



## **Kent County Veterans Services**

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DRAFT minutes 03/10/2022

Committee present: Mary Johnson, Melvin Bauman, Jill Wolfe, Michael Blundell, Trish Torres, Chris Kamps, Reggie Howard

Committee absent: None

Staff present: Martha Burkett, Ryan Grams, Rachel Wustman, Jim Thompson, Charlie Rogers

Guests: Paul Ryan

1. Meeting called to order/ instructions-
  - A. The meeting was called to order by veterans services committee chair Mary Johnson.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – lead by Jim Thompson.
3. Approval of the minutes from April Meeting
4. Success stories
  - A. Arbor Circle had 3 new intakes and 16 groups for substance abuse program have been provided. One of the activities the groups do is go outside and do a ruck march and she receives more participation this way. There were 92 individual sessions and ten family and significant other sessions, and she administers a total of 21 grief addiction monitors for outcome measurements. There has a client that is about to hit their one-year sobriety anniversary and another client celebrated their one year anniversary. There have been a couple clients that have relapsed but have stayed in touch with the program.
  - B. We are still receiving mostly word of mouth referrals along with the VA referring people to our office.
  - C. Aucdetox is about ready to begin, it took a bit between legal review with the county and the contract is in place, It will begin the first week of May. On May 27<sup>th</sup> a demo meeting has been set up. Aucdetox has offered a demo to the committee members and staff. Martha encouraged the committee to participate in the demo so they will be able to talk about it in the community. Flyers are also being made to send out to the community.
5. Manager's report
  - A. Last month there were 15 fully developed claims which is up from the month before. Phone calls are up from month before, and Meijer food voucher are way up from month before which is wonderful, we are keeping families fed.

KCVS MANAGER We have not really started spending money as MVAA contracts were late getting executed. We have all but one is completely done so we will start getting invoices on them and see how funds start to drop. As long as we have everything in place and we have the requests into MVAA by October he MVAA will reimburse us.

- B. Has heart already has their 21 veterans for Art Prize 22
  - C. We are working on the Art Prize Gala which will be on July 15<sup>th</sup> at the Ever Heart center at grand valley. This event will be invitation only, Art workshop participants from this year and last year, committee, board of Commissioners, and other dignitaries will be invited. The staff will be there to be able to answer any questions from veterans. There will be a cash bar and soft drinks will be invited. Rosemarie Aquilina will speak, Martha has asked the Governor but have not heard back yet, also asked Gary Peters but no answer yet.
  - D. The Art Prize open day event will be on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, Hoolagins will do a fly over, a bag piper is lined up, the Patriot Guard, live music is lined up. We are purchasing with grant money a hot dog machine and popcorn machine. Mel inquired if we need volunteers to work the tables. Martha replied absolutely and encouraged the Committee to come to any of our events and participate. Jenny James inquired about having it down town in Calder Plaza. Reggie Howard advised it would be better to have here at KCVS.
  - E. May 12<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm KCVS will have a table set up for the Hidden Wounds of War Conference which is being held at GVSU.
  - F. Woman's banquet is still in the planning phase for this year. We are looking at having it the last Saturday in July at maybe GVSU – Jill will be helping run the banquet. Dollar amount may need to be raised to \$6000.00 to cover expense of the event. Jill has offered to help with fund raising if it is needed. This banquet is a Kent County lead initiative.
  - G. Martha asked for a woman volunteer to go to the equine retreat on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup>. Trish volunteered to go help. Suicide prevention specialist from 92 for 22 will be there also.
  - H. Mel asked the question if we have thought about having a table at the Armed Forces Thanksgiving dinner this year. This will be looked at more.
  - I. Mel also brought up having a table and VSO at the Airport Veterans Lounge. Committee members have spoken to the airport and to the Partners at Spartan Nash but have been getting the run around. Mel asked if Jenny may be able to help in the matter. Jenny replied she would look into it.
6. New Business
- A. The Millage Committee had a meeting involving Mel, Mike, Mary, and Dan Ophoff. The Veterans Alliance has \$6000.00 towards advertising. Tammy has just been brought onto the committee who is the director of the alliance and will be ordering the signs and table banner for the Gun Show table. Mel Asked how much it would cost for 200 signs and was answered with about \$1700.00. If there are any monies left over from millage donation may go back to the veterans court. The signs should be finished in a couple weeks. They will be getting magnetic signs for cars in parades also.
  - B. Mary asked Jill about the student's media project. Jill says they have not done the presentations yet for their projects. The presentation will be next Tuesday and Thursday at 8 am. A link was sent out to observe the presentations.

- C. Martha working with Jenn Headrick to come up with forms for the advertising involving states and stories of KCVS.
  - D. May meeting changed from May 12<sup>th</sup> to May 19<sup>th</sup> due to committee member availability needs.
  - E. Staffing has been filled in the office with the two clerk positions filled, Martha is requesting new positions for added for the office of a new full-time admin position also to make the Veteran support Coordinator position permanent.
  - F. Michael brought up a suggestion of having the county place freeway signs directing where the office is. Jenny commented that this would need state highway approval for that, and she will look into what would need to be done.
  - G. Rachel expressed she is still doing popcorn at the clinic on Tuesdays as time permits. She has two events later today both at care facilities that are doing art prize workshops for the residents. Also have a meet and greet at a new care facility in Wyoming this afternoon. Rachel is also making new flyers since we have the equine therapy, music, yoga, and art back that can be sent out to facilities. Rachel is also going to a luncheon at senior neighbors and will bring a bunch of those flyers. Also, will be continuing to reach out to other care facilities.
7. Public comment:
- A. Paul says Mike and Mel already know that the parade is back and will be Monday May 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am and will end at memorial park where a ceremony will be held as they have done for many years. Guest speaker will be Commissioner Antwerp who just won an award from the MVAA for his support of veterans with the freedom cruise event and monitoring the fallen service member who gets his portrait painted. September 24<sup>th</sup> will be the West Michigan Veterans Coalition resource fair and will be held at the 44<sup>th</sup> Street Grandville Armory in conjunction with the Michigan National Guard family programs, they expect 45 to 50 resource providers across all their mission areas, education employment, healthcare and quality of life. For the employment piece they are looking for not only veteran friendly employers but also employers who are ready to employ people with barriers to employment, being physical, cognitive disabilities, and criminal/ legal issues. Final request for a copy of the Arbor circle report to take back to the Veterans council of Kent County.
  - B. Adjournment. Veterans Services Committee Chair Mary Johnson moved adjourned to the meeting.