

Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
An advisory board to the Clark County Council

January 11, 2024

Chair: Michael Harding

Vice Chair: Bob Nichols

Secretary: Bruce Maas

Meeting called to order.

Roll Call: [Bold script indicates presence at meeting]

POST

40 et 8

American Legion #14

American Legion #44

American Legion #168

American Legion #176

American Veterans #6

Camas Post 27

DAV Chapter #4

Korean War Assoc. #321

Marine Corps League #826

VFW #4278

VFW #7824

Vietnam Vets #512

Members at Large

PRIMARY

Bob Brennan

Gene Couture

Darren Wertz

Bob Nichols

Thomas Phillips - excused

John Lovejoy

Wes Forgey

Bruce Maas

Earl Edwards

Steve Slegers - excused

Shannon Roberts - excused

Michael Harding

Greg Whitson

Kelly Jones

Bryan McGillis

Tonya Wark

Tamara Elam - excused

Megan Anderson

Eli Gonzalez

Michael Langsdorf

Lloyd Bowman

ALTERNATE

Steve Slegers

Charles Ingalls - excused

Michael Gibson

Vanise Pratt

Shawn O'Neil

Tom Cousino - excused

Dixie Hotaling

John Stofiel

Dana Difford

Nick Herber

Clark County Representative: Abby Molloy

Guests: CVTV23, Janet Snook (Clark County); **Lori Pugh, Judy Russel** (Clark County Veterans Assistance Center); **Tony Sprague, Emma** (VA representative for Congresswoman Glusenkamp-Perez); **Sonja Wood; Chris Casto** (Evergreen Memorial Gardens); **David Puente** (WDVA); **Councilor Glen Yung** (Clark County);

Approval of December 14, 2023, meeting minutes

The minutes were approved following a motion by **Bob Nichols** that was seconded by **Kelly Jones**.

Committee Reports

Appeals: None

Policies and Procedures: Section 2.3 extends unexcused absence notification and termination to members at large. **Section was approved on voice vote.**

Section 4.3-Terms of Office, clarifies that members may serve up to three years in each position of chair and vice chair, and may be reelected following an elapsed year. **Motion made by Bob Nichols was seconded by Kelly Jones and passed.**

WDVA update (David Puente)

State Veteran Homes offering skilled nursing are located in Spokane, Orting, Walla Walla, and Port Orchards. Eligibility is extended to eligible veterans, families of eligible veterans, and gold star parents. Two facilities also offer transitional

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housing to get veterans employed and housed. The state veteran cemetery is located in Medical Lake. Armed forces license plates support the cemetery. Research is being done to identify a location for a second cemetery. Veterans' services include: service officers to file claims, the homeless veteran reintegration program (HVRP) case management to employability and economic security, veterans innovation program, transitioning warrior program, apprenticeship coordination, estate management, military transition and readiness, veteran owned business certification, LGBTQ+ outreach, military spouse outreach, women veteran programs, and call centers. WDVA offers counseling, TBI, and suicide prevention programs. The strategic planning process will continue for 4-5 years. HB1925 is being considered in legislature to provide additional funding for rural counties to have VSO services provided. HB2014 is proposing a change to the state definition of veteran.

Burial Benefits and Costs (Chris Castro)

Honorably discharged veterans, their spouses, and children up to age 18, are allowed to be buried in a veteran cemetery. A memorial marker or medallion is included. Arrangements are made at time of death, so family members may not be placed adjacent. National cemeteries do not allow a graveside service. Burial at sea is also available. Flags are available on request. A presidential memorial certificate is offered. Full military honors are included. Family can receive reimbursement for some expenses. Veterans' benefits may be available up to two years after passing, with proof of service, marriage certificate, receipts, death certificate, and other documentation. Costs average \$8,000-\$10,000.

November 2023, Contractor & Fund reports

The fund assisted 63 Veteran households. The Veterans Assistance Center received 601 veteran visits. The Free Clinic billed \$719 for 2 veterans. The Fund balance was \$763,205.

Veterans Assistance Center (VAC) Update

- 38 veterans were buried/cremated in 2023 at the cost of \$68,000.
- The Center received over 2100 visits and phone calls every month in 2023.
- Feb. 14 Bingo at Elks Lodge on McGillvray. Cards can be purchased from the CCVAC website.

Old Business

- Send questions for the budget office to Abby Molloy. Budget Office likely to present in August.
- Community Needs Assessment community forums are occurring this month.

New Business

- 2024 Committee Appointments: Kelly Jones will continue to chair the policies and procedures committee, and Bruce Maas will continue to chair the nominations committee.
- 2024 work plan: Draft work plan was reviewed. Members may contact Abby with suggestions.
- Discussion of unexcused absence limit: Michael Harding drafted a letter for organizations who have extensive absences. Members may notify officers or Abby Molloy in advance of meetings to be excused. Policy begins effective with this meeting. Discussion of a possible limit on excused absences to be discussed in a policies and procedures meeting.
- Lloyd Bowman was approved as member at large following a voice vote.

Open Forum

- SW Washington should have an appointed member to the veterans housing board. David Puente is sending a list of people currently on the committee. More information is needed.
- WDVA holding a women's veterans conference in Yakima. Registration opens Feb. 1.
- WDVA legislative agenda will be forwarded by Abby.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting February 8, 2024