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[Minutes: September 21, 2023](#)

Present: Mary Johnson, Jill Wolfe, Mel Bauman, Chris Kamps, Mike Blundell, Reginald Howard

Excused:

Absent:

Staff: Martha Burkett, Ryan Grams, Rachel Wustman, Amanda Lake and Jennifer James

1. Meeting called to Order by Mary Johnson at 0900.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of minutes
  - a. Motion to accept minutes by Mel Bauman. Motion accepted by Reginald Howard. All were in favor.
4. Success Stories
  - a. Rachel- KCVS had our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Art Prize opening. Ryan and Rachel were attendance from KCVS, along with Rachels father. They had great weather and a lot of interaction with veterans and their families for the opening ceremonies.
  - b. Mike Blundell- KCVS Ryan and Kenyon came to the veterans retreat that was held in Luther, Michigan. They got a lot of good feedback with having them there and it was appreciated they came to speak with the veterans at the retreat.
  - c. Jennifer James- Thought the band was very good and heard a lot of great feedback from the crowd about the band.
5. Monthly Impact Report – Ryan Grams
  - a. Record Requests: Significantly lower than August of 2022
  - b. Fully developed claims: Almost doubled the ones done in August of 2022
  - c. Face-to-face contacts have increased
  - d. Intent to file: Continue to increase
  - e. Claims in Development: 293 with 27 awarded
  - f. Monthly award of dollars has significantly increased
  - g. Burials: We didn't have any for August of 2023



- iii. Mary to Jenny- Should be we sending a letter to the board of commissioners to express interest in having a commissioner on our board?
- iv. Jenny- I think I would reach out to them with a letter, but you will need to change the day/time of your current KCVSAC meetings due to the board of commissioners meeting at the same time. Discussion was held to change the KCVS meeting day and time to continue to be on Thursdays, the time will change from 9am to 2pm. This will start after the new year.

9. New activities

- a. Operation Green light- Martha Burkett
  - i. We just had a meeting with Kent County Communications department. They are on board with wanting to help and be involved with promoting operation green light from the county level. We received a tool kit from them on how to promote it. We also talked to them about supporting us during the veteran's parade. We have some extra money, so we are looking to buying some green lights to distribute in our office. We are looking at making a tool kit to share with our community stakeholders. The toolkits will come with posters and yard signs to tell about Operation Green light. I spoke with Dawn Davies in Kent county communications, who is "hyped" to get a float for this year veterans' parade. We would like to get some help possibly from the Veterans court getting this ready.
  - ii. Mel- The more vehicles and awareness the better. If there are any veterans' groups that want to be involved, get them in touch with us. The parade will be 11-11-23. Lineup will be starting at 9-930 am. We are working on a guest speaker right now, along with obtaining all the permits that are needed.
- b. Heroes Corner needs- Reginald Howard
  - i. Reginald- We are looking for some items for a room that is specific to women and their kids only. There are no males allowed in their area, as some of the veteran women who will be using this space are victims of MST. We are looking for furniture and toys for their kids. This isn't specific to African American women, but to all women veterans.
  - ii. Mary- Please send out a list of everything you will need for this room. That way we can pull together and get this room filled up.
- c. Art prize 2024
  - i. Martha- We had 2 bids coming in for the 2024 art prize. Michael Hycinthe and Pamela Alderman who have worked together in the past few years, but have both put in separate bids for the 2024 Art Prize. Pamela has won the bid for 2024.
  - ii. Mel- are we changing the "Voices" theme of art prize then?
  - iii. Martha- I am not sure what will be happening, other than it will be fully headed by Pamela Alderman this next year.
  - iv. Reginald- I think that we need to review the location, it is highly populated by the homeless community. I think that our veteran artists work way to hard to have their artwork destroyed or stolen like it has this year. I think there should be more security to protect their artwork.

- v. Martha- They do have security from 9-5, but we can look at addressing it going forward in the 2024 campaign. We do know that the boots that were stolen this year, were taken by a homeless gentleman. But they were returned. This year, I didn't have much say in the security. But next year, I can have more say in what is happening.

10. Public Comment

- a. Anthony Torres- Kent County Treatment Court-
  - i. If we hear about any events that are available to our veterans, we get it out to all our current people and alumni. We are not on any social media, so we need hard copies or emails of the events to pass along and in a timely manner to get them in the hands of our people. We will get it out there, but we can't force anyone to do it. We are currently working on our collaboration with Kent County Core Services. They are currently having a software issue that makes it hard for us to distinguish veterans. Ethan, the core services pretrial supervisor is personally going through it and making changes. I am currently waiting on a descriptive report from our program. That should be done any day. If you get me the information about events and programs, I will gladly put it out there to our people.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Lake