

Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

Minutes: March 8, 2017

Veterans Affairs Committee meeting called to order by Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman, Sam Gray at 2:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance / Moment of Silence

Roll-call of committee members:

• Chairman	Sam Gray	Present
• Vice-Chairman	George “Rob” Beam	Present
• Secretary	Trena Philo	Present
• Committee Member	Charles Baker	Excused Absence
• Committee Member	Donald Cady	Present

Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office Staff:

• Director	Aaron Edlefsen	Present
• Service Officer	Kristina S. Higgins	Present
• Service Officer	M. Luann Cape	Present
• Administrative Assistant	Heidi Case	Present

Calhoun County Administration:

• Finance Director	Michele Johnson	Present
• Comm. Development Director	Jen Bomba	Present

Agenda Changes: Director Edlefsen added the new Committee Members names to the agenda.

Citizens Time: Introduction of guests from Goodwill Industries presenting: Dawn Dean, Financial Opportunity Center Coordinator and Cecelia Brooks, Program Manager.

Correspondence: None.

Presentation by Dr. Carl Gibson, Senior Services Director for Calhoun County:

Dr. Gibson presented an overview of Calhoun County Senior Services, they were as follows:

- Senior Services is funded by the Senior Millage and started in 1996.
- Calhoun County is one of the few counties around the area that provides these services for seniors.
- They use outreach to find out what the needs are of area seniors. They provide information in many locations, some being doctor's offices, hospitals and libraries.
- Their most utilized services are: 1) Meals, 2) Transportation and 3) Dental services.
- Their dental programs are provided through the following agencies: 1) Fountain Clinic, 2) Grace Health in Battle Creek and 3) Grace Health in Albion.
- They also have programs in place for providing home repairs for low income seniors.
- Two of their main events are: Senior Fair and Senior Day at the Calhoun County Fair.

Presentation by Dawn Dean, Financial Opportunity Center Coordinator, Goodwill of Central Michigan's Heartland:

Ms. Dean presented an overview of the programs that are provided by Goodwill and also included many important details of their services. They are as follows:

- Their programs are available to everyone, no income requirements, disabilities, etc.
- Their services are free, funded by grants.
- Although their retail brings in a lot of the revenue; retail is not their mission, it is putting people to work.
- Their programs are not based on financial grants given, but free services including: Free Income Tax Preparation, Good STEPS, Wheels to Work, Car Connections, Goodwill Connects, Job Coaching and Financial Coaching.
- Some services are provided in a group type setting, but most are one on one.

Ms. Cecelia Brooks, Program Manager presented details on the Job Coaching program. They are as follows:

- They work with individuals even if they are already working with other employment agencies/programs.
- They work with some companies that hire individuals with criminal backgrounds.
- Their goals are to coach people to learn the skills needed to be successful in the workplace. Their programs are based on training to move into other jobs, not permanently with them.
- They do have some services that are fee based.
- Not all Goodwill Industries have the same programs available. They tailor their grants to community needs.
- They have a local manufacturing company in Fort Custer. They employ a small number of individuals allowing them to learn to work in a slower paced manufacturing environment.
- They work along with many other local agencies.

Women's History Month & Women in Aviation Worldwide Week:

In honor, Director Edlefson presented a Tribute to the Women Airforce Service Pilots:

- November 16, 1942 women pilots began military flight training.
- August 1943 – General Hap Arnold ordered that all women pilots who were flying military aircraft would be called WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots).
- 1944 – General Arnold personally requests that Congress militarize the WASPs. His request was denied.
- December 20, 1944 the WASP were disbanded with no honors or benefits and had to pay their own way home.
- All records were immediately sealed and marked “classified” or “secret” and were archived. The records were unavailable to historians and scholars until the 1980s.
- In 1977, Congress finally voted to give veteran status to the WASP, but they were not invited to the White House signing ceremony. Their medals were delivered seven years later in plain brown envelopes
- On July 1, 2009, President Obama signed Public Law 111-40 awarding the Women Airforce Service Pilots with the Congressional Gold Medal for their remarkable service to their country during World War II
- Until May 20, 2016, the Army denied WASP the right to be interred at Arlington National Cemetery. The rule was overturned when President Obama signed Public Law 114-158. On September 7, 2016, Elaine Harmon was the first WASP to be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.
- Director Edlefson went on to mention many notable WASP members.
- The sacrifices made by the WASP led to a new generation of Women aviators.

Veteran's Relief Fund Applications:

Applicant 17-25: Request was for help with rent in the amount of \$510.00. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-26: Request was for assistance with rent in the amount of \$445.00 Request was denied.

Applicant 17-27: Request was for help with rent in the amount of \$1015.00. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-28: Request was for assistance with electric scooter repair in the amount of \$300.00. Request was approved.

Applicant 17-29: Request was for help with dental services in the amount of \$7734.00. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-30: Request was for assistance with Consumers in the amount of \$1354.59. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-31: Request was for help with a bicycle in the amount of \$79.99. Request was

denied.

Applicant 17-32: Request was for assistance with a wrecker in the amount of \$129.00. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-34: Request was for assistance with rent in the amount of \$801.58. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-36: Request was for help with car loan in the amount of \$5118.71. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-37: Requests were for assistance with rent in the amount of \$3522.00, water bill in the amount of \$253.21, Semco in the amount of \$596.36, Consumers in the amount of \$310.24, and car insurance in the amount of \$447.68. All requests were denied.

Applicant 17-38: Request was for help with Consumers in the amount of \$1578.35. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-39: Requests were for assistance with vehicle repairs in the amount of \$1224.22, car insurance in the amount of \$767.50, vehicle registration in the amount of \$64.00, and Consumers in the amount of \$278.70. All requests were denied.

Applicant 17-40: Request was for help with rent in the amount of \$964.27. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-41: Request was for assistance with car repairs in the amount of \$177.21. Request was denied.

Applicant 17-42: Requests were for help with car repairs in the amount of \$914.46 and car insurance in the amount of \$499.82. Both requests were denied.

Administrative Update: None.

Minutes from February 8, 2017 and February 22, 2017: Ms. Philo motioned to accept the minutes as given. Mr. Beam seconded the motion, all were in favor, motion approved.

Old Business: The Strategic planning meeting scheduled for Friday, July 21, 2017 was approved by all committee members.

New Business: Director Edlefson discussed moving forward in the plans with working on Budget Counseling with Goodwill Industries in combination with the VRF and MVTF programs. All interested parties are on board with it.

Good of the Committee: Ms. Johnson mentioned that she will be presenting information to the Board of Commissioners on the veteran's millage finances and what the committee does.

Adjournment: Mr. Gray made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Philo seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed. Meeting adjourned 4:32 pm.

Sam Gray, Chairman
Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs Committee

Aaron D. Edlefson, Director
Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs