

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes
Macomb Community Action Training Room
21885 Dunham Clinton Township, MI 48038
Monday, March 02, 2020

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Laura Rios at 9:04 am.

Attendees:

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| Adrienne Gasperoni, CARE | Brian Webb, SOM DHHS |
| Chris Reilly, Michigan Works! | Christy Koons, Reg Coord |
| Darryle Johnson, Vet Services | Dawn Revyn, VOA |
| Deanne Honeycutt, Homeless Coalition | Franklin Newman, AFSA |
| Gabriella Barthlow, Vet Services | Gerald Fisher-Curley, VAMC |
| Heidi Heck, Vet Services | Jennifer Kimm, Michigan Works! |
| Kara Fields, MCC | Laura Rios, Vet Services |
| Lisa Marie Duncan –Edwards, Vet Svcs | Liz Sergeant MCA |
| Madeline Habib, MCCMH | Mark Diaz, VCCF |
| Mark Kilgore, CARE | Mark Meadows, VAMC |
| Mike Johnson, AFGE | Nicole Gauthier, MCCMH |
| William Cochran, Congr Andy Levin | Yolanda Spencer-Dandridge, VAMC |
| Rodney Tolbert, Strategy for Eff Lvg | Erica DeLange, MyCare |
| Monica Alderman, Vet Center | Jason Groth, Preferred Care at Home |
| Teena Sawicki, John Dingell | John Konechue, AMVETS |
| Charles Petch, AMVETS | Robert Orłowski, AMVETS |
| Pandora Brown, Detroit Arsenal | Janice Smith, VA |
| Billy Hallmark, USAG | Kim Tisor, ACS |
| Lucia Rogers, Bright Star Care | Leonard Hogan, AMVETS |
| Ashley Bood, VOA | Stephen Boegehold, DHHS |

II. **INTRODUCTIONS:** The members went around the table and introduced themselves.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The January 06, 2020 minutes were approved as a matter of record.

IV. **AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES:**

Chris Reilly stated that the Marketing and Education/Outreach/Communication subcommittees will meet as one committee until the members decide how to break down the tasks. i.e. What is marketing? What is outreach? etc. The first matter that was discussed was: “Who we are as an MVAC, what are we trying to do and who are we trying to help?” “Are we trying to find and connect veterans with their services or educate ourselves about the services we provide?” The subcommittee

provided a form for each service organization to fill out that included name of organization, contact information and what services it provides. The committees will meet in April.

v. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Benefits/Communication: Laura Rios stated the Blue Water Navy claims are slowly being processed by the VA. If a veteran was denied their claim under the Blue Water Navy, they must resubmit it. The VA will not go back to re-access denied claims. The Vita Tax program has “exploded and there are no more appointments available.” The Veteran Service office has an opening for a VSOI. The applicant must be a veteran with counseling experience.

Employment: Mark Meadows stated that manufacturing is “doing well.” Ford and Chrysler are hiring right as well as Beaumont Hospital. The Tier 1 suppliers are also hiring. The Hiring Our Heros event is being held this Saturday, March 7th at the John Dingell in Detroit. Jennifer Kimm stated the Veteran Boot camp was canceled for March because there were not enough veterans.

Services: Madeline Habib stated the flowcharts are in the process of being updated, as soon as they are finished, they will be uploaded to the MVAC website for download.

Membership: Laura Rios gave a quick reminder of how to become a member of MVAC and the sign in process for each meeting. Mark Diaz has offered to take on this committee in the interim.

Faith Based: Rodney Tolbert stated they fed over 20 veteran and families during November and December of last year. He stated for those who work at the VAMC, to be sure a representative from the Census comes to the hospital to register any veterans who will be there on April 1st. April 1st is the official count day.

Higher Education: Kara Fields stated the Post 911 changes have settled down and those who are using the benefit should be receiving the correct stipend. VetTech is a VA program that helps veterans get a quick certification in I.T. This program is free to the veteran as long as they have Post 911 eligibility that has NOT been exhausted. Even if it has expired, a veteran can still get into this program. For additional information on this program and others, please contact Kara.

vi. **VCAT/ROUND ROBIN:**

Kara stated the next Motor City VCAT meeting will be held on March 27th from 10 – 12 at the VFW in Royal Oak.

Laura Rios stated Dean Shunk, the previous Voc Rehab counselor retired last year. The VA did not automatically assign “his” cases to our new Voc Rehab counselor Alexandra Wilson. This has caused confusion and frustration to those veterans. Laura reminded the committee that her office just hosts the Voc Rehab counselors and they are still VA employees. She has no say on their work load.

Gerald Fisher – Curley mentioned that the Traditional GPD NOFA was closing on March 2, 2020. The Transition-in-Place GPD NOFA was announced two weeks ago and proposals are currently being accepted by the national office through April 22, 2020. The CEO of the Michigan Veteran Foundation, Tyrone Chatman, recently passed away. Please contact Gerald for additional information.

Kara Fields stated there will be a MCC and Warren job fair April 22nd from 4 – 7 at the South Campus. Emergency funds and a food bank will be available.

Leonard Hogan stated the Amvets has emergency assistance for veterans.

Madeline Habib mentioned the dates for the Traveling Tours: May 13 – 14
She is also the contact for My Common Wealth online bulletin board

Mark Kilgore state the 4th annual Sober Bowl had over 300 participants. They are working on another event for St. Patrick's Day.

NEXT MEETING

May 4, 2020 at the MCA Training and Conference Room starting at 9:00 A.M.
There will be no Special Speaker.

VII. ADJOURMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 A.M.