

MINUTES

GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON VETERANS' SERVICES FULL COMMITTEE

Date: May 8, 2008

Place: Oregon Military Department

Time: 3:00 p.m.

In attendance: Paul Evans, Amy Goodall, Mic Alexander, Dan Estes, Scott McCrae, Pegge McGuire, Jim Booker, Jim Keller, Diane Gooding, Tino Ornelas, Kevin O'Reilly, Jack Heims, Jerry Lorang, Paula Brown, Jim Willis, Elizabeth Peters, Rick Peters, Jeff Pullman, H.A. MacDonald, Bill Carpenter, Burt Bogart, Frank VanCleave, Marc Jolin, Rachel Post, Barry Vertner, Daniel Thompson, Jeanne Arana, Linda Christy, and Jose Samaniego.

Chair Paul Evans opened the meeting by announcing that several people in attendance will be addressing the group today. He then clarified the breakout rooms for today as they had changed and which subgroups would be going where.

The Chair then explained the focus for the meeting is housing and all the aspects from homelessness to affordability for veterans.

Peggy McGuire, who is the Community Resources Division Administrator at the Oregon Housing and Community Services, was the first speaker. She had a Power Point presentation and numerous handouts. Some of the key points of the presentation were –

- On any one night in Oregon there are approximately 13,000 homeless persons seeking shelter. 7,000 of those are veterans.
- There are many reasons for homelessness – unemployment, mental illness, and addictions are a few.
- The lack of sufficient affordable housing and housing that accepts those who receive subsidies. There is a need to look into increasing the number of these housing sites.
- Explanation of subsidizing and the various types, referred to handouts.
- OHCS has partnerships through county, state, private businesses, and community action organizations etc., used to deliver services.

Next presenter was Bill Carpenter who is OHCS's CIO who gave a brief look and feel preview of the data collection software program OPUS.

Rachel Post from Central City Concern was the next guest to address the group. She gave an overview of what services they provide (also through community partnerships). They have several outposts around the Portland area. She stated that the average persons served per year are 15,000.

The next person to make a presentation to the group was Mark Jolin of a fairly new program titled JOIN. They have been a focused group for about two years and they work with Central City Concern. JOIN is an active, on-the-street outreach for homeless individuals.

A few items that Jolin brought up as suggestions were:

1. A van that actually is on the streets and more accessible that can do some outreach, snack/food handouts.
2. Try to find ways to ease the process of getting services – healthy, supported individuals lose motivation to persevere through the process and homeless individuals have it even harder.
3. Mental health care programs are expanding and effort needs to be made to ensure that previous era veterans are eligible for treatment and aware of such programs.

Chair Evans then announced it was time for breakout groups and these same individuals would be traveling between each breakout group to answer questions etc. It was 4:07 p.m.

Whole group recommenced at 5:05 p.m. Paul went around to the subcommittee Chairs for update reports –

Jim Booker first brought up the fact that there is a common need to get the word out and possibly consider a marketing plan to help set the hook. Paul agreed that a panel of folks could be pulled together to talk to the group.

Scott McCrae (Reintegration) – Stated that basically the group is seeing a large need to mesh together the federal/state/local programs and services. A whole mind and body piece so to speak. This should be accessible for all ages of veterans and their families. Models that are out there and working but the disconnect is funding.

Mic Alexander – (Post Separation) – Agrees with the understanding of the need for outreach and funding. Need to also include previous era veterans in the programs that are appropriate. A way to identify veterans needs to be developed – through community services and programs, schools, hospitals and healthcare facilities etc.

Jerry Lorang – (Aging and Senior Veterans) – Mostly echos the concerns that have already been stated. The homelessness of Vietnam veterans – some discussion about the fact that they are respected by society as a whole the same as current and other era veterans.

Chair Evans offered some consensus on the issues of what is needed and the duty of the country to ensure that no veteran should be homeless or die alone.

He then gave a brief of what is coming up for the group. May 15 will be focused on workforce. There is a draft list that has been compiled for June and July town hall meetings. He would like to see about six or seven committee members at each. He asked the group to review and provide feedback on what places and what dates they could attend.

Right now those are - Aloha, Bend, Corvallis, Myrtle Point, Burns, Eugene, Florence, Pendleton and Madras.

Some additional site visits are planned as well. ODVA and VA offices in Portland, VA facilities in Portland area, Oregon Veterans' Home, Community Based Outreach Clinics, Camp Rilea, Etc.

Group adjourned at 5:25 p.m.