



Kent County Veterans Services

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DRAFT minutes 2-7-2020

Present: Mary Johnson, Trish Torres, John Baxter, Harold Mast, Shane Scherer, Mel Bauman, Randy Tharp

Absent:

Guests: Mary Sumner, Theresa Robinson, Anthony Torres

1. Meeting called to Order – The meeting was called to order by Veterans Services Committee Chair Mary Johnson at 8:30am
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Veterans Services Supervisor Ryan Grams led those in attendance to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Approval of Minutes –
 - a. Committee Member John Baxter made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee Vice Chair Shane Scherer seconded, UNANIMOUS
4. Committee Chair Mary Johnson wanted to make sure everyone was aware that this months meeting is an informational meeting, there will be nothing more to vote on this month. Also, as a reminder this is an Advisory Committee, not a Board, however if anyone has any issues with how Manager Martha Burkett spends money, or runs the department, to please bring concerns to her, Mary Johnson, first.
5. Success Stories-

Martha shared that the MVAA Grants went through. Also shared that the team has continued to work from home doing everything they can for the Veterans of Kent County. Pamela Alderman has also been going full steam ahead with as much progress as she can for ArtPrize. Rachel, Reggie, Theresa have been working with HR and the Health Department to assist with Contact Tracing for COVID 19. It will last 4-6 weeks.
6. Public Comment-none.
7. Introductions- none
8. Before moving forward, Committee Member Trish Torres asked about the process currently for if a veteran wants to start an initial claim, she wondered if there was a way to start the “clock” from a

phone call. Veterans Services Supervisor Ryan Grams said not presently, and there is not a way, through the Veterans Services Office, right now to start an initial claim. Ryan Grams did state however the veteran could start it on their own, using E-Benefits. Committee Member Randy Tharp echoed Ryan Grams sentiments stating E-Benefits is currently the way to go.

9. Committee Member Randy Tharp also questioned about a new software program being purchased. Martha Burkett answered with the offices shut down, there have been some administrative delays, but will have Admin Rachel Wustman look into moving forward.

10. Monthly Impact Reports

- a. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett advised that Supervisor Ryan Grams does not have any access to claims currently, just like the rest of the staff, due to PII. Therefore having a monthly report is not feasible for this month.

11. Presentations- none

12. Managers Report

- a. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett went over the art workshops for the artprize piece with artist Pamela Alderman. She is also working on having a few no contact workshops. Committee Member John Baxter shared his thoughts on being impressed with the progress of the Artprize Piece.
- b. Veterans Services applied for roughly \$220,000.00 to applied to 7 initiatives. All 7 were approved. One initiative was for a TV campaign, Supervisor Ryan Grams shared a first draft of a commercial. Committee Member Harold Mast asked for a breakdown of how much money is going to each initiative, Manager Martha Burkett said she would have that by next meeting.
- c. Veterans Services Manager Martha Burkett also shared that Veterans Services is still moving forward with the affiliation with WINC, once the paperwork is received, she will send it to the Legal Counsel. There are ideas of doing a virtual meet and greet, and possibly a no contact workshop.

13. Old Business –

- a. There has been a vacancy for the position of Veterans Services Officer in the department, so that position has been posted as well as a Clerk II position.
- b. Mary Sumner with Kennari Consulting wondered if both the guidelines and expectations were approved to get them out of draft form. Yes, at the January 2020 Kent County Veterans Services Advisory Committee Meeting.

14. New Business-

15. Survey Responses – 0. Admin Rachel Wustman is working on getting a link to a survey for e-mail signatures.

16. Around the Table-

17. Public Comment –

- Tony Torres from Veterans Treatment Court shared that because of the pandemic, all public courts have been closed in Michigan, with the exception of video arraignments, which are currently in a holding pattern. Presently there are 19 veterans in the program with 4 pending. Things could possibly open up in June, but social distancing will still be taking place.

18. Adjournment –Veterans Services Committee Chair Mary Johnson moved adjourned the meeting at 9:27am
19. The next Veterans Services Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, June 4th, at 8:30am place is TBD due to the Governors orders.