



Hudson Valley Veteran Task Force Meeting Minutes/Notes of May 8, 2019

FINAL

OPENING: The meeting of the Hudson Valley Veteran Task Force was called to order at 9:20 am on Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at the Orange County Department of Health, Goshen, NY by Larry Neumann. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Larry Neumann welcomed all present.

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission statement was recited by Larry Neumann.

The mission of the Hudson Valley Veteran Task Force is to address the needs of those who served by having relevant agencies meet collectively, regularly and cooperatively, to ensure the timely administration of services and referrals in order to achieve an end to Veteran homelessness and meet their immediate and long term needs.

PRESENT: Many veteran and human service agencies of Orange, Sullivan, Rockland, and Putnam Counties were represented. Dutchess County representation was not present. The guests/presenters are listed below. There were a total of 40 in attendance.

INTRODUCTIONS, Opening Remarks and Review of last month's meeting:

Larry started the meeting with a recap of the April 10th meeting. Reminded and reviewed last month's speakers with the highlights of their events and services together with their upcoming dates. He reviewed last month's homeless veteran count.

Introduced Ginger Hoefling, mother of a veteran in need of services. Larry invited her to our meeting so she could see the services and organizations. She is a registered nurse specializing in geriatric care. Her son is an Army Airborne combat veteran. She stated that her son did not come back the way he left and is looking to assist him and learn how to assist others. She would like to be involved.

Larry reviewed last month's announcements and reported on their successes.

GUEST SPEAKERS/PRESENTERS

Tammy Rhein and Angela Jo Henze: Crisis Call Center:

Tammy oversees adult mental health component of the Orange County Department of Mental Health. She is introducing the recently launched Call Center. It provides 24 hour, 7 days of week clinicians for callers that are dealing with emotional distress. The call center will provide crisis intervention, follow up after referrals, and if needed, the dispatching of Mobile Mental Health.

The need for a mental health call center was born out of the current opiate addiction. When discussing the current mental health situation with first responders, police and other crisis officers, the request and consensus was that there was a need for one number.

One change is that the mobile team is dispatched from the call center. The staff evaluate the situation and dispatch mobile mental health or make the referral to peer mentors, recovery coaches. Whatever is needed at that immediate time.

A three-digit phone number has been applied for. That number is expected to be 311. It has not been officially launched. They work hand in hand with 911. Unfortunately, not all police stations dispatch through 911. 911 is also in the same area. **The calls were primarily suicide** calls, now receiving all types of crisis calls. Both 911 dispatchers and call center staff jointly attend mental health training.

Angela requested the service organizations present provide information for the call center. Most of the helplines consolidated into this number are still active and will continue with plenty of time for transitioning. Access Support for living has received a multi-million dollar grant to provide urgent care for mental health. This allows for immediate mental assistance.

Questions? Bill Sestrom asked, "How many calls did you get last month?" Answer: 1500. Christian Farrell asked, "How many calls for suicide?" Answer: Approximately 2 per day. The call center is receiving a lot of calls from parents. Questions were answered by Angela Jo Henze.

Comment: Larry stated, as you improve the call center, you will get more calls. Waiting for 311 to be up and running to advertise the call center service. When it does, the number of calls is expected to increase significantly.

Maureen Jagos, Dir. Chester Public Library Literacy Grant

Thank you for the invitation. Ramapo Catskill Library Systems manage all libraries in Hudson Valley. The Literacy grant is a state grant. She would like to re-direct what libraries are about. Libraries are no longer the older librarian hushing everyone. We are community hub. We do have books, but so much more. For instance, their library was the first to have a sensory reading program, and also a food pantry. Chester is having food insecurity issues and they addressed it. Roscoe library rents out fishing poles.

Question? Derek Brown asked, are the libraries available for support groups? It depends on each library. Space is limited because of the alternate programs provided by the individual libraries.

The literacy program wants to invite veterans, reach out to provide services for them. In her own family, those who have served don't identify as veterans. The grant can be anywhere from \$200 to \$1500. This would allow for maybe just one speaker or create programs. Whatever they decide it must be linked to literacy (job skills, digital literacy, etc.) It is an open topic and the possibilities are there.

