



Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: February 14, 2022 / 10:00 a.m. / Virtual Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present: Allan Jensen, Lynn Graham, Paul Pelot, Richard (Dick) Conoboy, Christopher Brown, Wes Weston, Andrea Vance, Robert Wilson, Joseph Shepherd

Committee Members Absent:

Whatcom Co. Health Dept. Staff/Guests: Ann Beck, Liz Witowski, Ashley Geleynse

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1. Call to order	Meeting called to order by Lynne Graham.	Lynne
2. Roll Call	A quorum was present.	All
3. New Business Review/Approval of December 2021 Minutes Introductions and welcome to new board member and reappointments Nomination of Chair and Co-Chair for 2022	Dick moved to approve the December meeting minutes. Al seconded the motion. The board voted and the motion passed. Robert was not present for the vote. Joe Shepherd introduced himself as a new member of the board. He retired from the Army in 1986 after 21 years of service. Wes, Al, and Andrea are beginning their second term. Chris nominated Lynne to continue as chair. Andrea Vance volunteered to co-chair. Al made a motion, Paul seconded the motion. Motion passed.	Aye: 8, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0 Aye: 9, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0
4. Reports/Discussion Veteran Service Officer Update	Ashley Geleynse moved into a Community Health Specialist role in the Housing Program. She will also spend about 20% of her time in the Veterans Program assisting Liz with claims once trained. This time last year, Liz was the only accredited VSO (Veterans Service Officer) in Whatcom County. Soon, there will	Liz



<p>HS Manager Updates</p>	<p>be four: Liz, Ashley, Andy, and a new Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) contracted VSO at the Vet Center.</p> <p>Ann Beck stepped into the role of Human Services Manager overseeing the Veterans, Housing, and Developmental Disabilities programs. The Health Department will be hiring a supervisor for her replacement.</p>	<p>Ann</p>
<p>Veterans Case Manager</p>	<p>Ann shared the day to day duties of the the proposed Veterans Case Manager position, specifically a Veteran Housing Services Navigator contracted out to the Opportunity Council. The proposed case load would be 20-25 Veterans who are unsheltered or in the housing pool, working to reduce barriers to housing and connecting to community resources. The board talked about how this position would help bridge the gap between VASH and SSVF. Like with all County contracts, the term limit maximum is one year so the board can reassess the effectiveness of the position before renewal. The board will identify key metrics to help determine whether the position is meeting the needs that the board identified. Some ideas for metrics to track include housing obtention and retention, number of contacts, links to benefits (VA, healthcare) caseloads, how much they're bringing in by applying for benefits. Ann and Liz will report on deliverables at meetings for board review.</p> <p>Dick motioned to fund the position, Wes seconded. Chris clarified that the approval will be good for one year, and that the board requires results on progress. The board voted and the motion passed. County Council will need to approve the amendment to the contract and the Opportunity Council can work on hiring.</p>	<p>Ann</p> <p>Everyone</p> <p>Aye: 9, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0</p>
<p>Good of the Order</p>	<p>Al mentioned that he is seeing a lot of Skagit veterans, and Liz explained that there is no Skagit VSO right now. During the gap, Skagit veterans are supposed to call VVA Seattle until they get a new fully accredited VSO. Skagit still contracts financial assistance through Community Action Council, and they are working with WDVA to have full-time county VSO to submit claims.</p> <p>Paul shared that Bill Adamek retired from ESD January 31st. The open position is posted on careers.wa.gov.</p>	<p>Al</p> <p>Paul</p>

	<p>Ann shared that Liz received the Governor's Veterans Advisory Committee 2021 Outstanding Service to Veterans Award.</p> <p>Chris shared that John Freaney, psychologist at the Vet Center retired. There will be a six-month gap; Chris and Lynne will be primary counselors taking on new cases in the interim. There is also a new office manager at the Vet Center.</p>	<p>Ann</p> <p>Chris</p>
6. Next Meeting	The next meeting will be held Monday, April 11, 2022 on Zoom.	
7. Adjourned	The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.	<i>Lynne</i>