# **Veterans Advisory Board of Skagit County**

Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, October 11, 2022, at 1300 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA, 98273-5625

# **Attendance – Total Attendees**

- 1. Bob Stratton VAB Board Chair / VFW 5056
- 2. Bob Garrison VVA / VAB First Vice Chair
- 3. April Patterson American Legion Post 91/VAB Second Vice Chair
- 4. Chris Diaz Skagit County Veteran Service Specialist
- 5. Carmina Villalobos Community Action of Skagit County
- 6. 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 1303 on Tuesday, October 13, 2022.
- We have a quorum and can continue with business

# **Meeting Minutes Approval**

- September 2022 minutes were available for review
- Special meeting minutes were also 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
- Pete Sill motioned that we accept the VAB special meeting minutes as presented
  - Jamie Thornberry seconded the motion
  - Motion passed

#### **Reports**

- Bob Stratton Board Chair Report
  - Events Update
    - Stand Down Thursday, October 20, 2022, 0900-1500, at the American Legion in Burlington
      - Susan went to Snohomish and grabbed some stand down goodies for our event
    - 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

- Veterans Community Plaza Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
  - Northern State Recreational Area Veterans Community Plaza
    - o 25625 Helmick Rd, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284
  - Thursday, November 10, 2022
  - Open House starts at Noon & Ribbon Cutting at 3:00 pm
  - NJROTC will be out there to represent!
  - Still looking for a band for the ceremony
  - Chris Diaz also checking with the Tribes to see about having someone bless the land
- Cascade Landing Ribbon Cutting went well
  - Tenants should start moving into units in November
- Carmina Villalobos Financial / Vets Connect Report
  - Financial Report is attached as well as included in the earlier email
    - It was asked when we last raised the senior stipend
      - This was done a couple years ago when we raised it from \$100 to \$300 to help supplement rent for seniors
      - It was discussed as to whether or not we should raise it again
      - April asked if any senior has expressed the need for an increase
        - Carmina said she has not been approached about this
      - TJ Molendyk motioned that we raise the senior stipend from \$300 to \$500
        - Pete Sill seconded the motion
        - Motion passed
    - TJ asked about gas vouchers as gas prices increase
      - The board just recently raised the voucher amount. We did not feel it appropriate to raise them again so soon. It is still worth nearly 15 gallons of gas at the current voucher amount.
    - TJ Molendyk motioned that we accept the financial report as presented
      - Ande Mitchell seconded the motion
      - Motion passed
- Chris Diaz (Skagit County Veteran Service Specialist)
  - Special needs transportation committee meetings have been going well.
  - There will be a report coming out soon
  - o PACT Act claims have started. Send vets to Chris is they need more information
- Kelly Blough VASH
  - Still working on vets with the smoking issue. Have spoken with one of them and will be following up with several more of them this week. So far, the idea seems to be a viable solution. Will update next meeting
  - We have 8 vouchers getting ready to be filled in December

#### **Old Business**

- American Legion Post 91 October Stand Down will be Thursday, October 20, 2022
  - Set up starts at 0800 will have coffee and donuts
  - o Runs from 0900-1500
  - VetsConnect office will be closed as their staff will be at the stand down
- Council terms are expiring. More information to come at next meeting
- Stand Down Food Drive
  - We were not able to coordinate a food drive in time for the stand down
    - Ande Mitchell has food he can bring and donate (cases of food)

### **New Business**

- Vet Smile Day
  - Carmina found a dentist that is willing to help. If you have a veteran in need of dental care, please send them to Carmina.
  - Veterans MUST see Carmina to get signed up for a spot with the dentist
- Energy Assistance Program
  - This program does NOT count veterans compensation anymore!
  - Reach out to your seniors and low income folks to let them know of the new guidelines. There are veterans that will now qualify!

#### Good of the Order

- Jamie Thornberry joined American Legion Post 147 in Conway. She will be attending the Conway legion meeting this week to be confirmed as their representative on the board.
- TJ is actively working with Helping Hands to get a representative on the board
- Pete Sill is very thankful for all the help with the stand down. Everyone has come through in the best ways. Thank you.
- Martin Symons is working on putting together a last minute job fair.
  - This is NOT confirmed, but he is working on it.
  - o It will be focused on government contracts and NAS Whidbey stuff
  - o Aiming for November j9, 2022, from 1100-1600, at the Elks Club in Oak Harbor
  - Ande Mitchell would like to connect about hiring for his new investment company here in Skagit County
- Ande Mitchell and Bob Garrison will be in Washington DC for a VVA celebration in November

# **Adjournment**

- Pete Sill motioned for the meeting to adjourn
  - TJ Molendyk seconded the motion
  - Motion passed unanimously
- Meeting adjourned at 1336

Minutes submitted by: April Patterson, Second Vice