Questions? What do you do with the excess books? Not of profit cannot sell books. Can't always take books. Do take a small amount and the ones that cannot be used are given to friends of the library.

Anthony Covington, COO/Exec. VP and Rev. Norman Graves Sr.: B.A.T.S.

Larry expressed the ever-growing problem of veteran homelessness. Anthony introduced his project as Veteran transitional housing in Sullivan county. They currently have transitional and will be providing a house for permanent housing. Project specifically for veterans.

Go to website for brochure. Born of NBWC ministry, a subsidiary of the BATS program. It started when a parishioner's family wanted to give away a house. The church could not take the house. They created the project and made this specific house for homeless veterans.

Major requirements must be Honorable or other than honorable discharge. We want to make sure the veterans tap into the available benefits. They connect veterans with the county and others provide services. The ultimate goal is to get the veteran into permanent housing. Sometimes the services are not local, so they explore other areas the veteran may want to live, even if in another state.

Questions? What is the residency requirement? They do have a couple of residents that are from Orange County. Primarily Sullivan county, but will house veterans of neighboring counties. Do you only take men? currently only men. Do you assist veterans in getting the skills to maintain housing? Every veteran has chores and need to follow the rules which are in place to teach the skills they need to manage their lives. If a veteran presents himself and has an addiction, veteran must be in treatment. The level of care must be managed and at high level functioning.

Nicole Embry of the VA Health Center offered to come out and register veterans for the VA. What is your capacity and what is the average length of stay? 8 weeks, and 6 to 9 months. If they are not able to leave, they waive the time and work with the veteran. The process is long to find housing. Medication? Each veteran in their room have a safe and lock box with both combination and key. Each person is responsible of their own medication.

They primarily are funded with donations and the county. Five rooms - one room is for the house coordinator with all the amenities and he stays there at night; one handicap room; amenities such as kitchen, washer and dryers, etc. are provided. The resident must provide a portion of food stamps for the household food supply, and they pay for their housing on a sliding scale. It all depends on the amount received by the individual veteran. It is emphasized that the resident must be saving money. Pictures and a video of the house is online. Invited group to see the housing.

WestCOP asked questions in order to make a connection with Sullivan County. They have had difficulty identifying and serving the homeless veterans of that county.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Larry introduced and welcomed Kathy Yusuf BS, Military Coordinator, Graduate Programs and Adult Degree Completion of Mt St. Mary College.

Steve Renna: Committee for Families of War Veterans (845) 527-2522 or www.familiesofwarveterans.org . Steve sent a note to clarify the services that they provide. Since they came to the task force to introduce their services they have been overwhelmed with requests. The veterans referred to them must be in financial hardships.

- We are a non-partisan, 501C3 not-for-profit organization based in the greater Hudson Valley area of New York.
- The Committee was founded in 2007 to raise funds for returning veterans, current soldiers, as well as the families of soldiers wounded or killed in combat. We strive to provide maximum assistance when urgent expenses arise related to fundamental needs such as housing, transportation, and food.
- We prefer to work in conjunction with existing veterans organizations, but can also work directly with individuals whose needs are critical and who meet the basic criteria.
- They give consideration to those in most need.

Kendal Kless: Boxes for Soldiers

The care package drive kicks off May 16th Armed Forces Day until the Tuesday after Memorial Day. She would like to request donations, help packing boxes, monetary donations for mailing. They are sending out over 300 boxes this year. Packing will be Tuesday the 28th of May in the evening. The location to be determined. Contact Rob Bowmen (845) 610-5700. The boxes will go to the chaplains to be distributed.

Derek Brown, Newburgh Veteran Drug Court:

Judge Williams, and Lindsey have been doing a great job with the program. There is a graduation on May 15th. Derek's request is to continue to relay message - Judge Williams has been able to relocate cases to the Newburgh court. They work with Justice for our Veterans. We have support groups, trips and one on one mentors. If you run into veterans that need to move on with their lives after a legal infraction please refer them to the program.

