



Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: October 11, 2021 / 10:00 a.m. / Virtual GoToMeeting
 Committee Members Present: Allan Jensen, Paul Pelot, Richard Conoboy, Lynne Graham, Christopher Brown, John Mitchell, Bob Wilson
 Committee Members Absent: Andrea Vance, Wes Weston
 Whatcom Co. Health Dept. Staff/Guests: Ann Beck, Liz Witowski, Ashley Geleyne / Melissa Nyberg

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1. Call to order	Meeting called to order by Lynne Graham.	<i>Lynne</i>
2. Roll Call	Quorum present at 10:09 a.m.	<i>All</i>
3. Review/Approval April minutes	June minutes were reviewed. Al motioned that the minutes be approved with the amendment that the meeting was actually called to order by Lynne, not Liz. Chris seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed. John and Bob were not present for the vote.	Aye: 5, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0
4. Reports/Discussion Veteran Service Officer Interlocal Agreement with San Juan County	Liz is currently the only federally accredited VSO north of Everett. In conversations with surrounding counties about Whatcom County serving their Veterans, San Juan County expressed wanting to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with Whatcom County so that Whatcom will be reimbursed for submitting San Juan claims. The draft agreement states that in the first pilot year, San Juan will pay Whatcom \$200 for initial claims, and \$100 for subsequent follow up. Liz would be serving San Juan Veterans remotely for now, but that could change in the future. The committee discussed the agreement with San Juan, and partnerships with other counties, and potential for additional VSOs in Whatcom County. Currently, Liz doing VSO work by referral or by people finding her on the va.gov website. She is not able to do outreach like she used to due to current workload, and when Liz isn't doing claims, claims for Whatcom	<i>Ann, Liz</i> <i>All</i>



<p>Veterans Housing Case Manager Position</p>	<p>County are not done. After some discussion, many members of the board agreed that there is a need for more assistance to help with claims. Chris suggested having a more serious conversation about adding another County staff person to ensure there aren't gaps in services.</p> <p>The board discussed two possible federally accredited VSO positions that may be coming to Whatcom County, and Ann asked for board members to send County staff any other potential positions so they can map out what's available and what's still needed for Whatcom County; whether that's adding a new position or subcontracting with WDBA.</p> <p>Ann presented on the need for more case management support for Veterans in the community. Ann showed the board how the Veterans Assistance Fund has grown over the years, and suggested the creation of a housing case manager position to serve a caseload of 20-25 Veterans. The board discussed this potential new position, that would more than likely be contracted out through Opportunity Council (OC).</p> <p>Ann will follow up with OC about whether they are receiving federal funding for veteran's specific case management, as this may impact the feasibility of creating the new position. Ann clarified that the fund could sustainably fund both a housing case manager position with OC and a county staff person to assist with claims and outreach. County staff will develop a fund balance report with projections for the next 5-10 years, with two positions factored in to forecasting. This will be emailed to the board, and discussed further at the next meeting.</p> <p>AI has been in Veterans Memorial Center of Bellingham meetings discussing preserving the Northwest Annex as a community wide Vet Center. AI will send board members a link to a website that contains more information.</p>	<p>Ann</p> <p>AI</p>
<p>5. Good of the Order</p>	<p>American Legion was contacted by the VA about establishing a clinic to offer medical services to Veterans since the Mount Vernon clinic is closing. There are plans to set up a clinic out of a trailer at the post. The VA is also looking at putting up kiosks to allow Veterans to check their VA status, start claims, contact doctor, etc.</p>	<p>AI</p>

WHATCOM COUNTY
Health Department



Erika Lautenbach, Director
Greg Stern, M.D., Health Officer

6. Next Meeting	The next meeting will be held Monday, December 13, 2021 on Zoom.	
7. Adjourned	John motioned to adjourn the meeting. Wes seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.	<i>Lynne</i>

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