



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
*PO BOX 41150 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1150 • 360-725-2167*

**Meeting Minutes**

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| <b>Meeting attended by</b>           | Roy Compton, Merl Gorton, Francis Jeffery, Gary Lysne, Dick Marcelynas, Tito Medina, Don Schack, Bob Schwartz  |
| <b>Absent from meeting (Excused)</b> | Oria Berndt, Lloyd Burroughs, Kathy Hobbs, Don Fenton, Rob Lougee, Owen McCurdy, Gary Pearson  |
| <b>Date</b>                          | January 23, 2014   |
| <b>Time</b>                          | 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  |
| <b>Location</b>                      | Port Orchard Eagles Club   |
| <b>Call to Order</b>                 | Meeting was called to order by Dick Marcelynas – current VAAC Vice Chair. Francis Jeffery gave the invocation and Don Schack led the Pledge of Allegiance  |
| <b>Welcome &amp; Introductions:</b>  | Dick Marcelynas made the welcome and introductions   |
| <b>Areas Discussed:</b>              | <p><b>Agency Overview – Alfie Alvarado</b><br/>Alfie gave a WDVA agency overview and also shared the agency's vision, mission and goals. WDVA vision, mission and goals aligned with Governor's Inslee's vision. Our agency focus is in 5 areas: outreach and access, education and employment, quality health services, continuous improvement and exceptional customer. The agency's vision is to have all Washington veterans and their families connected to the benefits they earned – this is the reason why we need every Washingtonians to refer veterans to our agency. Alfie also mentioned that the first executive order that Governor Inslee signed when he took office is Executive Order 13-01 known as the Veterans Transition Support – with this executive order came the creation of the Washington Military Transition Council – this council is a collaboration between federal, state, local agencies, private and non-profit organizations that will equally share the responsibility in providing transition assistance to service members and their families. Alfie shared the unemployment figure for our state which is 7.7% for veterans and 8.8% for non-veterans.</p> <p><b>Building 9 Homeless Veterans Services – Ray Switzer</b><br/>WDVA Building 9 Homeless Veterans Services is located on the ground of the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil. Bldg. 9 has been in existence for 7 years. To date Bldg. 9 has 29 community partners in assisting those veterans that are currently housed in the building – the services that is being provided are: chemical dependency counseling, employment services, life skills, etc. There is also a service center that is open to the community who are seeking assistance in applying for state and federal benefits. SSI disability benefits application assistance offered to both veterans and non-veterans. The total received for the</p> |

past 7 years is \$84 million received by veterans who have service connected disability compensation – these veterans are also entitled to additional benefits such as medical care and/or prescriptions for their service related conditions.

#### **VASH Voucher – Tony Sparber**

There are 35 Section 8 HUD/VASH Vouchers set aside for Kitsap County and 25 vouchers for Clallam County to assist chronic homeless veterans. Tony works closely with Ray Switzer from Bldg. 9 and other community partners in Kitsap and Jefferson counties. The HUD/VASH vouchers are a voucher that provides rental assistance for homeless veterans with case assistance management and clinical services provided by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. VA provides these services for participating veterans at VA Medical Center and Community Based Outreach Clinics (CBOC). Every year VA and HUD awards these vouchers based on geographic need and public housing agency administrative performance. The allocation process for these vouchers is a collaborative approach that relies on 3 sets of data – HUD's point in time data submitted by Continuums of Care (CoCs), VAMC data on the number of contacts with homeless veterans and the performance data from PHAs and VAMCs. Since 2008 HUD award approximately 10,000 VASH vouchers.

#### **Attorney General's Office – Travis Alley**

When Bob Ferguson got elected as the new Attorney General for our state committed to: protect consumers and seniors against fraud, keep communities safe, protect the environment and **stand up for veterans**. The AG also published the Military and Veterans Resource Guide – this guide is designed to help inform veterans, military personnel and their families about federal and state laws, consumer laws, unemployment that are unique to veterans and their families. When an individual calls the AG's office asking for any type of assistance one of the questions they have been asking the caller is – have your serve in the military? By asking this question they are able to further assist the individual. Besides from the AG there is also the NW Justice Project who provides free legal services to financially eligible low income and homeless veterans for civil and not criminal legal problems that are a barrier to housing, employment and self-sufficiency. They also provide legal advice, representation and references to legal issues such as: child support, consumer law, housing issues, discharge upgrades (less than 15 years), and vacating criminal convictions/records. There are currently 6 fellows at Northwest Justice Project that are assigned to assisting veterans – 2 in King County, 1 in Snohomish County, 1 in Pierce County, 1 in Spokane County and 1 in Clark County.

#### **Employment/Work Source – Mike Robinson**

Worksource/Employment Office is a partnership of state and local government, and non-profit organizations working together to provide comprehensive range of employment and training services. The Worksource office assist thousands of veterans each year with: resume writing, interviewing skills, job search and referrals, training opportunities, etc. The Worksource centers are staffed with

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|                                | <p>employment specialist whose job is to assist veterans navigate the employment arena. These employment specialists are called Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) or Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) and they are veterans themselves who understands the veteran's unique needs and provides the right assistance help/assist the veteran get back to work. Each LVER and DVOP has a caseload of 50 veterans a piece. There is an average of 94 veterans served at a work source office a month. Their current success rate in assisting a veteran with employment is 68% which surpasses the state goal of 50%. The current veteran unemployment rate of veteran in our state is 7.7%.</p> <p><b>Kitsap County Veterans Assistance Fund and Olympic Workforce Development Council – Jim Mckenna</b></p> <p>Every county in Washington State has a veterans assistance fund under the auspices of RCW Chapter 73.08. In Kitsap County, the fund is guided by policies and procedures in assisting the needs of veterans in Kitsap Peninsula. The assistance fund provides temporary assistance to veterans in financial crisis. Each veteran service officer is very knowledgeable in the variety of opportunities that are available to veterans and their families in Kitsap County. The maximum amount that they can award is up to \$900.00 dependent on the veteran situation and need. More information on applying for the fund is found in their county website.</p> <p>The Olympic Workforce Development Council works closely with various federal, state and local agencies and organizations in assisting veterans and their families especially in the employment arena. Because of the economic downturn and the recent government cutbacks – jobs in the shipyard which is the major employer in Kitsap, Olympic, etc. area have decrease. The council continuously put on a job fair and seeking small business to persuade them to set aside one job in their company.</p> |
| <p><b>Issues Discussed</b></p> | <p>Possible Integration of information of all services or any related veterans information into one website for all counties in Washington State – if a veteran needs an information specific to the county all they have to do is click on this website and all information they would need is obtained at this site.</p> <p>List of Navigators on universities and colleges – WDVA will post this on our website.</p> <p>A Yearly Meeting of all members of Veterans County Advisory Board for all the counties to share information and best practice</p> <p>Rural areas are still behind or have limited access when it comes to modern technology access what can other counties can do to assist them to close the gap</p> <p>Giving legislative update was much appreciated and this should be done at all VAAC town hall meetings.</p>  |