



CLACKAMAS COUNTY  
VETERANS' ADVISORY  
COUNCIL

August 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes  
2:30pm – 4:30pm in Person

FACILITATOR	Laurie Kimmell
NOTETAKER	Sean Wells

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL							
E	Betty Fish-Ferguson	A	John Budiao	P	Dan Miner	P	Steven Beals
P	Paul Edgar	P	Thomas McAlarney	P	Brian Gornick	O	Rafael Kaup
P	Laurie Kimmell	P	Michael Blackwell	P	Aubrie Balkwill	P	Kyrion Gray
P	Tracy Bogard	E	Tawnya Lege	P	Don Kingsborough	P	Robert Kilgore
P	Carol Bernhard	P	Austin Hansen	P	James Manning		
S	Joey Johns	S	Tracy Garell				
S	Gus Bedwell	S	Ken Bietschek				
S	Sean Wells	O	Ben West – County Commissioner				
	Gally Murray - Guest						

P-Present, A -Absent, E-Excused, O-Other Attendee

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
<b>Meeting Called to Order and Introductions</b>	A quorum was established at 2:31 pm. Brian Gornick motioned to approve meeting agenda. Agenda adopted by acclimation.	

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<b>Adoption of Minutes</b>	Paul motioned to adopt June 2025 minutes. Approved by acclimation. June 2025 minutes adopted.	
<b>Chair Report</b>	Laurie talked about how well the VAC barbeque was and how it was a great opportunity for the committee members to get to know one another. She also let the VAC know about a few upcoming events including a motorcycle show and volcano coffee event.	
<b>Subcommittee Updates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Expo Subcommittee</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tracy distributed postcards and flyers for the expo to the VAC. She encouraged everyone to take so and distribute them to anyone who may be interested. Aubrie has secured food for the event; boxed lunches from Great Harvest. The website will be updated with the hours, so people know when to arrive. Tom M. has scheduled speakers, and the expo agenda will be finalized early next week. Social media invitations will be sent out soon and Tracy encouraged everyone to share information about expo on their personal social media accounts. The County's Public &amp; Government Affairs (PGA) will be posting on the County's social media accounts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Social Services Report</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tracy welcomed the new VAC members. She also let the VAC know that the BCC has been on a retreat where some ABCs were assigned commissioners. The VAC was assigned Commissioner's Schrader and West.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>VSO Report</u></li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gus is working on hiring a limited term Veteran's Service Officer (VSO). They are currently interviewing prospective employees and will be holding a second round of interviews in September. In November a VSO that has been working remote will be back in the office. The VSO is also gearing up to assist with the veteran's expo and sending employees to Veteran's Day events. He also addressed long wait times, no walk-in, and let the VAC know that his office has been dealing with fallout from sudden changes in the federal VA. He then gave an overview of the VSO booth at the County Fair. The VSO spoke with more than one hundred folks, not all of whom were Clackamas County residents. He said that he'd like to have a booth at the fair next year with a VSO booth and a Social Services booth. He said that there were four Clackamas County booths, but none of them knew about one another. Finally, he let the VAC know about upcoming events that the VSO will be attending, including a Pride event at Clackamas Community College on September 6<sup>th</sup> and a Fall Festival at the Pioneer Community Center on October 4<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>● <u>Veterans Housing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Joey let the VAC know that a Veteran's Outreach worker has been hired.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Monument Subcommittee</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The subcommittee is waiting to see the timeline on the current monuments and a response from Representative Drazen's office. Brian G. will forward the PGA email he received to Tracy Garell so she can the subcommittee will reconvene to discuss its next project &amp; follow up on it. When the current monuments are completed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Veterans Employment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ken reported that employment has been somewhat erratic, but <del>that</del> there have been several good training opportunities and the Veteran's Village has had several success stories recently. Unfortunately, there was also a suicide at the Village and said that the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) came to offer counseling. He also let the VAC know about a possible expansion to the Veteran's Village.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Guest: Clackamas County Mental Health</b>	Galli introduced herself and gave a presentation suicide prevention efforts in Clackamas County.	
<b>Left Over Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Formation of Mental Health Committee</u>: Laurie announced the formation of this committee and asked for volunteers. Chair Laurie Kimmell appointed James Manning of the subcommittee. She appointed Sub - committee members: Robert Kilgore, Dan Miner, Traci Bogart and facilitator Joey Johns. Laurie Kimmell (Sean Wells – administrative support, county mental health -advisory only). The suicide prevention committee will be folded into the Mental Health Committee.</li> <li>• <u>Veterans' Points</u> – County Code to Policy: Gus explained how veterans' preference work. If proof of service is provided and the minimum qualifications are met, then the applicant is given an interview. That is Oregon State law. The County changing Veterans Preference Points- from code to policy will not affect it.</li> <li>• <u>New VAC Members</u>: Laurie welcomed the new members. James Manning, Steve Beals, Kyrion Gray, Rafael Kaup, Don Kingsborough, Michael Blackwell, Aubrie Blackwell and Robert Kilgore.</li> </ul>	

<b>New Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rural Clackamas County Suicide Awareness Training</u>: -Joey Johns-presented a plan of action PowerPoint created by Laurie. It was stressed that the community should be trained in recognizing warning signs.</li> </ul>	
<b>Adjourn</b>	The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 pm.	
ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
<b>Member Updates, Announcements and Upcoming Events</b>	None this meeting.	
<b>Next Meeting</b>	Veterans Advisory Council Thursday, October 23, 2:30-4:30pm – In Person Location TBD	