

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

MEETING MINUTES

29 APRIL 2021

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Vice Chair Quinn

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Dave Parramore, COL (USA, Ret), Mike Garcia Commander Post 37

SPEAKERS: Jessica Bradstreet Local Recovery Coordinator; Gabriella Tapia Care Giver Support; Craig Pasanen VA CBOC

CALL FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH: Minutes reviewed and approved by membership

Treasurers Report: John Mountcastle delivered the Treasurers Report. He reported a current balance of \$62,325.99. Copies of the detailed report were distributed to the membership. He reminded the membership that approximately half of the current balance is dedicated to specific programs. After his presentation the membership approved the report.

SPEAKER: Jessica Bradstreet delivered a presentation on the mission of Local Recovery. The primary mission is to provide access for veterans to mental health care. This mission makes possible a connection between the veteran and the community as well as Veterans Affairs resources and contacts. Jessica serves as the liaison for the Jacksonville and St. Augustine VA/Community Councils. She developed a program and a guide to Mental Health Resources for Veterans. It has been distributed throughout the South Georgia and North East Florida VA system and community.

SPEAKER: Gabrielle Tapia presentation informed the membership about the resources available through Caregiver Support. Financial support is available upon approval of an application to the Veterans Administration. Both the caregiver and the veteran must apply. Eligible for consideration are; spouses, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member or extended family member or someone who lives full-time with the veteran or is willing to do so. The amount of the stipend depends on the number of hours of care given and the amount earned per hour. The application is a ten step process and is not rapid. It could take three to six months for a determination of eligibility. Caregivers of our veterans are encouraged to apply.

SPEAKER: Craig Pasanen provided an update on the long- awaited Community Based Outpatient Clinic in St. Augustine. Bottom line upfront: Anticipated opening 22 June 2021!

Craig stated that furniture is being moved into the facility at present and one of the major items on the list for completion is the communication hardware. Computers, telephones, fax machines, just to name a few of the technical items. There have been few glitches. Upon completion of the IT requirements next will be installing the medical equipment. After the move and installations are complete a week will be spent “stressing” the systems to ensure readiness. Much discussion has taken place in reference to a grand opening. It was hoped to conduct a ceremony on 22 Jun 21 however due to continuing constraints caused by COVIC-19 we must wait. It has been proposed by our Chairman that we consolidate the Veterans Day Observance with a Grand Opening. That proposal has received a tentative approval.

OFFICER REPORTS:

CSM McDermott reported a continuing backlog at St. Louis the Military Records Center. At present there is a backlog of 482,000 requests for records. He said veterans are being asked for patience. He also announced he would be at the Vet4Vets gathering Saturday 30 April 21 in Jacksonville. He announced there will be a Homeless Veterans Stand Down conducted this year on 11 Sep 21. The event will be conducted at the Elk’s Lodge from 0900 – 1300.

John Leslie reported on the current status of the Veterans Treatment Court. He stated the current number of graduates is 39. In the past month the class lost a participant due to incarceration. In other news it was announced that John has been re-elected to as the leader of our Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1084. John reminded everyone of the chapter’s upcoming golf tournament at Palencia. He announced the tournament would be visited by the Lieutenant Governor of Florida. There will be an informal meet and greet during the tournament.

Steve Spickelmier reported on the current status of the Missing in America Project. He stated they have conducted 25 services for veterans and or spouses. The next service laying to rest these veterans and spouses will be 13 May 21 at the South Florida National Cemetery. There are 19 veterans and 5 spouses to be laid to rest.

Chairman Dudley reported on the tentative plan to combine Veterans Day and the opening of the St. Augustine CBOC. He reported on the pieces that must fall into place to make the plan a reality. A date of 02 Aug 21 has been designated as the GO/NO GO date for final decision.

Chairman Dudley also reported that consultation and coordination continues with St. Johns County, our Council and the VA to establish the old CBOC as a veteran’s homeless center.

Chairman Dudley called for a motion to adjourn. After a move and second the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

RAY A. QUINN

Vice Chair

