

# **Kent County Veterans Services**

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DRAFT minutes 3-11-2021

Committee Present: Mary Johnson, John Baxter, Mel Bauman, Shane Scherer, Trish Torres, Jill Wolfe,

Michael Blundell

Committee Absent:

Staff Present: Martha Burkett, Jacob Calvert, Andrew Lapres

Guests: Harold Mast, Gerald Dennis, Dan Ophoff, Eric Nelson

1. Meeting called to Order/Introductions –

- a. The meeting was called to order by Veterans Services Committee Chair Mary Johnson at 8:30am
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance Committee Member Trish Torres led those in attendance to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3. Monthly Impact Reports
  - a. Veterans Services Officer Andrew Lapres provided an update, calls are up, from 1,893 to 3,000. Retro payments went from 1,271 for January to 116,535 in February. Monthly awarded dollars went from 3,051 to 51,987.
- 4. Manager's Report
  - a. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett detailed the **budget report**.
  - b. Martha Burkett stated that the **budget for Sailors and Soldiers Relief had to be reduced by** \$200,000. That number is not yet reflected in the budget.
  - c. Martha Burkett stated it that there appears to be \$230,000 in outstanding encumbrances, but that number is from the Degage contract and Dental contract, which is not supposed to be coming out of Sailors and Soldiers Relief. Martha states she will set up a meeting with Chris Wilson to go through the budget line by line to straighten it all out.
  - d. All programs are on track and progressing as planned, except ID card services.
  - e. Martha Burkett that **at least one staff is going into the office every day with Nelson Soto** to get him up to speed and support him.
  - f. Nelson and Pamela Alderman were on TV and he received 4 calls immediately after the segment.
  - g. Martha stated that the billboards have started going up.

- h. **The Arbor's Circle program has started,** currently have 2 clients. Martha will be giving a presentation to the treatment court.
- i. Rachel and Martha are working on **the Gala guest list.** Save-the-dates will be going out soon. **Senator Peters is still not confirmed.**

j.

### 5. Old Business

- a. Committee Chair Mary Johnson began discussion on the changes to the Soldiers and Sailors Relief policy.
- b. Mary Sumners presented the changes.
- c. Committee Member John Baxter suggested the policy be reviewed yearly instead of every three years. Mary Johnson seconded.
- d. Mary Sumners shared that KCVS staff have the ability to require a budget class as needed.
- e. Trish Torres recommended that each major issue be included in the document with headings and explanations. Marth Burkett seconded.
- f. Mary Sumners shared that applicants may be approved for assistance for month-to-month rental agreements, with supporting documentation.
- g. Marry Sumners stated she will tweak the draft and send it out for approval.

## 6. New Business-

- a. Committee Member John Baxter spoke on the Covid Vaccine clinic at the Deltaplex.
- b. John Baxter spoke to Jenny James about the need of a sub-committee for a renewal of the millage. It was found that no sub-committee is necessary. John spoke with Jenny and they will cover the compilation of figure and narrative that is necessary for the report to the sub-committee or the county, and also for the marketing work and date by which the report needs to be presented to the entire board for review and the date by which the report needs to be recommended for inclusion in the Kent county filing for the November 2022 voting schedule. They will review points and dates during the process with recommendations about potential members to the Kent County board. They will be open to recommendations as to who should be involved in the process moving forward.
- c. Martha Burkett stated she forwarded an email from Jenny James about the millage renewal.
- d. Martha Burkett stated that she will start planning for the approved Women's Veterans appreciation event. Mary Johnson stated that the event should be able to take place by the end of summer.

### 7. Around the Table-

- a. New events
  - i. No New Events

### 8. Public Comment -

- a. **Harold Mast** spoke on the "Veteran of the Year" award. He stated that the Vet Counsel will be starting a new program with three awards: a "Veteran of the Year," "Auxiliary type Member of the Year," and "Person Who Holds Up Veterans" awards.
- b. **Harold Mast** is assembling a committee for the awards. KCVS staff Rachel Wustman will join the committee.
- c. **Gerald Dennis** wanted to know about money being spent on programs for transportation for Veterans. Martha Burkett explained that KCVS awarded a grant to Disability Advocates of Kent County for a transportation service "Phoenix Rising." Community Action hired a van driver for veterans, but the program stalled due to Covid.

- d. **Dan Ophoff** wanted to know if the SSR policy is posted to a public website, and stated that if it isn't, it should be.
- e. **Eric Nelson** shared the number for the Disability Advocates Ride service.
- 9. Adjournment –Veterans Services Committee Chair Mary Johnson moved adjourned the meeting at 9:05 am.