



CLACKAMAS COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL
August 22, 2024, Meeting Minutes
1:30pm – 2:30pm in Person

FACILITATOR	RB Green
NOTETAKER	R.E. Szego

VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL							
P	Betty Fish-Ferguson	A	John Budiao	P	Janet Braman		
P	Paul Edgar	P	Thomas McAlarney	O	Jared Novak (prospective)		
P	Laurie Kimmell	E	Don Hedlind	O	Brian Bornack (Prospective)		
P	Tracy Bogard	P	Tawnya Lege				
P	Carol Bernhard	A	Gregory Freetage				
S	Brenda Durbin	S	Joey Johns	S			
S	Ken Bietschek	S	Gus Bedwell				
S	Sean Wells			S			

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

ITEMS / ISSUES	DISCUSSION	FOLLOW-UP
Meeting Called to Order and Introductions	Introductions: • April Smith works for VET Center at Clackamas Community College. • Sean Wells is the new VAC Liaison.	

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	A quorum was established at pm.	
Adoption of Minutes		
Officer Nominations	Nomination of new VAC Chair: - Paul nominated Betty Fish as the new chair, Tom seconded. Betty explained that she wanted to know more about what was happening in the local veteran's community and that she wanted the VAC to get out into the community more and visit other local veteran's services groups to build relationships. Nomination was approved unanimously and accepted. Nomination of new VAC Chair: - Paul nominated Laurie Kimmell to be Vice Chair, Betty seconded. Laure explained that she had been on the committee for a while and wanted more visibility for veterans in the local community. Her biggest goal to establish a veteran's treatment court. Nomination was approved unanimously and accepted.	
Veterans Expo	Tracy was announced as the new chair of the Expo Subcommittee. She said that the Expo is being pushed back to March or April of 2025 due to a number of factors including a short time frame, the upcoming elections, and other veteran events. It was mentioned that CCC may no longer hold classes on Fridays which would make space less of an issue but would make the expo less available for student veterans. Parking concerns were raised as CCC parking spots are not reservable. The need for event insurance was brought up and Laurie said that she knew a company that provided affordable plans and the County can provide	

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	coverage as well. Outreach will be handled by the County's PGA as well as other veteran's organizations. There was a call for volunteers for the subcommittee. The first subcommittee meeting will be held on Thursday, August 29th, and will be held on the third Thursday of each month. For new members the goals of the Expo were explained. The primary goal is for veterans to connect with veteran services and veteran owned businesses. The hope is that the veteran community can connect and understand what opportunities and services are available to them. An idea to create a website to help Clackamas County veterans connect was floated. It was also made clear that this would not be a standdown, but rather a broader informational event.	
VSO Updates	Gus joined late and introduced himself. He explained that he was late due to the VSO being understaffed and that he was a working manager. He gave the committee an overview of the VSO; what services it offers, recent achievements, and the staff. He requested that anyone referred to the office not be referred to any particular staff member as that would negatively impact the workflow. He also mentioned that a broader demographic of veterans have been accessing VSO services including women and LGBTQ veterans. Gus then asked if the committee had any questions. • When asked about the average wait time for services he said that it was roughly four weeks. VSO staff members generally have four or five appointments a day. He did note that the PACT (Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics) Act has increased the traffic into the VSO.	

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	• He explained where the budget of the VSO came from and gave a brief history on a measure that used some lottery funds to help pay for veteran's services. He said that roughly one-third of the VSO budget comes from the State and the remaining two-thirds comes from the County. • Gave a comparison between Clackamas and other nearby counties. Clackamas is #4 in veteran population. Washinton and Multnomah Counties have larger staff and Lane County is comparable in staff size. He explained that Clackamas County VSO does not take walk-ins instead focusing on offering the highest quality services. Also noted that the various Oregon VSOs meet every two weeks to discuss the state of the State's VSOs. • Finally Gus provided an overview of the VAC workplan: ○ Increase County awareness of the VSO and other veterans services. ○ Increase VAC membership so it can reach more of the community. ○ Use events like the Veterans Expo to build upon the first two goals.	
Member Updates, Announcements and Upcoming Events	• On Sunday, August 25th, soldiers are departing for Kosovo. • There will be a legislative meeting on Monday, September 23rd, regarding predatory services targeting veterans. • Aubrie Balkwill is going to be leaving for a position at CCC.	
Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm.	
Next Meeting	Veterans Advisory Council Thursday, October 24, 2:30-3:30pm – In Person	

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	Fort Kennedy https://www.fortkennedy.org/ 7600 SE Johnson Creek Boulevard, Portland, OR 97206	