MEETING MINUTES / 21 JANUARY 2020

ATTENDANCE:
Present: Stewart, Baldwin, Bradley, Farley, Lardizzone, Lopez, Magner, McMullen, Sarg, Seppala 83.3%
Excused: Showell, Newman
Unexcused:

Guests: Courtney Stewart (Deputy Secretary of State), Ginny Yelland (Wilmington VAMC), Matthew Brown (Wilmington VAMC), Archie Poling (Delaware Veterans Home), Pat Cerchio (First State Women Warriors), Kim McMullen, MaryAnne Donaghy (Biden Institute)

VICE CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS:
Moment of silence for:
Service Members abroad
Martin Luther King Jr
Wished Chairwoman Showell good health as she’s “under the weather”

MEETING MINUTES:
October minutes were motioned by McMullen approved by Magner

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:
Wilmington VAMC – Virginia Yelland, Assistant to the Director
Introduced Matthew Brown, Chief of Health Administrative Services
- Oversees scheduling, eligibility, enrollment, medical records, release of information
- Supervises 140 employees
Confirmed construction for Wilmington VA parking garage
- Starting in the spring
- Will impact parking so employees will park offsite to provide customer parking
- Valet service will move to the front of the medical facility
- Prefabricated garage will be placed in a sectional format
(Lopez) Asked about handicapped parking spaces
They will still be available during construction and in the completed lot
Kent County CBOC
- Actively in construction phase will be 29K square feet
- Will have service officer and conferencing space
(Baldwin) Wanted to confirm that during parking lot construction, the VSO meeting will be available online
This was confirmed and coordination is pending
(Baldwin) Can any veteran enroll in the VA healthcare system?
To be eligible for services you must have 24 months active duty service
(Baldwin) Wondered why VA cards could not be issued when service members transition from service
Roundtable discussion explained the issue is between DoD and the VA
Discussion mentioned which VA card holders have access to military installations
(Farley) Asked if VA cards can be issued at the CBOCs
Yes, but sometimes the camera equipment is the issue
(Lopez) Asked about the Veterans Experience Council
Created new Veterans Experience office, in Wilmington, to improve customer service
- Looking at services that veterans need quick access to and will move those closer to the main entrance
- Looking to set up a local council with staff, service officers, veterans
  - Would like someone from the commission to be a part
(Magner) Wanted to know if the handicap spaces for hand-controlled vehicles would still be in place
They should stay in place and will check with those controlling parking to ensure

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Archie Poling, Interim Director:
73 residents
Will begin construction on two new bathing suites
Several team members visited the Long Island Veterans Home to observe their day-care center program
- Will look to start the process locally but will have to investigate
Moving forward with dental suite and looking at different plans
Exploring new call bell system and communication improvements
Looking at ceiling bariatric lifts, currently have two, would like one per unit
- Bids are out for this addition
Secretary Bullock recently visited the facility and engaged with the staff
The admissions and Friend of Delaware Veterans Home meetings are this week
(Baldwin) When do you plan on having more than 73 residents?
Beginning today the plans are to greatly expand the census
(Baldwin) Can we place 150 veterans?
No, the actual maximum capacity is 145
(Farley) Do you have the staff to care for 145 veterans?
No, we staff as needed
Facility needs overhead lifts in all units, just in case of a medical emergency, the original structure was not designed for this
(Stewart) Emphasized whatever the home needs, it receives support from the Department of State
(Sarg) Are there a certain number of beds that can be counted as bariatric, meaning is there a limit?
No sure, this is something that needs to be explored as the home was originally built to hold two bariatric beds

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:
Not present

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
Courtney Stewart, Deputy Secretary of State
Mentioned her attendance was to show support for the agency

Liz Byers-Jiron, Veterans Stand Down
Discussed last September’s event and of the upcoming stand down (kick-off 23 January)
(Lopez) Mentioned how the VA benefits team registered veterans for services

Dave Skocik, Veterans Coalition
Visited an incarcerated veteran and mentioned this population’s need for assistance following reintegration
Mentioned upcoming fundraiser for trust fund
MaryAnne Donaghy, Biden Institute (University of Delaware)  
Focused on veterans’ employment and education as a policy institute  
Hosted a focus group of 9/11 veterans seeking input on where the institute can bring the most impact  
Met with Michael Haynie, Syracuse University Veterans Institute  
- Highly productive veterans and family’s program  
- Seeking ideas  
Attended Student Veterans of America conference  

COMMITTEE REPORTS:  
Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:  
Interments – 78 (+18)  
Mentioned how some flagpoles are vacant, in need of veteran service organization flags  

