

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes
Monday, August 1, 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 9:05 A.M.

Attendees:

Monica Alderman	SOM/VA	Mark Meadows	VAMC
Gabriella Barthlow	AFSC/CFPB	Scott Metcalf	VFW 4659
Rebecca Couch	M-SPAN	Charlene Myers	NCOA/DAV
Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards	Veterans Services	Paulus Obey	SANG Family Support
L.V. Ervin	Shepard's Gate	Katie Page	Vet Center
Kara Fields	MCCC-Veterans	Kyle Pollet	Staff/Sandy Levin
Gerald Fisher-Curley	VAMC	Laura Rios	Veterans Services
Chris Franklin	AIVOM	Rachel Simons	Veterans Services
A.C. Giles	TTI	Mary Beth Ryan	VCCF
Tiffany Gunten	RTA	Yolanda Spencer-Dandridge	VAMC
Madeline Habib	MCCMH/HSCB	Joann Sterne	Macomb Action
Sama Harp	Macomb Action	David Thomas	MVAA
Nikkie Hochberg	CARE of SEM	Diana Ursu	WDA/Veterans
Crystal Kinsman	WDA/Veterans	Sue Walker	Salvation Army
Althea Kyles	VOA	Heather Whited	Macomb Action
Joe McClellan	Buddy-to-Buddy		

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees of the meeting introduced themselves and stated what agency or business they work for.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Madeline Habib made a motion, supported by Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards, to approve the June 6, 2016 minutes. The motion carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Laura Rios reminded everyone that the MVAC website is now up and running and that all of the flow charts, membership forms and the roster will be posted on the website, which can be found at <http://mvac.macombgov.org/>. Laura also requested that everyone provide a link to their websites, email, or a pdf of the flyer for their program for the website.

V. SPECIAL SPEAKER: TIFFANY GUNTER, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Tiffany Gunter is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and they've been working for the last year and a half to develop a "Regional Master Transit Plan" for four county area that includes Washtenaw, Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland Counties. They coordinate the existing transportation infrastructure.

She provided a map that shows the proposed different rapid transit plans. One service would be provided by a bus on a dedicated guideway. They're also proposing a Regional Rail System between Ann Arbor and Detroit. The system is set up to mimic the Seattle, Washington rapid transit service and would be a One-Call/One-Click system. There would also be a Regional Fare Card which will be used on all vehicles and systems.

The new system would eliminate DDOT, SMART, the Detroit People Mover and all of the current mass transportation would be known as RTA. They would also provide parking lots for commuters to park in if they'd like to park and ride RTA into the City. Tiffany stated that 76% of people that work in the downtown and mid-town area do not live in the City of Detroit, but in the surrounding areas.

RTA has provided in their millage for Transit Police. They will work to ensure the safety of the passengers. They also will return 85% of profits to the counties where the system operates.

Tiffany explained how they can expand routes in the future by demand/response, which will identify and coordinate through a program they call Mobility Management. RTA will also offer an Airport Express service, which would run according to how the flights out of and into the airport are scheduled.

The millage to provide for the implementation of the RTA will be on the ballot for people to vote on in November.

Tiffany answered several questions from the MVAC members.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits/Communication Committee: Laura Rios/Mary Beth Ryan

Laura Rios states they have another hospital scheduled for their "Road Show" presentation this month.

Jobs Committee: Crystal Kinsman/Mark Meadows

Mark Meadows is states that the Hiring Our Heroes event was a success. There were 45 job offers that came out of this event. There is an upcoming event coming up in Southfield and Mark has been sending out flyers with information about that and other upcoming hiring events.

Mark has been working with Ford Motor Company and thirty veterans have been hired. He requested that if a veteran sees a job at Ford or General Motors that they're interested in to forward him their resume and the posting and he will work to have their application pulled and an interview scheduled.

He stated that the VA Workforce Development Roundtable just signed their 60th member last week. He's hoping that this will be recreated at a National level.

Mark also requested that if anyone knows of anyone hiring vets to please notify him so he can sent it out in the newsletter.

