

Veterans Advisory Board of Skagit County

Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, September 13, 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 / American Legion Post 91
3. April Patterson – American Legion Post 91
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 1302 on Tuesday, September 13, 2022.
- We have a quorum and can continue with business

Meeting Minutes Approval

- August 2022 minutes were available for review
 - Printed copy available - all members should have received an email with these minutes for review before the meeting
- ***Pete S. motioned that we accept the minutes as presented***
 - ***TJ seconded the motion***
 - ***Motion passed unanimously***

Reports

- Bob Stratton - Board Chair Report
 - We are still looking for anyone that is interested in joining our board. They can represent a veteran organization, a veteran owned business, or any veteran that wants their voice heard.
 - We are still looking for bios and headshots for the county website
 - If you represent an agency, lets get your pic and info for our site
- Carmina Villalobos – Financial / Vets Connect Report
 - Financial Report is attached as well as included in the earlier email
 - Randi B. asked about the senior stipend
 - This was done a couple years ago to supplement our 65 and older veterans a couple of hundred dollars for rent (\$300). We still have one senior using this program
 - ***Ande M. motioned that we accept the financial report as presented***

■ ***TJ seconded the motion***

■ ***Motion passed***

- Chris Diaz (Skagit County Veteran Service Specialist)
 - The PACT Act is being updated constantly
 - Vets are taking advantage of filing for the presumptive illnesses and getting claims started
 - There will be more updates as they come - See Chris for more details
 - Chris Diaz had been advocating for veterans on the Special Needs Transportation Committee
 - The American Legion in Burlington has started raising funds to purchase a van. Chris is also working on getting grants for this transportation need
 - Chris connected with Ann Larson from Patty Murray's office. He will be advocating for veterans in Skagit County
- Kelly Blough - VASH
 - Looking for input about creating a designated smoking area for a group of 7 veterans housed in Mount Vernon
 - Great landlord that works with VASH to house multiple veterans
 - There is not a designated space to smoke, so the veterans smoke out on their patios. This aggravates other tenants that have complained. The owner is looking for a creative solution.
 - The board suggested we ask what they would like to have (a gazebo, a picnic table, a fire pit, etc.). We want to make sure it will be something they will actually use.
 - The CVMA offered to build something if the board buys the materials
 - Kelly will follow up with the tenants to see what we can do for them

Old Business

- Policy & Procedures have been updated and signed by the Commissioners
- American Legion Post 91 October Stand Down
 - Pete Sill went to east county to put up flyers
 - Nowhere in Rockport besides a bar - hopefully the information makes it up that way to the local veterans
 - Still trying to get in touch with someone from the VA to see about cold weather gear, boots, etc.
 - We have confirmed the haircuts
 - The barber shop wants to set up haircuts once a month for veterans
 - We can see about setting this up on Wednesdays during coffee
 - Chris will speak with the health department about what services they might be able to provide (covid tests, resources, etc.)
 - There will be a meeting tomorrow at the American Legion in Burlington at 10:30 am to discuss the stand down

- If you cannot attend, you can zoom in using the county VAB meeting link
 - Chris will be sure to have the meeting available online
- The Task Force Tribute event went well. They want to make this an annual event
- First Responders' breakfast on Sunday went well. We want to make this an annual event
 - Special thanks to TJ for organizing this event! Great work!

New Business

- Cascade Landing Presentation
 - Community Action is asking for the support of the VAB in regards to the new housing project in Burlington
 - The person doing the presentation was not ready and not available
 - This will be addressed at a later meeting hopefully before the opening in October
 - Ribbon cutting will be Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at a time to be determined

Good of the Order

- The Welcome Home Vietnam event at Ande Mitchell's in Woolley went really well.
- Oak Harbor had a resource fair this past weekend. Went really well. They want to do more of these events
 - They are working on a military job fair in Oak Harbor - more info to come
- Randi Bowman gave information about the Hilton Honors Points employment program for veterans. See her for more information. Flyers available
- Jamie Thornberry is joining American Legion Post 147 in Conway. She hopes to become their representative on the board. She will be officially voted in soon and will follow up about becoming the representative for their organization.

Adjournment

- ***April Patterson motioned for the meeting to adjourn***
 - ***TJ Molendyk seconded the motion***
 - ***Motion passed unanimously***
- Meeting adjourned at 1344

Minutes submitted by: April Patterson, Second Vice

Minutes approved by: