

# Veterans Advisory Board of Skagit County

Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, November 08, 2022, at 1300  
1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA, 98273-5625

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## Attendance – Total Attendees

1. Bob Stratton – VAB Board Chair / VFW 5056
2. April Patterson – American Legion Post 91/VAB Second Vice Chair
3. Chris Diaz - Skagit County Veteran Service Specialist
4. Carmina Villalobos - Community Action of Skagit County
5. Other Attendees - See sign in sheet

## Call to Order

- Bob Stratton called to order the regular meeting of the Skagit County Veterans Advisory Board at 1304 on Tuesday, November 08, 2022.
- We have a quorum and can continue with business

## Meeting Minutes Approval

- October 2022 minutes were available for review
  - Printed copies available - all members should have received an email with these minutes for review before the meeting
- ***TJ Molendyk motioned that we accept the VAB general meeting minutes as presented***
  - ***Pete Sill seconded the motion***
  - ***Motion passed unanimously***

## Reports

- Bob Stratton - Board Chair Report
  - Current terms expired October 31, 2022.
    - New and returning members
      - Jamie Thornberry – AL Post 174 Conway
      - Randi Bowman – At Large
      - Andi Mitchell – AL Post 43 Sedro Woolley
      - Pete Sill – CVMA 11-5
        - ***TJ motions to accept new and returning members***
          - ***April seconds the motion***
          - ***Motion passes unanimously***
    - The following members are resigning from the board
      - Bo Watkins
      - Ray Brown
      - Stephanie Morgareidge

- ***TJ motions to accept resignations of the above***
    - ***Jamie seconds***
    - ***Passes unanimously***
  - Robert “Bob” Stratton is stepping down as board chair. Nominations now open
    - ***Jamie Thornberry nominates Pete Sill for board chair***
      - ***Pete accepts the nomination***
    - ***TJ Molendyk self nominates***
    - ***Votes - unanimous vote for new chairperson, Pete Sill***
- Carmina Villalobos – Financial / Vets Connect Report
  - Financial Report is attached as well as included in the earlier email
    - ***TJ Molendyk motioned that we accept the financial report as presented***
      - ***Pete Sill seconded the motion***
      - ***Motion passed***
  - Vouchers from Christmas are having delays in voucher returns. Some companies are waiting until March/April to send in vouchers. This causes issues
    - Issues with vendors returning vouchers in a timely manner. We suggest that the deficit amount be carried over to the most recent request. This will allow us to have that money available without having to request additional funds at the last minute
- Chris Diaz (Skagit County Veteran Service Specialist)
  - Commissioners briefing went well
    - Talked about all the work veterans organizations are doing
    - County made a proclamation for Operation Green Light
      - County courthouse will be green all week
- Vernon Hunter - Community Action
  - Now will be called Care Specialist
    - Going through training now through January
    - More information to come
- Kelly Blough - VASH
  - There is talk about 25 new VASH vouchers coming to Skagit
    - This is not confirmed, but is a result of Susan Brisby’s diligent work over the last several years

## **Old Business**

- Cascade Landing
  - Opening soon – finishing up the contract with the county
  - Getting procedures in place to ensure stipend payments
  - Applications will be sent out soon – hopefully opening in December
  - We need to get together to talk about how to prioritize veterans for units

- The board needs to discuss the process for determining which veterans get awarded stipends for Cascade Landing
- Dental Smile Day – Carmina was able to help 11 veterans get connected with dental care at no charge
- Senior stipend has been adjusted to \$500
- Job fair tomorrow in Oak Harbor – ELKS 2362 – Martin Symonds
  - 35 employers signed up! Focus on veterans employment
- Events Update
  - Veterans Day Parade and Breakfast, November 12, 2022
    - Breakfast 0800-1000 at the Burlington Senior Center
    - Parade starts at 1100 by Banner Bank on Fairhaven in Burlington
    - Soup and sandwiches after the parade at the Burlington Senior Center from noon to 1:00pm
  - Veterans Community Plaza Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
    - Northern State Recreational Area - Veterans Community Plaza
      - 25625 Helmick Rd, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284
      - Thursday, November 10, 2022
      - Open House starts at Noon & Ribbon Cutting at 3:00 pm

## New Business

- Would like to do the Thanksgiving vouchers and the Christmas vouchers again
  - Need input for other stores that might accept vouchers
    - Check with BYK about their store in Woolley
    - Helping Hands is available to help assist with food for the holidays
    - Veterans organizations are out there to help with toiletries and household items
      - Please bring some of your stuff to our hygiene closet at Vets Connect
    - Jamie feels that some of the items handed out by veterans organizations are sometimes lower quality. Similar issues with food from Helping Hands – lower quality, expired, limited selection
      - Kelly agrees about giving the veterans a little more, letting them choose how to spend the money provided in the vouchers
  - ***Pete motions that we request 60 vouchers at \$250.00 (food voucher) along with 60 vouchers at a max of \$150.00 (miscellaneous) (60 vouchers at \$400 each) not to exceed \$24,000.00***
    - ***TJ seconds the motion***
    - ***Motion passed unanimously***
  - ***TJ motions that we draw from the reserve funds not to exceed \$24,000 for holiday vouchers***

- *Pete seconds the motion*

- *Motion passes unanimously*

- Community Action is requesting \$22,000 from the VAF to cover the cost of salaries and administrative costs through the end of the year.
  - This decision is needed by November 23, 2022
    - Why is this the second time we have been asked to do something last minute? Why are the numbers not accurate?
      - Cascade Landing was last minute
        - Vernon says Cascade Landing is a county thing - Not a Community Action thing
    - Board Chair, Pete will coordinate with the board before November 23, 2022, to discuss this agenda item
- The Community Action Finance Director would like to sit down with the board and get a budget together

### **Good of the Order**

- Happy Veterans Day everyone! Enjoy your week.

### **Adjournment**

- *April Patterson motioned for the meeting to adjourn*
  - *Pete Sill seconded the motion*
  - *Motion passed unanimously*
- Meeting adjourned at 1431

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Minutes submitted by: April Patterson, Second Vice