



CITRUS COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
Citrus County Resource Center
2804 Marc Knighton Court
Lecanto, FL 34461

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

January 13, 2022 Citrus County Resource Center

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM

a. Pledge of Allegiance

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Richard Floyd	Chairman	Present	
Tom O'Brien	Vice Chairman	Present	
Joseph Reale	Member	Present	
Walter Osburn	Member	Present	
Arlena Newson	Member	Present	

Mariselle Rodriguez, Community Services Director

Philp Watson, CVSO Manager, CCRC

Damian Culley, VSO Sub-Recording Secretary

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Veterans Service Advisory Board Agenda

Agenda Summary for Veterans Advisory Board January 13, 2022

***Motion** by Bud Osborn to approve Agenda. Motion seconded, approved, carried.*

C. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

***Motion** by Bud Osborn to approve Minutes from previous meeting on 7/8/21. Motion seconded, approved, carried*

E. OLD BUSINESS

1. Looking for Veterans to give the Pledge of Allegiance at BOCC Meeting

Looking for Veterans to give the Pledge of Allegiance at BOCC meeting - Many veterans have stepped up but others from different areas, services, years of services are welcome to lead. Board mentions the question of why BOCC Board meeting are held during the day while people work and same time as school board meets

2. VA bus to Tampa and New Port richey VA 813-647-2862

VA Buses - Buses through the VA clinic themselves are starting back up and taking veterans to appoints. Clarification is made that they are discussing the ones that belong to the VA clinic itself not the county transit buses. County Transit Services buses do have specific days they go to 3 separate VA Clinic/Hospitals

3. Veterans ADHOC committee website veteransofcitruscounty.com

Website for Veterans - Bill Merryman discusses a website that is to include all ADHOC's and all other types of events, gatherings, etc., that veterans can log into and get information on. Phil states the website is called Veteransofcitruscounty.com. Bill mentions that in the future The Chronicle will not be having as many articles regarding veterans' activities as in the past. This website would be necessary to get the word out to veterans and organizations

4. Veterans Foundation golf tourney on 11 Sep Citrus Hills

Golf Tournament - Veterans Foundation tournament past. District VFW for Citrus County is having a golf Tournament, April 16, 2022, at Citrus Hills Golf Course. Further details to be released. Questions contact Bill Merryman.

5. COVID deaths and FEMA funding for burials

COVID deaths and FEMA funding for burials - FEMA is paying up to \$9,000 reimbursement for COVID related deaths listed on death certificates. The VA will pay \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses if not hospitalized nor not service related at time of death. If it is a service-related death the VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses

6. Veterans Village update

Veterans Village update - Phil Watson gives update on the Veterans Village that they are still approximately a year out. Funding issues, geological issues, materials as now labor and materials have gone up from when originally budgeted. Phil explains how he has been going around the county trying to educate veterans on what is and what is not covered by the different organizations, VA disability claims, Aid and Attendance, etc. Veterans Village is an ALS which will fall under a 501CS which will get donations and fundings. It is a very big project that already has been in the works for over 5 years.

F. NEW BUSINESS**1. VSO Updates****VSO Updates**

A. New website for veterans is looking for ways to improve, suggestions, etc. If Board members or any others don't know where to send said suggestions, give them to Phil and he will get them to the proper recipient.

B. Suspension of travel hearings due to COVID pushed back to until January 31st but subject to change. All hearings scheduled for after January 31st should remain the same.

C. County VSO office has flyers and literature of an organization just North of the county that helps veterans obtain services dogs if needed. It is a private organization nothing to due with the VA.

D. County VSO office since start of December 2021, has seen approximately 358 veterans and families. A few outreaches were done. Phil attended 1 in Homosassa put together by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans that Jimmie T. Smith runs. Event dealt with Community Care and VA medical. Mark Acker from the Lecanto VA Clinic was present also and assisted with many who needed information.

E. Paychecks for Patriots sponsored by CareerSource is a job fair attended yearly by County VSO. Last 2 years was virtual.

F. Purple Hearts Reach Across America held back in October 2021. Veterans Services had a booth along with other organizations getting the word out of what the county VSO's can help them with and inform veterans.

G. American Legion in Crystal River had an event hosted by MOA regarding the Veterans Village back at the end of September 2021. A retired physician that is on their board was in attendance. Phil attended as Folks with the Veterans Village don't quite under Aid and Attendance and how it works. Large group of veterans will

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not qualify due to the law if served between 1975 through 1990 will not be eligible for Aid and Attendance. Phil spoke with Peter Kranker and not much has changed. Due to COVID labor pieces and materials have gone up and they still do not have secure financing.

a. ADHOC committee looking for ways to improve parade/support from the City, Citrus High etc.

New website for veterans is looking for ways to improve, suggestions, etc. If Board members or any others don't know where to send said suggestions, give them to Phil and he will get them to the proper recipient.

b. Suspension of Central office and Travel Board Hearings for January

Suspension of travel hearings due to COVID pushed back to until January 31st but subject to change. All hearings scheduled for after January 31st should remain the same.

c. NEADS service dogs www.neads.org

d. October - November- 658 veterans assisted and outreaches at VFW Hernando/IAVA, Paychecks for Patriots, Purple Heart Wreaths across America, and Massing of the Colors Proclamaiton

e. GI Bill concerns (Arlena)

G. ADJOURNMENT