



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

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

July 14, 2022 Citrus County Resource Center

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 AM

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	Absent	
Arlena Newson	Member	Present	

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES



**CITRUS COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD**

MINUTES - July 14, 2022

Citrus County Veterans Services Advisory Board met in regular session on Thursday, July 14, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. in the Citrus County Resource Center, located at 2804 Marc Knighton Court, Lecanto, FL. 34461.

CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting was called to order; Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

MEMBERS' ROLL CALL

Attendees	Title	Status
Tom O'Brien	Chairman	Present
Bill Merryman	Vice Chairman	Present
Walter "Bud" Osborn	Member	Not Present
Greg Pelletier	Member	Present
Arlena Newson	Member	Present

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Quorum met.

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT

Mariselle Rodriguez, Community Services Director
Philp Watson, CVSO Manager, CCRC
Damian Culley, VSO Sub-Recording Secretary
Ruthie Schlabach, Citrus County Commissioner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Tom O'Brien to approve Agenda. Motion seconded, approved, carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Bill Merryman to approve Minutes from previous meeting on 3/13/22. Motion seconded, approved, carried.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

See New Business, VSO Updates, Section D VA Home Loan Programs.
See Old Business, #5 Veterans Village Update.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Swear in Arlena Newsom and Bud Osburn -
2. Veterans Served at CC VSO - Jan-Feb 624 Veterans and families served
3. Support to Veterans - Influx of financial support from needy veterans; Inverness Moose Lodge has stepped in with assistance.
4. VA Home Loans - [Diane Perkins and Dawn Pagan](#)
5. Veterans appeals in Florida - There are currently 22,796 with appeals in as of February 2022.
6. Veterans Village Update - Commissioner Schlabach responded the Veterans Village has been extended for another year as stated at the July 12, 2022, BOCC Board Meeting. She explained about the changes with acres, building, etc. Phil Watson CCVSO Mgr. pointed out project has been going on since 2015 and no real progress has been made. Time to either develop or step aside for other projects coming into the county. Opinion is if Veterans Village doesn't get built it will not have a major effect on Citrus County as CCVSO officers assist veterans with Aid and Attendance continuously. This services assists getting veterans into any ALS facility. Unanimously all 5 Veterans Advisory Board members agree there is no confidence in the Veterans Village project.
7. Commissioner Schlabach speaks with Greg Pellitier re: Bridge 4 Veterans, Inc. shelter (formerly The Mission) they are running to assist homeless veterans. He explains that at time of meeting they had 8 gentlemen staying at the shelter. They can hold up to 16 but try not to as that would have 2 - 3 men staying in 1 room together which is too tight. Tom O'Brien mentions how in past it was run with upwards of 40 people staying in tents outside.

NEW BUSINESS**VSO Updates**

1. VSO Updates
 - A. Mar-Apr 658, May/June 570 veterans and families served. Going forward for the next few months approximately 300 will be seen as season slows down.
 - B. Arlena is working with Senator Rubio's office to get a DEERS/RAPID terminal at the National Guard facility in Crystal River. Checking on status of the approval. Commissioner Schlabach offered to assist. This would help local veterans not having to drive to Tampa.

- C. Caregiver program is run through the VA medical for veterans 70% or higher service-connected disability for spouse to care for veteran. Program is currently on hold apprx.15k applicants and 2.5K already enrolled due to enrollment confusion on the VA's part.
- D. FDVA State nursing homes are at 75% occupancy due to staff shortages. FDVA trying to get pay raises for staff through the state. Projected to open 2 new homes in the future.
- E. 199,843 appeals pending, 77,068 hearings pending and a goal of 102,000 decisions for 2022 nationwide.
- F. Phil mentions the retirement of VA Staffer Mark Acker who worked with the eligibility and enrollment for veterans.
- G. Veterans' Week in November. Phil spoke with a committee member and their plan is to have the veterans fair combined with the YMCA Health Fair on November 12, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tom O'Brien to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Greg Pelletier. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting - November 10, 2022, at 3:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Lisette A. Serrano
Recording Secretary

E. OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Swear in Arlena Newson and Bud Osburn**
- 2. Jan-Feb 624 veterans and families served**
- 3. Influx of financial support from needy veterans; Inverness Moose lodge has stepped with assistance**
- 4. VA Home Loans with Diane Perkins and Dawn Pagan**
- 5. Currently there 22,796 Florida with an appeal as of February 2022**
- 6. Veterans Village update**

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. VSO Updates

- a. Mar-Apr 658/May/June 570 veterans and families served
- b. Arlena is working with Senator Rubio's office to get a DEERS/RAPID terminal at the National Guard facility in Crystal River
- c. Caregiver program through the VA is on hold/15k applicants and 2.5K already enrolled
- d. FDVA State nursing homes are at 75% occupancy due to staff shortages. FDVA trying to get pay raises for staff. Projected to open 2 new homes in the future
- e. 199,843 appeals pending, 77,068 hearings pending and a goal of 102,000 decisions for 2022
- f. Nehmar down to 100k claims still to work (Blue Water claims)

g. Veterans week in November allprestige@yahoo.com

G. ADJOURNMENT