

# Minutes

May 1, 2008

Oregon State Capitol Building, Senate Caucus Room

## **Veterans' Services Task Force** *Post-Separation Subcommittee*

**In attendance:** James Booker; Krissa Caldwell; Mike Caldwell; Paul Evans; Michelle Nelson; Mark Miedena; Kathy Campbell; Benjamin Hier; Joanne Truesdell; Dan Long.  
**Absent:** Mic Alexander, *Chair* Amy Goodall; Karen Hummelbaugh; Debbie Koreski; Jeff Barker

Meeting convened at 4:20 p.m.

Topic of the meeting was "How to Expand Reach and Scope of Veterans Services."

Paul Evans asked about Community College funding structures and how they relate to property taxes and property tax limitations.

The group discussed how Community Colleges are property tax based similar to K-12 without legislative statute. Additional funding requires local option taxes. Community Colleges have to choose which areas they want to increase when looking at funding because voters tend to choose one over another. Colleges have to choose between local funding options that go away after just a few years, or capital funding options, which go on for 20 plus years.

Evans asked if there was a unified community college perspective dealing with veterans' issues. Are most colleges looking at veterans' centers? The answer was no. That is the fear of the unfunded mandates. Lane County's efforts were independent.

Mike Caldwell asked about the possibility of getting 17 service officers for each of the community colleges organized through ODVA.

Ben Hier commented on the need for a facility for the veterans and their families to provide a comfortable environment.

Evans asked if there is space on most community college campuses to build a small veterans' facility. There was discussion on facilities including an idea of using some sort of modular site trailer on a piece of school property, and perhaps creating a partnership with Habitat For Humanity to create facilities.

Mike Caldwell asked about acceptability on the part of community colleges to use a position and/or the required funding to use for veteran-related work. Discussion ensued on pros and cons of such availability.

Benjamin Hier said he envisions involving the community in an online resource manual for veterans, breaking down services for each area in Lane County.

Evans asked if a similar online resource would be helpful to colleges.

Discussion ensued about veterans issues and where to find resources on each school's website.

Evans asked about issue of proper training of veterans for faculty. Discussion about availability and proper training of VSO's on campuses. There was a suggestion to offer training as in-service training, how such training should be viewed as diversity training. Evans noted that using the word "diversity" could backfire with some veterans.

Jim Booker commented on the need to promote student veteran groups. He commented on veterans wanting to help other veterans.

Evans commented on how the war is going to change significantly in the next 12 – 18 months and that is why these systems need to be in place.

Joanne Truesdell commented on how getting help of many kinds would be helpful including VSO's, regionally located vet centers, counselor from vet services, etc.

Caldwell asked about more of a virtual veteran center with ODVA tasked with training and outreach coupled with Employment. Once together, they could bring it to the colleges for in-service or other training. It would be done under a grant program that ODVA would manage. Coordinating a training module in this way would work for both the community colleges and the university system. It would reward those who participate with some funding, but not be oppressive for those who choose not to participate.

Meeting adjourned: 5:05 p.m.