

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes
Monday, March 7, 2016
Verkuilen Building Training and Conference Center
21885 Dunham Clinton Twp, MI 48036

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Co-Chair, Laura Rios at 9:00 A.M.

Attendees:

Chery Allen	Southwest Solutions	Crystal Kinsman	WDA/Veterans
Gabriella Barstow	AFSC/CFPB	Kurt Klasmeier	N/A
Doug Chalmers	Catholic Charities SEM	Michael Kolb	Vick Fnrl. Home
Lisa Marie Edwards	Veterans Services	Althea Kyles	VOA
L.V. Ervin	Shepard's Gate	Joe McClellan	Buddy-to-Buddy
Kara Fields	MCCC	Paulus Obey	Selfridge SFC
Patrick Forystek	Walsh College	Kathy Pagliai	Called to Serve
Chris Franklin	AIVSEM	Julie Patterson	Veterans Services
Tony Gerheiser	Red Cross	Laura Rios	Veterans Services
Marie Goral	Veterans Services	Shaun Taft	United Way SEM
Madeline Habib	MCCMH/HSCB	Dave Thomas	MVAA
Mike Johnson	AFGE Vet's Affairs	Diane Ursu	WDA/Veterans
Mark Kilgore	Care of SEM	Sue Walker	Salvation Army

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chris Franklin made a motion, supported by Madeline Habib, to approve the February 1, 2016 minutes. The motion carried.

III. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was addressed.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Services Committee: Madeline Habib

A. "Before and After a Veteran Dies" flow charts

Madeline Habib distributed copies of the draft of the flow chart on "What to do Before and After a Veteran Dies. She explained the contents of the flow chart page by page and explained how to use it. It is recommended that MVAC meet with the Macomb Homeless Coalition, explain how to use this information and distribute it to their members.

Mike Kolb from Vick Funeral Home explained the difference between recent death and obvious death listed on the flow charts. In a recent death, the body is still warm and lifesaving measures are a possibility. An obvious death is where the person is beyond resuscitation.

Mike explained the policy for military honors. Only one set of honors will be performed regardless of how many services are held, for example, a memorial service and a graveside service.

Mike stated that when a veteran dies in a homeless shelter, the flow chart may deviate due to the lack of identifiable family. He explained that when the new law goes into effect, a "Funeral Representative" may be appointed to take care of funeral arrangements.

Mike has a fingerprint scanner that costs \$800.00 using an iPod. He believes that shelters fingerprinting the homeless population would assist in identification of deceased homeless people who do not have a next of kin to identify them or are deemed unidentifiable due to decomposition. That way there will not be a prolonged stay in the Office of the Medical Examiner waiting for identification.

Vick Funeral home would be happy do a community service by using this device to fingerprint clients at the homeless shelters and sending the shelter of residence the prints to store in the event they are needed in the future for identification. A waiver would probably be necessary to do this.

A space for a fingerprint will be added to the Vital Information sheet.

B. "Health Insurance/Health Services" Flow Charts

Madeline will have a copy of the "Health Insurance/Health Services" flow chart next month for review.

Benefits/Communication Committee: Laura Rios/Mary Beth Ryan

Laura Rios is going to Beaumont Hospital in April to educate their social workers.

Laura circulated a binder that contains various resources for veterans that the social workers at area hospitals can use to point vets in the right direction. Several different ideas were tossed around as to how to fund the binders and their contents. Any suggestions for additional information to be included would be appreciated.

Laura has emailed 150 churches a brief survey about what they do or would like to do for their veterans and received a response from one so far that would like to meet with her.

Jobs Committee: Crystal Kinsman/Mark Meadows

Crystal Kinsman reported that they're recruiting again for the 12 week Vets to Agriculture program. She passed out flyers giving contact information of how vets need to call to apply. There is no pay, but transportation and meals are included. She hopes to have at least 13 veterans in the program.

