

# Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

An advisory board to the Clark County Council

August 12, 2021

Meeting held remotely.

**Chair: Kelly Jones**

**Vice Chair: Michael Harding**

**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  
DAV Chapter #4  
Korean War Assoc. #321  
Marine Corps League #826  
VFW #4278  
VFW #7824  
VFW # 12028  
Vietnam Vets #512  
Members at Large

**PRIMARY**

Morris Geisler  
**Gene Couture**  
Darren Wertz  
**Michael Gibson**  
**John Lovejoy**  
**Bruce Maas**  
Steve Slegers (*excused*)  
Shannon Roberts (*excused*)  
Michael Harding (*excused*)  
David Daly  
**Greg Whitson**  
**Jim Jensen**  
**Kelly Jones**  
Michael Langsdorf  
Kevin Lawson (*excused*)  
Bryan McGillis  
Tonya Wark (*excused*)

**ALTERNATE**

Steve Slegers (*excused*)  
John Rose  
Les Schreiber (*excused*)  
Vannis Pratt (*excused*)  
**Tom Cousino**  
John Stofiel  
Dana Difford (*excused*)  
**Bruce Maas**  
Nick Herber (*excused*)

**Clark County Representative: Samantha Whitley**

**Guests:** **Judy Russel, Sharon Tyre** (Clark County Veterans Assistance Center); **Mallory Huerta** (WorkSource Vancouver); **Leslie Luo** (Transitions Project Portland); **Andy Lexow** (Lifeline Connection); **Terri Graves** (Cowlitz Tribe Veterans Services) **Chris Thobaben** (Community Roots Collaborative)

**Call to Order/Invocation/Roll Call**

**Approval of July 8, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

**Motion made to approve by Les Schreiber, motion seconded by Steve Slegers, minutes approved as written.**

**Community Roots Presentation**

Chris Thobaben with Community Roots Collaborative (CRC) gave a presentation on their new tiny home development in Fruit Valley. CRC's community consists of 21 tiny homes and one house with four units. There are six units reserved for Veterans. Seamar, Kleen Street Recovery, and Partners in Careers (PIC) will refer tenants and help with case management. Tenants will need to be mature individuals who can take care of property, themselves, and their neighbors. A second phase project (50 units) will be located on property near Saint Johns, funded with city and state funds. Each tiny home can accommodate a family of three, even though they are single units. Tiny homes are open to men, women, and families.

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The Clark County Veterans Assistance Center would like to be able to refer Veteran tenants to this housing; Judy will contact Chris about this. The ribbon cutting for the tiny homes project will be held at 10:00 am on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, it is open to all.

A second program that Chris spearheads is Marine for Life Program where he connects community partners with marines in need of services. Since October 2020, 17 Veterans have obtained employment through the program. Email contact information for this program is [m4lpdf@gmail.com](mailto:m4lpdf@gmail.com); they can be found on LinkedIn at [www.linkedin.com/in/marine-for-life-portland](http://www.linkedin.com/in/marine-for-life-portland).

### **Cowlitz Tribe Veterans Services**

Teri Graves is the Cowlitz Tribal Veterans Representative, located in DuPont, Washington, where the Tribe just purchased the Girl Scout Headquarters Building. Teri is the main contact for the Warriors Program and Veteran-related tribal information; she is also training as a VSO. Currently, the program serves approximately 178 Veteran tribal members located up/down the I-5 Corridor.

The Tribe held a luncheon at Ilani for Veterans two years ago, but Covid caused them to pause programs. The Warrior Program Volunteers help Veterans file claims, conduct outreach to elder Veterans, provide vaccines and groceries for elders and Veterans who can't leave their homes. Teri is currently working on a Powwow in September that will be open to all Veterans, it will be held at a VA facility in Longview. She is also coordinating with Puget Sound Honor Flights to take Veterans to the Native American Memorial, networking and attending Veteran treatment courts throughout Washington; helping tribal Veterans coordinate care through the VA; and meeting with nonprofits that provide services for tribal veterans. Teri is also considering hosting another luncheon at ilani and hosting a Veterans symposium. Teri is looking to identify more tribal Veterans in Washington.

### **2021 Portland Stand Down – September 10<sup>th</sup>**

Leslie Luo updated the board on the Portland Stand Down. It will be from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm on September 10<sup>th</sup> at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland, Oregon. Services provided range from housing to healthcare, with 15 employers onsite looking to hire Veterans. Leslie shared a registration link for service providers to join the Stand Down. Covid preventions practices will be instituted at this event; any questions, please contact Leslie.

### **Committee Reports**

**Appeals:** None.

**Policies and Procedures:** Nothing new, however, as a follow-up to last months' question regarding requirements for County Veteran programs, RCW 73.08.010 is to be referenced.

### **June 2021 Contractor Reports & Fund Report**

The fund assisted 24 Veteran households with \$25,041 in assistance; there was one (1) denial. Year-to-date, six Veterans have exited homelessness, with \$2,935 expended. The Veterans Assistance Center saw 126 Veteran visits for essentials and food; served 148 meals and fielded 946 calls/emails. Volunteers provided 448 hours of service for a value of \$11,073. The Free Clinic Dental Program served three Veterans and billed \$703. WDVA VSO second quarter report reflects 430 claims with 83% approved and \$217,101 in VA payments to veterans. VAF balance at the end of June was \$948,951.

### **SWACH Navigator Contractor Update**

Contract has been executed for 12-months at \$30,000, as approved.

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### **Veterans Assistance Center (VAC) Update**

- The CCVAC received \$700,000 for the TERA/TRAP Program and have \$17,600 remaining. Back rent and future rent has been paid for Veterans. The funding will be spent by the end of August.
- Vancouver's Stand Down event will be held October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9am to 1 pm. This event will be from a drive-thru/walk-thru event like last year, held at the same location as last year, the River City Church at 2400 E Fourth Plain Blvd. If anyone is interested in being a vendor, please send your information to [standdown@ccvac.net](mailto:standdown@ccvac.net); there is limited space available. CCVAC has spent \$22,000 thus far on the Stand Down. The Department of Labor Stand Down grant requires a match of \$2,000 and the Center has raised \$1,100; they are \$900 short of making the goal. Please consider a donation to help the Center reach the \$2,000 match goal for the Stand Down.
- CCVAC has hired an outreach specialist. This individual is in the process of setting-up appointments and meetings. Still looking for another CSO. Rena will retire at end of month and that will only leave Mark and Pat.
- SWACH training has been completed and they have referred two Veterans already.
- School supplies from the Reserve Center are being distributed to Veteran families.
- Next online auction will be September 1-14; the link will be sent out.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

None.

### **Open Forum**

- NW Battle Buddies provides service animals for Veterans. It was asked whether the Fund can make donations to help cover program costs. The answer is no, unless there are direct costs to Veterans for this program and it is believed that this program is no cost to Veterans.
- Bruce Maas mentioned that the Traveling Wall will be coming to Mt. Solo Cemetery in Longview, on September 24-26, 2021. This is being sponsored by the Legion Post in Longview and they are asking for donations; please consider visiting this event on the last weekend of September.
- Samantha Whitley, is co-chair of the Association of County Human Services Veterans Committee (made up of all the counties in the State). This year the Committee is prioritizing legislative changes that will increase and prioritize support for VSOs under RCW 43.60. This will affect rural Clark County with populations less than 100,000.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting to be held September 9, 2021, at 2:00 pm.