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:  
Interments – 29 (+17)  
Expansion project is going on, will produce 1600 columbarium niches  
High visibility internment was broadcast on the local news  
- Commission wasn’t informed and the director will ensure the cemetery administrator keeps leadership aware  

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:  
Positive meeting with the veterans’ home dental suite selection team  
Brain Injury Council, through House Bill 14, is seeking motorcycle helmet protection for all riders  
- Delaware only requires helmet wear during the safety test but not after  
Delaware needs an advanced brain injury treatment facility  
Delaware does have intermediate brain injury treatment facilities  

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:  
Legislative recommendations, thanks to Commissioner Sarg, are ready for presentation  
- Awaiting a date to present to the joint veterans affairs committee  
House Bill 265, Property Tax Exemption for 100% Service Connected, was voted out of veterans committee  
- Urged commissioners to speak to their legislators about support  
(Sarg) Recommendations will be signed by myself and Commissioner Showell  
- We need to get sponsors for these recommendations  
- Signatures quantify the product  

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS:  
DVTF Previous Month: Applications 15; Granted 11 (71.9%); Awarded $10,787.35; Balance - $47,263.00  
Legislative Hall Display Table will be on 29 January / 1400  
- Meet and greet with legislators and discuss the agency  
Important for veteran service organizations seek support for veterans’ legislation  

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:  
Commissioner McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association - AFSA)  
Chapter voted on and will install new officers  
22 – 24 April: Division 1 Professional Airman Conference, Dayton, OH  
7 December: Attended DAV Christmas Party  
17 December: Attended DCVA Holiday Party
Vacant (American Legion - AL)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AmVets)
9 December: Attended Wreaths Across America ceremony
14 December: Along with other Post 2 members, laid wreaths on graves at Millsboro Cemetery
Post 2 members donated $750.00 to Wreaths Across America
Post 2 is giving life memberships to members over age 90
AmVets National is sponsoring Rolling to Remember on Memorial Day weekend

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)
17 - 20 December: Attended Departmental Service Officer training
19 December: Attended VVA Christmas party for veteran receiving service dog
10 January: Presented Department Service Officer training for two female veterans
14 January: Attended Veteran Service Officer meeting at Wilmington VA
Department helped 68 veterans with claims

Vacant (Korean War Veterans)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)
Completed Toys for Tots drive, numbers are not yet available
Working Mayor’s Veterans Crisis group

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)
Met with local legislators concerning veterans’ recommendations
6 January: Attended Brain Injury Council Meeting (Motorcycle Safety Helmet Bill HB14)
14 January: Attended Employment First Oversight Commission Meeting
16 January: Attended DVH Dental Suite Design Meeting with architects from Becker Morgan
20 January: Met with Representative Sean Lynn on HB14
11 February: MOAA fundraiser at Outback Steakhouse, supports scholarship fund

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)
8 January: Two Purple Heart flags have been ordered from MOPH National Headquarters for use by the Northern Veterans Cemetery
8 February / 0900: Executive Committee meeting is scheduled at the DCVA conference room
10 February: JROTC/ROTC medals and certificates will be ordered for the University of Delaware Army and Air Force units and 14 Delaware high schools

Commissioner Newman (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)
- Met Senator Poore, with General Vavala, on military items
- General Berry briefing from Delaware Decision Makers
- USS Delaware fund raising efforts
- Funding requests procedure for Commission? (Confusion on asks)
- DMA, FSMA, CSW seven U.S. Military Academy appointments (arriving with four years’ experience)
- Mindfulness training for veterans (Sam Beard, Jefferson Council)
- Met with President Clarke, Wesley College, for ideas on veteran enrollment
- Sussex Military Academy is pending as a new plan will be unveiled

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)
Nothing to present

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)
17 December: Attended Sussex Military Academy board meeting
20 December: DelVets Post 2 sponsored three single parent veteran families for Christmas
22 December: Attended DelVets Post 2 benevolent event
7 January: Attended Sussex Military Academy board meeting
8 January: Attended Dover Mayor’s Crisis Awareness Challenge meeting
9 January: Attended Drone Workforce Solutions briefing
14 January: Attended Veteran Service Officer meeting at Wilmington VA

Commissioner Stewart (At Large, affiliated with student veterans’ associations)
Nothing to report

TERM COMPLETION:
Bradley – 21 April 2020
Newman – 21 April 2020

EVENTS:
29 January / 1200 - 1430: Table Display, Legislative Hall
12 February / 1730: Military Affaire, The Landings, Dover AFB

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
Submission of Legislative Concerns (CLOSED)

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:

CLOSED SESSION:
None

SPECIAL SESSION:

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 18 January 2020 at 1000
LOCATION: Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs