active part of the board
 - Examples: DAV, VFW (Bob is chair and does not represent the VFW), VOA, IAVA, Wounded Warrior, and other organizations that serve veterans.
 - The board is looking into the limitations on how many votes/representatives each organization is allowed - this is part of the policies and procedures
- ❖ Good of the order
 - There will be a centennial celebration for VFW 5056 on May 31, 2022, from 4:00pm - 6:00 pm, at the American Legion in Sedro Woolley
 - Everyone is invited to come celebrate 100 years with VFW 5056!
 - The American Legion in Burlington is serving coffee and donuts to veterans on Wednesdays from 10:00am - 12:00pm at the legion on Fairhaven. Vets are begging to connect with each other in person. We are working to give them that space again

Adjournment

❖ ***Bob Garrison motioned for the meeting to adjourn***

o ***Bill seconded the motion***

o ***Motion passed unanimously***

❖ Meeting adjourned at 1407

Minutes submitted by: April Patterson, Secretary

Minutes approved by: