

## Veteran Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, April 11, 2018

### 1. Roll Call:

Board Members in attendance: Ken Slininger, Gary Bracht, Fil Rivera, Eileen Bornheimer, Rex Davis, Mark Owens, Carrie McCormick, Jim Brakebill, and Eileen Boylston

VSO: Jerry Gingrich

Guests: John Nordine  
Vinnie Sanchez  
Luis Torres

### 2. Reading and approval of the old minutes.

#### Old Business:

- Reviewed Grant County Veteran Assistance Fund, we are at the 25% usage, so where we should be for this timeframe. Fil noted that we used to get a listing of all the veterans who had used the fund and how much they had used, he indicated that he felt this was helpful for him when veterans wanted to access the fund. Jerry indicated that with his computer program he knows exactly how much they have used as soon as he inputs their information, whereas the reports we used to get might not be accurate after a short while. There was also some discussion about having voucher #s on hand for when Jerry is not available, it was recommended that if Jerry is not immediately available to provide the voucher #, that the veteran be told they will be called when it is ready. Fil, Rex and Jerry can further discuss to see if a better solution can be reached.
- Stand Down. The 4H Building, tables and chairs have been booked at the Fairgrounds for Sept 28 and Sept 29<sup>th</sup>. Gary has requested our flyers from the printers to be given out to post in the community at our next quarterly meeting in July. It was noted that we should give participants (employers, resources, volunteers) a certificate of appreciation or thanks after each event. A Stand Down Committee was established: Eileen Boylston, Eileen Bornheimer, Luis Torres, Jerry Gingrich, Gary Bracht, Keith Connelly, Rex Davis, Mark Owens, and Ken Slininger will serve on the committee. Our first Stand Down meeting will be on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm, at the Moses Lake Courthouse, Fil will reserve the room.
- VSO Update: 35% of Jerry's funding comes out of the Veterans Fund, the rest is out of the county. Jerry indicated he feels due to our excellent volunteer Service Officers, that the 35% of his time will work for his position. The board noted a couple concerns, due to our very large geographical area, areas such as Royal City and Mattawa do not get the attention they should get, and this position was to fill that gap, with just 35% of his time being dedicated to veterans, this may be difficult. Also, when initially requesting this position, one primary reason besides the large geographical area, was to have a permanent, paid, very experienced at filing claims service officer in place – there was/is a concern that younger veterans are not stepping up to take over the volunteer VSO positions, those in place now will not be there forever, the county position was to ensure we always had experienced coverage; there is a concern that with only 35% of his time doing veteran work, primarily

the vouchers and other work other than claims, Jerry may not gain this experience. Consequently, may have a difficult time filling that gap as current volunteers retire.

- Veterans Court. Gary has not had time to follow-up on this, but plans to look into it between now and July's Board Meeting.

### 3. New Business:

- Welcomed Jim Brakebill as a new member.
- Rex asked if VA Disability should be counted as income for veterans requesting assistance through the county veteran fund, Fil said yes it should be considered. Either way, it was noted that there should be a policy that addresses this. Rex also brought up the \$50 gas vouchers when a veteran uses less than \$50, Jerry stated that the voucher is for "up to \$50", and that the actual receipt should be attached reflecting the exact amount.
- Board travel, Jerry collected completed forms for travel reimbursement for board members traveling to and from meetings and other activities performed for board functions.
- Gift cards, the county veteran fund cannot be used to purchase gift cards.
- PA Systems. Jerry suggested that the PA systems be transferred over to the posts from the county, with the Veterans Advisory Board being able to use them if needed. It was felt that would work so long as there was written agreement that the equipment could not be sold, and that the advisory could use them whenever needed.
- Post 24 wants to create a new Auxiliary for the VFW, there are two scheduled dates to apply and find out information, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 10-1, at the Quincy Senior Center and April 28<sup>th</sup>, 10-1, at the Moses Lake Elks Club.
- Housing grants. Gary had emailed as well as brought an article from the newspaper about rental housing vouchers that had been awarded to some counties, and just noted that we need to be on board in the future to try to get them for our county.

### 4. Next meeting:

- Quarterly Meeting. Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 4pm, Grant County Courthouse, Ephrata.