



## MEETING MINUTES / 19 January 2021

**\*\*MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS\*\***

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Present: Baldwin, Lopez, Lardizzone, McMullen, Magner, Farley, Miller, Seppala, Sutton, Camarillo, Lewis

Excused: Bradley, Sarg, Phillips

Guests: Vince Kane (Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center), Jacob Dillon (Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center), Carol Erhart (DVH), Dave Skocik (Friends of Delaware Veterans)

### **CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:**

### **MEETING MINUTES:**

Prior minutes motioned to approve by Lardizzone seconded by Magner.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:**

#### **Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Director**

(Dillon) The Wilmington VA parking garage is nearly complete and on schedule to open end of March to early April. This increases 200 spots at our west entrance.

(Baldwin) Thank you.

(Kane) We will be demolishing the quarter houses to make way for our clinical admin building to free up space in the medical center. The VBA building is moving ahead with an anticipated opening of late spring to early summer. We have created space in all our new CBOC's to create more of a one stop experience. There will be room for our VSO's. Dover CBOC transition is projected late February. We received Moderna and followed CDC guidelines administering right away. To date we have vaccinated over 1783 veterans and 781 staff. We are still working on 75 and older and those with complex conditions needing the vaccination sooner than the latter. We have pushed the vaccinations to Dover and Georgetown CBOC's. We are switching Pfizer, which will give us more vaccine and shorten the time between the doses. We are aware many are interested; we do not have enough supply now. We are following the guidelines and have close to 4600 veterans that are eligible. We are calling veterans that fall into the current category. Our top priority is to vaccinate the veterans as quickly and safely as possible.

(Baldwin) Can you move to category 1B for the vaccine?

(Kane) We are still working through category 1A, we are migrating to 1B soon. Once we move to Pfizer, we will have the capability to move into 1B.

(Baldwin) Can a veteran get the vaccine in the community?

(Kane) Yes, the veteran can get the vaccine in the community ore through the VA. We ask that veterans inform us if they use the community.

(Baldwin) Is there a website for information purposes?

(Kane) Yes, our website will be updated. I will send you the link via email.

(Lardizzone) I would like to thank Valerie Camarillo for helping me get my healthcare information updated so I could use the VA system. I could not get through to anyone in the VA.

(Kane) We are doing everything we can. Our phones have been overrun with calls. We are trying to get the word out to veterans for when and where they can get the vaccine. We are trying to control the phone calls as best we can.

(Lopez) The veterans that are in the system and are getting the vaccine will be getting a call correct?

(Kane) Yes

(Lopez) What about the veterans that are not in the VA system? What is the procedure for them?

(Kane) We have our outreach team reaching out to them and trying to engage with them to get the vaccine.

(Skocik) I would like to be included on the distribution list. If I am included, I can pass it along to the large population of veterans that are unaware.

(Kane) It's best if you and Jacob connect to make sure our veterans can get the vaccine information.

(Baldwin) Thank you Vince.

(Kane) Thank you for partnering with us and getting the word out to our veterans.

### **Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Carole Erhart, Interim Director**

(Baldwin) Carole could not make the meeting today, but she did provide a report for us. 96.4% of residents have received Covid-19 step 1 vaccination. 59% of staff have received step 1 vaccination. We are reviewing the process to opening the home to admissions. They have added a tent and a gazebo for future outside visitation after the state allows in person visitation again. Staff continues to get tested 3 times a week. Bi-weekly letters continue to be sent to families or residents in the home to keep them current with the home. Visitations are not expected to change until directed by the Department of Health.

### **Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:**

Not Present

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

(Baldwin) Introduces Dave Skocik, president, Friends of Delaware Veterans.

(Skocik) We have 2 websites that are being updated at the moment. We are working on the Delaware Veterans Trust Fund website should be updated within the week. Thank you to the Commissioners and everyone else that make the mission possible.

(Baldwin) Thank you. Pat Cerchio, do you have anything to provide.

(Cerchio) I do not have any updates.

(Baldwin) Thank you and stay safe.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

#### **Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:**

Interments – 83 (+17)

902 total burials for the year.

(Baldwin) Nolan Lewis got the NABVETS flags for the cemeteries. We would like to do a flag raising ceremony and we will contact you when we can.

#### **Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:**

Interments – 32 (-2) (Provided by Commissioner Magner)

354 total burials for the year.

#### **Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:**

Not present

**Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:**

(McMullen) I contacted the new head of the Joint Veterans Committee, Representative Chukwuocha and spoke with his assistant. We are setting up a set of dates to present our concerns to the Executive Committee.