TASK FORCE HOMELESS CASES Status: Christine

2 emergency cases came in last night. A disable veteran with a large emotional support dog. He cannot pay for pet fees at the hotel and the SSVF funds cannot be used for this kind of assistance. The pet fees are \$125 a week. Looking for assistance to pay the next 2 weeks of his pet fees. Angela Jo Henze suggested discretionary funds provided by case workers.

Numbers going up in every county. Trying to explore more housing availability and need the task force's help. It must be affordable housing. Contact Christine with any suggestions.

- **WestCOP SSVF: Open/New Case Report**
 - Dutchess - 5
 - Orange - 16
 - Ulster County -
 - Westchester - 43
 - Sullivan - 2

Working with many agencies to provide a truer number. There are more homeless than they can identify along. Asking agencies to provide numbers - even if the veteran is not ready to come in, please inform the task force.

VETERAN SERVICE AND COUNTY UPDATES:

- **Dutchess County, excused.** Location is distance prohibited
 - **Vet2Vet: Adam Roche, Program Manager, Vet2Vet Veterans' Peer Services**
- **Orange County**
 - **VSO: Christian Farrell, Director - Orange County Veteran Services**
 - **Vet2Vet: Larry Neumann, Program Coordinator**
 - Revisit Honor Flight Mission #22 - great mission. Highlight a 102 year old barber veteran escort 80 yr old.
 - Hospice Veteran Breakfast - great event and presentation of their final salute to veterans in their care. Heartwarming presentation.
 - Annual Veteran picnic – a lot of community veterans came out, possibly over 100. Rolling Thunder did all the cooking for the event.
 - Remember to partake in the Memorial Day Services
- **Putnam County**
 - **VSO: Karl Rohde, Director, Putnam County Veterans Service Agency**
 - Homeless again. Interview with a veteran. has 2 extra rooms in his residence.
 - Veteran Cooking class at one their local camps. First program like it.
 - Memorial Day invitation to Putnam County for the ceremony. The monument is guarded from 6pm to 6 am. Celebration is 3 days with the opening ceremony on Friday night
 - **Vet2Vet, John Bourges, Program Coordinator**
 - WE have another homeless in jail, but likes to be homeless in New York City
 - Thank their local Rotary club for the cooking class. 15 veterans attended.
 - Provide packages to the armed forces - golf outing to raise money - \$10 per box
 - Warm line - have gotten many calls from Texas and other states. 24 hour helpline is well received.
- **Rockland County**
 - **Vet to Vet: Sharon Bailey - notes read by Larry Neumann**
 - Task Force Meeting the 9th May at 9am
 - Writing Workshop 6:30pm Thursdays
 - Monthly - Acupuncture and Social.
 - Weekly on Thursdays- Yoga at Birchwood Center
 - Run for the Rock at Rockland County Community College on June 8.
- **Sullivan County**
 - **VSO: Howie Goldsmith, Coordinator, Sullivan County Veteran Service Agency**
 - 3 veterans escorted to the Honor flight - 1 on oxygen, 1 on insulin
 - handing out flags on Memorial Day
 - Traveling Wall coming to Rock Hill Fire Department Sept 11 to 14
- **Office of US Representative Sean Patrick Maloney. excused**

UPCOMING EVENTS/ROUNDTABLE

Nicole Embry - Veteran Resource Fair on June 1st. See flyer. Something new starting tomorrow - Broadcast from main campuses on environmental exposures. Will get info out.

Anthony - Annual 5K Run -July 27

Andy - Camp for Women Veterans Workshops - see flyer on HVVTF website.

Peer On Demand - Navigation rehabilitation services are being provided. If interested contact, Veteran and Recovery programs. CDC has given them permission to give NARCAN training with at least 2 weeks' notice.

2019 INITIATIVES

Larry - held up the list of initiatives. We haven't had the time to review at this meeting, but be aware that a lot of work has been going on to address these issues such as transportation, women veterans, etc.

Adjournment: meeting was adjourned at 11:25am by Larry Neumann.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2019, 9am Location: TBD

Minutes taken and typed by: Millie Rivera-Velez

Minutes reviewed and submitted by: Larry Neumann