



CLACKAMAS COUNTY
 VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL
 February 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes
 2:30pm – 3:30pm via Zoom

FACILITATOR	RB Green
NOTETAKER	R.E. Szego

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL							
P	RB Green	A	John Budiao	P	Janet Braman		
A	Paul Edgar	P	Betty Fish-Ferguson	E	Tawnya Lege		
P	Laurie Kimmell	A	Don Hedlind				
A	Tracy Bogard	P	Thomas McAlarney				
E	Carol Bernhard	A	Gregory Freetage				
S	Brenda Durbin	S	R.E. ("Ari") Szego	S	Joey Johns	S	Aubrie Balkwill
S	Ken Bietschek		Aaron Henry	S	Gus Bedwell		Commissioner Paul Savas
	Allen Anderson		Mike Manske	E	Dan Miner	O	Austin Hansen
O	Allen Gumm						

P-Present, A -Absent, E-Excused, O-Other Attendee

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
Meeting Called to Order and Introductions	RB called the meeting to order at 2:36 pm. A quorum could not be established. Introductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin Hansen applied for VAC Membership. He provides Military Education at Grand Canyon University, with a specialty in accessing veterans benefits. 	

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allen Gumm is a US Navy Veteran involved in the Project Management curriculum at Clackamas Community College. He will be working with VAC and a group of students on supporting the Veterans Expo as their capstone project. 	
Adoption of Minutes	We were not able to establish a quorum and approve Minutes for February.	Add February Minutes approval to the April agenda.
Membership Updates	The Executive Committee recommends the nomination of Austin. Without a quorum this was postponed to a future meeting.	Add Nomination of Austin to April Agenda.
Logistics	<p>Proposal for a New Meeting Model – Betty proposed a recommendation from VAC Executive to move toward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full VAC meetings quarterly For the two months in between the subcommittees would work on their committee work and prepare to bring that to the next full VAC <p>Brenda added a suggestion that while we could offer hybrid opportunities our goal would be to have everyone in person for the quarterly meeting as much as possible. We would incentive this with lunch or snacks as appropriate to the time of the meeting.</p> <p>Gus noted that part of the idea is also hosting those quarterly meetings at different locations that are veterans-centric or do veterans work. It’s challenging to do a hybrid meeting if the technology is not available that location – e.g. the Veterans Village meeting in November. The connectivity of in person meetings</p>	The ongoing date / time of meeting has not been addressed

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
	<p>might also inspire membership. He wants to plug food and we might be able to learn more about a program or project being done at that location.</p> <p>Laurie shared concerns that when legislature is in full swing, there's a lot going on regarding veterans. If we're only meeting quarterly how will we get the message out there. Sometimes she or one other person is the only one testifying. The more people who testify or advocate for veterans on some of these bills the better the vote will be for veterans. For example, for HB 4001 the Governor was going to do a Task Force, but there was nothing about veterans. Laurie contacted the co-sponsor, wanting two veterans represented on the taskforce and got one. When legislature is full swing we will lose needed participation in Salem.</p> <p>Brenda suggested that we identify a discrete subcommittee for legislative interest to meet as often as needed during and before the legislative session. We could also have legislative efforts through committee as a whole via email updates with options for call-in when things need to be discussed. This body may be able to provide feedback to you as you go about your legislative activities.</p> <p>Laurie doesn't want people to lose interest. Meeting once a month keeps us honest and engaged. Do our bylaws allow quarterly meetings?</p> <p>Brenda answered that we would probably have to change our bylaws. There will be an ongoing expectation that everyone on the council is on a subcommittee.</p> <p>Laurie really liked it when we met in person even on our subcommittees. It's kind of impersonal (meeting on Zoom). For hybrid meetings, people may be</p>	

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
	<p>afraid they're not going to be able to put in their input. In the past when VAC met in person we broke off into subcommittees during meetings.</p> <p>Update on Thursday, April 25 In-Person Meeting – RB This will be held at Clackamas Community College with a hosted lunch. RB asked for feedback on the time: either a late lunch then go home after the meeting or have lunch at lunchtime. He suggested that we meet at Vet Center and then walk over to where the Vet Expo will happen. We could look at the physical space and talk with the Event Manager.</p> <p>Draft agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 30 min lunch ○ 30 min tour / conversation ○ 60 min for meeting at Gregory Forum <p>RB will send a proposed itinerary to VAC Executive Committee.</p> <p>Gus will bring Charlie Killian, the new Admin for his office. We can invite other community members and people interested in helping. RB will invite Allen and Project Management group. It's Spring Break this week, so the faculty member wasn't able to attend today's meeting.</p> <p>R.E. moved the calendar invitation to 12:30 to 2:30pm on 04/25.</p>	
Subcommittee / Workplan Initiative Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Member Recruitment: Building a Strong Advisory Council 	Add to next agenda (or solicit via email?) – Leads