Membership Committee: Shaun Taft

Shaun Taft explained what people need to do to be added to the roster and get a nameplate. Shaun asked that only new people sign the sign-in sheet and that everyone on the roster check in on the roster. She also has the names of people who are not receiving emails and will add them to the email list.

Shaun reported that Laura Rios is in the process of getting all of the MVAC documents onto the Veterans Services website.

Shaun will be absent next meeting and Julie Patterson will fill in for her.

V. NEW BUSINESS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Haven Place is a new place that opened in New Haven for veterans to spend time with other veterans. It is located on Main Street. Laura Rios suggested that the MVAC meeting be held there in May to look at their accommodations.

Podio Lunch Webinars are still being conducted a couple times a month for training. It's suggested that anyone interested should take the training ASAP before July when the contract with the company that does support is scheduled to end.

Fraser is the latest city to be a "Purple Heart Town". The Purple Heart funds this program and seven cities and towns in our area have become "Purple Heart Towns". Laura will be sending a letter to Fraser, on behalf of MVAV, commending them for becoming a Purple Heart Community and offering the services of the Department of Veteran Services and MVAC as they provide support to veterans in their city.

Chery Allen from Piquette Square invited everyone to visit the facility. They permanently house veterans and have several activities during the year to recognize veterans.

Gabriella Barstow attending the hiring event at the VA Hospital and said it was an excellent event.

Gabriella also reported that her financial classes grant has been approved for the next several years and requested that everyone keep sending her referrals.

Tony Gerheiser from the American Red Cross came to the meeting for the first time to see how our grassroots program is working.

Freedom Christian Church in Sterling Heights will be having "Love Week" in August. They hope to help veterans in their city with home projects, baseball games, taking them out to eat, etc...

Chery Allen from Piquette Square requested items for their residents such as dishes, pans, and toilet paper. Shaun Taft suggested she check out the <http://www.freecycle.com/>.

Doug Chalmers from Catholic Charities of SEM is a first-time attender who would like to offer their services to veterans in the area. It is not a requirement that clients be Catholic. They do offer PTSD counseling.

Kurt Klasmeier from the Detroit Arsenal came to network. He assists transitioning military personnel moving into civilian life in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Paulus Obey announced that in 2017, Selfridge ANG will be celebrating their 100 year anniversary. The Air Show will be part of this celebration.

Dave Thomas attended the job fair at the VAMC and also was very impressed with the workshops offered. He also mentioned an organization called "Military Moms United" who meet quarterly to put together care packages for troops that have been deployed.

Operation Purple is a free summer camp held from July 3-9 for kids aged 8-14. Priority is given to children of families who served post 911 and have a service connected disability.

Dave also mentioned House Bill 5169 that has been presented to Michigan's Legislative Congress. This proposition would take away the property tax exemption from qualifying veterans and instead give them a \$1200.00 State of Michigan tax credit. He is requesting that everyone get the word out to their networks to work to stop this Bill from being passed in order to help make Michigan a "Veteran-friendly State".

Althea Kyles from Volunteers of America in Warren spoke about the renovations going on in their apartment style shelter. They currently have 3 beds available.

Shaun Taft is working on a book project that describes how to create a non-profit starting from writing the grant proposal to what people need to be hired.

Kara Fields told us about the Michigan Apprenticeship Program Plus. It's a pilot program started by the President and leads directly to employment.

Kara is looking for places for student veterans to obtain work-study positions.

Kara announced that another Bill is being presented regarding GI Bill transfer eligibility. If the Bill is passed, if the transfer isn't made within 180 days of the passing of the Bill, the housing allowance will drop to half of the normal amount.

Chris Franklin of AIVOM received a grant from the State of Michigan for a smoking cessation program. He would appreciate everyone taking flyers and surveys to assist them in their mission to stop cigarette smoking.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday, April 4, 2016 starting at 9:00 A.M. in the Verkuilen Building Senior Auditorium.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Patterson, Secretary