Services Committee: Madeline Habib

These Homeless flow chart has been updated and Madeline requested that everyone print off a new one It has been posted on the MVAC website, <http://mvac.macombgov.org/>.

There will be a meeting of the Services Committee after today's MVAC meeting to review the draft flow charts on Education, Training and Employment Opportunities for Macomb County Veterans and their Families.

The Transportation Flow Charts are the next set of flow charts to be developed.

Membership Committee: Shaun Taft

Shaun Taft was not present but Laura Rios explained what people need to do to be added to the MVAC roster and get a nameplate. She asked that only new people sign the sign-in sheet and that everyone on the roster check in on the roster.

Membership forms and the roster will be posted on the website <http://mvac.macombgov.org/>.

VII. NEW BUSINESS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Laura Rios attended a presentation a couple months ago that Sharon Ellis, ADA Compliance Director for the State of Michigan, spoke at and Sharon will be the special speaker in October. The special speaker in September will be Kristie King from the National Kidney Foundation. Laura suggested that members invite other people or agencies that would be interested in either of these topics.

Scott Metcalf from VFW Post 4659 gave a brief speech on what we can do to support and thank the Global War on Terror (GWOT) veterans. He's sending a letter to every Senator and Representative in the State of Michigan and would like endorsements from agencies and individuals who support his idea. Scott handed out forms that he is requesting be returned to him so he can attach them to his letters.

It was suggested that MVAC support this endeavor and majority vote agreed.

VIII. ROUND ROBIN

Attendees of the meeting introduced themselves, stated what agency they work for, and gave a brief description of what they do.

Mark Meadows of the VAMC is looking for veterans to be employees at the Dom and VCRRC as well as the CWT Program. He also stated that the Vets to Ag Program just graduated a class and is looking for veterans for their next 13 week program.

Dave Thomas has been working with several companies to help them become “Veteran Friendly”. He is planning an event for employers who are excited about this concept and would like any input from the MVAC members as far as helping to plan this event and referring prospective companies to attend the event. Also in September, there will be a fundraiser for Stiggy’s Dogs of St. Clair Shores. They train rescue pets to become Certified Service Dogs. On October 22, 2016, the USS Detroit will be commissioned in downtown Detroit. Dave also stated that VCAT will be meeting the week of Labor Day, but the date, time, and place have yet to be set.

Chris Franklin spoke about his Smoking Cessation program and requested any help available.

Kara Fields announced that she is on the Steering Committee for the Consortium of Michigan Veteran Educators. All of the public and private colleges in the State of Michigan will be in attendance and if any of the membership has any ideas that they would like presented by Kara at the meeting to please contact her.

Gabriella Barthlow thanked everyone for all of the referrals that have made her program a success.

Rebecca Couch from HomeFront Strong spoke briefly about her program which support spouses of active duty military and veterans. She will be providing her contact information to Laura Rios to be sent out to MVAC members.

Gerald Fisher-Curley stated Project Challenge is underway and he is surveying the community to see what services everyone thinks would be beneficial.

Kyle Pollet of Congressman Levin’s Office said that their office has reunited two Vietnam veterans who both thought the other had died during the war. He attended a ceremony in Washington D.C. where one was awarded a Purple Heart. He suggested we read the article in the Detroit News around July 10th.

Althea Kyles of Volunteers of America stated that they have three beds available at her facility.

Nikkie Hochberg of CARE of SEM attended the meeting for Mark Kilgore and she brought two brochures regarding a sober event and a biking fundraiser that they do annually.

Sue Walker of Salvation Army stated that they currently have 10 beds available.

Heather Whited of Macomb Community Action requested that everyone keep the referrals coming.

Laura Rios announced that Kevin Kolar, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from the VA that has been housed in the Veteran’s Services Office has retired. The Voc Rehab Counselor of the Day can be reached at (313)471-3800. Laura also reminded everyone to vote tomorrow.

World War II veterans who served in France are entitled to receive a medal from France. The French Consulate in Chicago will send a representative to the veteran to present the medal.

IX. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday, September 12, 2016 starting at 9:00 A.M. in the Verkuilen Building Training and Conference Center, 21885 Dunham Clinton Township, MI 48036

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Patterson, Secretary