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach: Ensure that veterans and their families living in Clackamas County know about the County Veterans Services Office, understand how to access those services, and feel that they belong • Host a Veterans Expo <p>RB stated that most of the work over the next six months will be related to the Veterans Expo. We will try to frontload most of the planning with a good plan and players invited by the June meeting.</p>	<p>for each Subcommittee</p>
<p>Veterans Expo Monday, Nov 18, 2024 Gregory Forum, Clackamas Community College, Oregon City Campus Tagline: “Connecting those who served to those who serve.”</p>	<p>Recap – RB. We will be hosting a groundbreaking free event for service providers can connect, network, and learn. Unlike Stand Downs focused on homeless veterans, this event will be geared toward all veterans. There are an estimated 25,000 veterans in Clackamas County.</p> <p>Gus reminded us of the theme: “Connecting those who served to those who serve.” We have people in the community who have services and products available that people could utilize but veterans may not know they’re available and the providers don’t know the veterans. It’s about connectivity.</p> <p>He noted that Stand Downs do a good job of connecting veterans and families to vendors, but the vendors never got connected. They may walk away not understanding military and veterans culture. We want vendors to create long-term relationships to help people connect to other organizations. The first part of the day is about education where we will have speakers on military and</p>	

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
	<p>veterans culture. We are trying to attract anybody from any walk of life who hasn't fully or has never engaged in their benefits or engaged with the VA once and got a bad taste. Historically, the VA is serving less than 1/3 of veterans.</p> <p>Allen has been to Stand Down events where he has had a similar experience to Gus where there are a lot of community providers there, but there's not a lot of time to interact with other vendors. Getting to know persons by name and organizations is critical, especially where there's a lot of mobility, people moving from one location to the next.</p> <p>Gus wanted to be clear that we've all agreed that this is much more than a Stand Down. As we're communicating, please take the time to educate people that it's not a Stand Down, it's an Expo designed for all veterans from all walks of life.</p> <p>RB framed this as moving up Maslow's hierarchy of needs, taking care of more people at various levels.</p>	
VSO Updates	<p>Gus asked for VAC's help in communicating with the community at large about the health, welfare, and logistics of the VSO. Over the past six months they have experienced significant change due to retirements and other situations. Colin Black is a new Veterans Service Officer. Jackie Bauer retired. They have a new front desk person, Charlie.</p> <p>If you're hearing rumblings from the community, help people understand that we're doing some new things to be even more efficient. Unfortunately for at least the next few months the VSO will also be down a Veterans Service Officer. Due to the combination of new staff without an experienced VSO appointments will be pushed out a bit. We're trying to serve as many people as possible, as</p>	

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
	<p>quickly as possible. If there's a customer complaint elevate it to Gus's attention immediately. We are on track to serve more people this fiscal year with staffing logistics than we did last year.</p> <p>Joey mentioned that there is a note on website about longer than normal wait times:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"We regret to inform you that we are currently experiencing longer wait times for appointments with our Veteran Services Officers. This is due to unforeseen circumstances resulting in several staff members being unavailable for a number of weeks. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your patience and understanding during this time."</p> <p>Gus shared that right now they're scheduling about a month out.</p>	
Member Updates, Announcements, and Upcoming Events	<p>RB: The Veterans Expo Subcommittee will meet on April 11 at 1pm. He will send an invitation for Zoom. He hopes to get max participation to see how people want to meet, use the CCC conference rooms.</p> <p>Gus: The VSO is working on a couple of different outreach projects, including a movie night event. A local veterans organization will be doing eight or nine suicide prevention and awareness events across their district. Gus will see how the VSO can sponsor these and utilize these as outreach events. Colin has a Community Center background and knows the Directors; they are working on how to do outreach through the Community Centers. He's hoping that within the next six months you'll see a lot more about the VSO out in the community.</p>	<p>RB – send invitation(s) for Veterans Expo Subcommittee meeting(s)</p>
Adjourn	<p>Gus made a motion to adjourn. Betty seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 3:24 pm.</p>	

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
Next Meeting	Veterans Advisory Council Thursday, April 25, 12:30 – 2:30 In Person only: Clackamas Community College	RB: Send R.E. the physical address of where we will meet