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[Minutes: January 11, 2024](#)

Present: Mel Bauman, Mike Blundell, Reginald Howard, Mary Johnson, Christopher Kamps, and Katie DeBoer

Excused: Jill Wolfe

Staff: Ryan Grams, Jennifer James, Rachel Wustman, and Jenna Willis

Public: Paul Ryan, and Anthony Torres

1. Meeting called to Order by Christopher Kamps at 1401.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Month
  - a. Motion to accept November minutes by Christopher Kamps. Motion accepted.
  - b. Motion to accept December minutes by Christopher Kamps. Motion accepted.
4. Chairwoman Review of Committee Guidelines
5. Success Stories
  - a. Ryan Grams – Jenna Willis has been training on SSR and has picked it up quickly.
  - b. Ryan Grams – I mentioned this at the Board of Commissioners meeting, but we have over doubled our \$1.7 million revenue in disability claims for veterans in the Kent County area.
  - c. Rachel Wustman – 10 big meals were donated and distributed to 10 different families in Kent County from Care Cardinal.
6. Monthly Impact Report
  - a. Ryan Grams - Overall, December is usually the slowest month, but we still made an impact in the community.
  - b. Records Requests: 3 records requests, which is more than last month but less than this time last year.

- c. Fully developed claims: 43, which is higher than last month as well as this time last year.
- d. Face-to-face Contacts: There were 98 in December, which is less than last month and this time last year.
- e. Intent to file: 15, which is one less than last month. We have no data for the number of Intent to File's for this time last year.
- f. Claims in Development: 345, which is more than last month. We have no data for the number of Claims in Development for this time last year.
- g. Awarded Claims: 32, which is higher than last month as well as this time last year.
- h. Monthly Awarded Dollars: \$68,561.67 was awarded in December, which is higher than last month as well as this time last year.
- i. SSR Awarded: 7 SSR's were awarded, which is higher than last month but the same as this time last year.
- j. SSR Dollar's Spent: \$14,246.31 was spent in December, which was more than last month as well as this time last year.
- k. Burials Awarded: There was 1 burial awarded in December, which is less than last month but the same as this time last year.
- l. Burial Dollars Spent: We spent \$300 in December, which was lower than last month but the same amount as this time last year.
- m. Meijer Grocery Vouchers: 25 food vouchers, which is less than last month as well as this time last year.
  - i. Meijer Grocery Voucher's expired on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The order was placed for the new vouchers and the audit is being worked on by Meijer.
  - ii. Ryan Grams - While the audit is taking place the number of vouchers will be at 0 for the upcoming months until we get the order in.
- n. Where are we making the biggest impact?
  - i. Phone contacts, fully developed claims, awarded claims, monthly awarded in dollars, claims in development at the VA, retroactive money awarded, and SSR's awarded.
- o. Service gaps/opportunities to make a deeper impact
- p. Return on Investments on current programs if any

## 7. Monthly Activity Report – Ryan Grams

- a. Current Budget Report
- b. Budget Review
  - i. Everything is on track where it is supposed to be.
  - ii. Going forward quarterly reports will be one next month instead of two.

## 8. Old Business

- a. Rachel Wustman – Ryan and I are working hard to pick up where Martha Burkett left off.
- b. All contracts are done and finalized, including support groups. Everything is submitted for the first quarter.

9. New Business

- a. Ryan Grams – Going forward, all letterheads must be changed so Katie DeBoer is listed on them.
- b. Rachel Wustman – We need to order new committee member business cards and brochures for the office.
- c. Rachel Wustman – Do not hand out existing committee member business cards
  - i. We need to change the emails from “.com” to “.gov”
- d. Kenyon Vickery and Rachel Wustman have been doing touchpoints with all partnered organizations to touch base and see how everything is going, if they need any changes, etc.
- e. Hero’s Corner
  - i. Work on getting a VSO at Hero’s Corner three hours per week to bridge the gap between community members there and our office/support services.
- f. If we have no new Manager – Ryan Grams and Rachel Wustman will handle information on the millage for March’s meeting.

10. Committee Connection Information Sheet

- a. Mary – going forward we will remove the Committee Connection Information Sheet from the agenda.

11. New activities/collaborations/soliciting feedback/advice – Rachel Wustman

- a. Women’s Appreciation Banquet at the John Ball Zoo Bissell Treehouse
  - i. Date: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024
  - ii. We allocated funds for women’s events. This is not a contract issue therefore this is not on the Millage Funded Programs Sheet.
- b. Mary Johnson - In March we will look at every program and decide what we will fund or not fund going into 2025.
  - i. Looking at number of veteran’s served to see if the program is worth our funding.
- c. Mel Bauman - I want to see us channel more funding into Hero’s Corner but we were told in the past it was a conflict of interest. I see a great benefit to funding this place for veterans and their families.
  - i. Mary Johnson - Since Reginald Howard is no longer on the board as President anymore there shouldn’t be a conflict of interest anymore. Ryan Grams will talk to Linda and give an update on that later.

12. Public Comment

- a. Paul Ryan – Memorial Day Parade
  - i. The parade is no longer May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 it will be held on Saturday May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
  - ii. I want to make this a county wide event and encourage participation of the community
  - iii. Mel Bauman – I would like to invite Katie DeBoer to be on the planning committee for the Memorial Day Parade.
- b. Paul Ryan – West Michigan Veteran’s Coalition and Feonix Rising Transportation

- i. Feonix Rising Transportation was awarded a \$1.5 million dollar grant to extend transportation services to Jackson, MI that started in August 2023.
    - ii. January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 – service was expanded to anyone who is eligible, military service or not. Although, participation is still largely from the veteran population and has been mostly to medical appointments.
    - iii. Later in 2024 – initiative with the American Cancer Society to help transport cancer patients in rural areas to their appointments.
  - c. Anthony Torres - Families in Narcotics Presentation
    - i. I would like to extend an invitation to Katie DeBoer to sit in on a Veteran’s Treatment Court session.
  - d. Katie DeBoer - How much money is going in house versus outside?
    - i. Ryan Grams - Our jobs are in house at the KCVS office.
    - ii. Through the millage – extra money allows us to contract outside organizations.
    - iii. We are all state and taxpayer funded.

13. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 1439.

14. CLOSED SESSION

Respectfully submitted,

Jenna Willis