

Thurston County Veterans Advisory Board
27 November 2023
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Bill Powell, Scott Frazier, Matt Hout, Ken Borque, Heather Mills, Anthony Moye, Rhonda Sutton, and Brandon Frawley

Others Present: Mark Moffett, Candace McCutchen, Jen Freiheit, Keith Looker, and Thomas Russell-Tutty

Meeting Opening:

The meeting was at 6:00 p.m.

Bill welcomes all to the forum.

Bill introduced the guests, and then Thomas Russell-Tutty introduced himself.

Scott proposes a motion to approve the October minutes, which Brandon seconds. The October minutes are then approved.

Upcoming Events / Forecasted Calendar

- Bill discussed various locations for the Memorial Day stand down in May.
- Keith suggested transforming the standdown into a resource fair since no homeless veterans attended.

Assessment of Stand-Down

- Between 8:30 and 12:00, 11 veterans participated in the standdown event.
- Discussing potential downtown locations for stand-down included the senior center.
- Mark emphasized the significance of a consistent location.
- Ken highlighted the importance of transportation.
- The target audience should specifically focus on the at-risk veteran population.
- Rhonda suggests the senior center as a suitable location.
- It is essential to clarify the target audience and effectively deliver the message to them.

Operational Teams

- Scott provided an update on the progress of the sub-committees and shared the proposed long-range calendar for events.
- He also discussed identifying and understanding the vulnerable community in the area.
- Furthermore, potential combined events were explored and considered for inclusion in the long-range calendar.

Transition

- Bill discusses transitioning from a smaller 9-member board to a larger 15-member board.
- Bill suggests increasing the number of people on the board will enhance participation.

- Mark emphasizes that the outcome is contingent upon the involvement of each member and suggests modifying the ordinance gradually by establishing a workgroup in January.
- The board unanimously decides to forego the December meeting and instead plans to convene in January to specifically address the proposed amendment concerning the addition of new members to the board.

Hub Update

- Keith says the hub boasts more than 144 partners.
- Keith addresses the critical issues of veteran suicide, food insecurities, and the vulnerability of low-income populations. Moreover, active-duty members, notably lower enlisted personnel, are experiencing food insecurity. Furthermore, the lack of affordable housing and mental health crisis sites exacerbates these problems, which are often rooted in mental health issues.
- Keith says 14,500 appointments at the hub, highlighting the significant demand for veteran services.
- Keith expresses concern about losing veteran service officers as many are reaching retirement age and aging out of their positions.

Old/New

- Matt inquired about the integration of the housing stabilization pilot program into the policies and procedures.
- Mark explains that Laniece's departure has caused a shift in priorities. The housing stabilization pilot program still needs to be approved by the board of county commissioners, along with the most recent policy changes. Mark believes it will require to be added to the agenda for January.

Around the room and adjourned.

- The next board meeting will be held in January 2024
- There being no further business. Bill adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- Brandon Frawley recorded the meeting minutes.