



Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: December 13, 2021 / 10:00 a.m. / Virtual GoToMeeting
 Committee Members Present: John Mitchell, Al Jensen, Lynne Graham, Wes Weston, Robert Wilson, Andrea Vance, Paul Pelot
 Committee Members Absent: Richard Conoboy, Christopher Brown
 Whatcom Co. Health Dept. Staff/Guests: Ann Beck, Liz Witowski, Ashley Geleyne / Malcom Oliver, David Loomis, Larry Montgomery, Robert Asperis, Brent Wagner, Melissa Nyberg, Joshua Hildebrand

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1. Call to order	Meeting called to order by Lynne Graham.	<i>Lynne</i>
2. Roll Call	A quorum was present.	<i>All</i>
3. Review/Approval October minutes	Wes moved to approve the October meeting minutes. Al seconded the motion. The board voted and the motion passed. Paul was not present for the vote.	Aye: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0
4. Reports/Discussion Open Public Comment	Malcom Oliver, on behalf of David Loomis, President of VVA Chapter 165, brought three items to the board. 1) A request to appoint Ron Wilson, VVA member, to the board. Ron has applied and Liz explained the rest of the application process. 2) A request for one of VVA Chapter 165's Veteran Service Officers (VSO) to be paid for additional two days/week. Lynne explained that one item on today's agenda is to discuss funding another VSO position so there is more coverage in the community. 3) A request for a letter of support in preserving the Northwest Annex building, particularly for the occupation of two offices for VVA Chapter 165's VSOs. David Loomis of VVA Chapter 165 will submit a letter containing the requested requirements for adequate office space.	<i>Malcom Oliver / David Loomis</i>



<p>Budget (report, discussion, funding opportunities)</p>	<p>David will also email Liz the contact information for the two VSOs working with VVA Chapter 165.</p> <p>Brent Waggoner, of the Bellingham Vet Center, shared his perspective on the VSO situation in Whatcom County over the last 20 years, and asked the board to support the hiring of another VSO to help submit claims for veterans in the community.</p> <p>Ann and Liz presented on fund projections through 2023 if a VSO officer and Veterans Housing Case Manager were added to the budget. Both positions would be contracted out to other agencies. Liz added information about Aid and Attendance (A&A) claims to further describe the need for an additional VSO. The board discussed what it would look like to contract a VSO position out through WDVA. Ann also talked about a separate Community Health Specialist position that has already been approved that may be able to help Liz out with claims at the county level.</p> <p>Wes made a motion to separate adding the VSO position and adding the Veterans Housing Case Manager position. Andrea seconded the motion. The board voted and the motion passed. Paul was unable to unmute for the vote.</p> <p>Al made a motion to contract with WDVA to add a VSO position. Wes seconded the motion. The board voted and the motion passed. Robert Wilson voted no. Paul was unable to unmute for the vote.</p> <p>The board continued to discuss the possibility of adding a Veterans Housing Case Manager contracted out to the Opportunity Council, as well as a separate Community Health Specialist with the county to help Liz with A&A claims. The board voted 5-2 in favor of adding a Veterans Housing Case Manager contracted out through the Opportunity Council, with a motion from Al, and a second from Andrea; however, after discussion of why two members voted against, Al motioned to table the discussion until the next meeting where more information will be provided. All members present unanimously agreed. The board would like to look at a job description, which Melissa Nyberg will work on getting to Ann and Liz. Ann will also look at projections of how many homeless veterans are served</p>	<p><i>Brent</i></p> <p><i>Ann / Liz</i></p> <p><i>All</i></p> <p>Aye: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0</p> <p>Aye: 5, Nay: 1, Abstain: 0</p> <p><i>All</i></p> <p>Aye: 7, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0</p>
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<p>Flood Assistance</p> <p>Board Membership</p>	<p>and how many veterans will need services over the next five years to help determine the need for 1 FTE.</p> <p>Liz put out a press release that the county can help eligible veterans with flood recovery costs, and American Legion has been working hard to connect people to Liz. The county can help with veteran flood assistance for relocation, water heater, plumbing etc. Liz is up to about \$30k in requests so far. The county's finance department is reimbursing directly to veterans. The board discussed what the fund can cover in terms of help with housing costs (permanent structure, RV).</p> <p>Lynne announced that this is John Mitchells' last meeting after serving two terms. There will one opening on the board at the end of January. Members must be an honorably discharged veteran living in Whatcom County. The board must have a majority of (5) members who belong to a nationally chartered organization. Andrea, Wes, and Al volunteered to serve on the nominating committee.</p>	<p><i>Liz</i></p> <p><i>Lynne / Liz</i></p>
<p>6. Next Meeting</p>	<p>The next meeting will be held Monday, February 14, 2022 on Zoom.</p>	
<p>7. Adjourned</p>	<p>John motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.</p>	<p><i>Lynne</i></p>