

Bay County Veteran Affairs

Committee Meeting

Date: May 21, 2024

Subject: REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Meeting called to order by the President of the Board, Vaughn Begick at 3:00 pm.

Commissioners present were Vaughn Begick, Troy Stewart, Van Digby, and Jon Vantol, Tim Eckstein was excused. Motion (2024-16) by Stewart second by Vantol to accept the March 2024 Committee Minutes, all in favor.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Citizens Input:

Keith Markstrom, we have had the students from Eastern High School stop into the Veterans Center, there has been a lot of good camaraderie between the students and the veterans. Several of the veterans consider themselves both mentors and recipients of mentorship. The Vet Center now has "coffee hours" the 4th Thursday of the month from 9-11 am. The VA hospital has been working with them with veteran housing assistance and both the Loons and the Spirit support the Vet Center. The Vet center hours are Monday – Thursday from 9 am – 1 pm, Phone number is: 989-572-6896, web site is: bayveterans.org.

The SVSU social work mentorship program may be able to assist the Vet Center with social work interns. The Vet Center has a homeless vet that comes in a few times per week, and doing very well, he's active in the group meetings.

There are more Women Veterans coming into the center, we would like to expand our hours to include Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The volunteers have modified some of the equipment so that those veterans in wheelchairs will be able to participate. The center has referred several vets to our Service Officer Mark. The VA advocacy council has visited the center also. We have a 10 week guitar session being formed, after the 10 weeks the veteran will get to keep their guitar. They have held 3 suicide prevention classes so far this year with 3 more scheduled for the remainder of the year.

Some of the things they are planning include:

- Law Enforcement training on how to approach a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Veteran.
- Installation and Maintenance of equipment class.
- A metal shop and welding course are being added soon.

The Bay Area Veterans Workshop and Learning Center is now debt free. Vet Center

representatives will be going to watch 5 Eastern Students graduate later this week.

Some of the projects the Vet Center has completed are: Signs for the Downtown Development Board, A quilt rack for the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). built life vest boxes for the Saginaw Bay Yacht Club. AT&T donated 100 refurbished computers.

- On May 23rd from 9 -11 am they will be hosting a Holly National Cemetery requirement class.
- June 11th they will be hosting a Women's Veterans Day Celebration from 5-8 pm.
- They will have a table at Tri City Brewery during the Car show on June 21st.

Petitions and Communications:

None

Service Officer report:

Matt, We will be conducting interviews this week for Marks assistant.

Mark, There was some discussion about the 22 to none Suicide awareness march. Mark mentioned there is a national Mental Health number which is (988), also veterans can always call 911 or Bay Area Behavioral Health (BABH) at 800-377-4693.

Beaver, "I have an email referring to PGA Hope. Bay Valley golf course is hosting the outing. They will have six local clinics to teach veterans how to play golf.

Old Business:

Digby, Mark Smith has over 2,000 flags to be placed for Memorial Day. The flags for Memorial Day have been ordered. The Vets Council purchased 3 new flags for the Veterans Memorial Park. " They have been posted". Flags are ordered in January.

Miscellaneous:

None

New Business-

Keith Markstrom, I would also like to request that the Veterans Affairs Committee help set up a united Veterans Group to support the Vet Center. Several visitors are not current members of any veteran groups. "we should pull together our resources and our talents".

Citizens Input-

None

Motion (2024-17) to adjourn by Digby, 2nd by Vantol, motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:38 pm.