(Baldwin) For your information there are 2 bills currently sponsored. HB12 – property tax exemption for 100% service-connected veterans, and HB 68 – POW/MIA flags being flown at state facilities. We need to present our legislative concerns. Thank you.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS:**

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 3; Granted 2 (66%); Awarded \$1,931.30; Balance - \$72,219.37

(Matticks) I need retract a previous statement regarding the colder weather and an increase in trust fund applications. I believe the increase in applications will occur when utility companies and rental companies are not required to continue with services unpaid. My current assessment is around May the applications should increase provided the vaccinations do what they are supposed to do. We are not at full staff. Please be aware the limitations of individuals allowed in the office. If you are making requests, be aware our staff is doing as much as possible while operating within the guidelines.

(Baldwin) Thank you

(Farley) I got a call from a veteran in Dover about the vaccine. He was told he could get the shot at the CBOC. When he got there, he was told he could not because he is only 74, is this correct?

(McMullen) At this time that is correct.

(Farley) The shots are being provided at the CBOC though, correct?

(Matticks) Yes

(Farley) Thank you

**ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:**

Commissioner McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association - AFSA)

AFSA staff is experiencing turnover at this time.

Meetings are at a minimum.

National is pushing with MOAA to educate congress on veteran’s concerns.

Commissioner Miller (American Legion - AL)

Nothing to Report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AMVETS)

Not present

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)

Served 41 veterans since last commission meeting.

Pushing DIC claims for widows.

Low numbers for veteran emergencies and expect an influx in the Spring.

Next Chapter meeting is in March.

(Baldwin) Are you back at work at the DAV?

(Lardizzone) Yes

(Baldwin) Glad to hear it, Thank you.

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)

No meetings scheduled.

Still planning our Mid-Eastern Division conference hosted in Delaware in April.

New leadership at the national level.

Looking to get more involved with veteran service offices.

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)  
Not Present

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)

Keeping active through Zoom meetings.

Local Chapter will have a meeting on January 28 @ 7 p.m.

Mayor of Newark has agreed to name the city a Purple Heart city in honor of combat wounded veterans.

Hosting Zoom meetings with a veteran's group every Friday to aid in mental health.

(Farley) Could you send me some information to provide to the Mayor of Dover?

(Magner) Yes, I will pass it on to you.

(Miller) I would like the information as well.

(Magner) Ok, I will get it to you.

Commissioner Phillips (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)

Not present

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)

Not fully operating, cancelled our meeting for the month again.

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars - MOWW)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)

Update of Crisis Awareness Challenge, tent card is complete but could take time to print. A brochure has been created in the meantime.

Commissioner Sarg recommended we propose a Crisis Awareness Day. Will coordinate with Commissioner Farley and have Dave Skocik join us for a release.

DelVets Posts are currently electing new officers and installing them in March.

Next meeting in February.

Commissioner Sutton (At Large)

Working with 3 veterans. 1 needs a DD-214 and needs a home loan, 1 needs access to his medical records, and 1 needs access to his retirement points.

Commissioner Camarillo (At Large)

There has been a large influx of veterans reaching out due to the vaccine.

Veterans are reaching out to me that want to see veterans in person, the DAV is the only one I know of that is seeing people in person.

(Matticks) DOVS is seeing veterans in person at the Dover location.

(Camarillo) Thank you, are you still seeing veterans?

(Matticks) My replacement is trained and seeing veterans at this time. Dover currently has 2 VSO's in place and working at full capacity.

(Camarillo) General Berry would like to speak at the March Commission meeting for an update on the inauguration. He is very interested in HB-12 and may have questions regarding that.

(Baldwin) The General will have the floor in March.

(Camarillo) January 28 will be a veteran webinar focusing on PTSD with a guest speaker.

(Baldwin) Lopez would like to have 5 minutes for Crisis Awareness during that meeting.

(Camarillo) Ok

Commissioner Lewis (At Large)  
Meetings are limited for NABVETS.

**TERM COMPLETION:**

Nothing to report

**EVENTS:**

Nothing to report

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Nothing to report

**NEW BUSINESS:**

(Lopez) Bylaws were sent to all commissioners requesting feedback on recommendations or changes. No feedback was provided. With no recommendations or changes I am proposing a motion to accept the bylaws to accept as they are.

Bylaws motioned to approve by Lardizzone seconded by McMullen.

**ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:**

Nothing to report

**SPECIAL SESSION:**

Nothing to report

**EXECUTIVE MEETING:**

**Thursday, 11 February 2021 at 1000  
Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Tuesday, 16 February 2021 at 1000**

**LOCATION:**

**Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs**