

HOLLIDAYSBURG VETERANS' HOME (HVH) ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024

10:00 AM

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ildephonse "Duffy" Hines (Council President), Marine Corps League Department of PA

R. Raymond Lenz (Council Secretary), American Legion Department of PA

Joseph Rodkey, Blinded Veterans Association

Brian Querry, Centre County, Director of VA

David Wagner, DAV

Jay Buchanan, MOAA

Michael "Mick" Hoover, MOPH

Tim Susengill, Vietnam Veterans Association

Todd Warner, Pennsylvania State Association County Director of Veterans Affairs

Henry J. Gaunt, American Vets

Irene Fulton, Resident Representative

VIP'S PRESENT:

State Senator Judy Ward

State Representative Louis Schmitt Jr.

DMVA PRESENT:

Travis Davis, Executive Director of Long-Term Care, Bureau of Veterans' Homes

Barb Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans' Homes

HVH PRESENT:

Chrissy Dambeck, Commandant

Kelly Smith, Deputy Commandant

Desiree Kearney, Director of Nursing

Sarah Reinhart, Doctor

Joe Patterson, Admissions and Marketing

Adrienne Bilek, Dietary Director

Jolene Hoffman, Human Resources

Theresa Smith, Payroll

Dana Merritts, Registered Nurse
Diana Stasko, Nurse Aide
Joseph Summers, Nurse Aide
Kelly Cogan, Assistant Director of Nursing
Nick Davis, Assistant Director of Nursing
Emily McDowell, Volunteer Services
Dylan Nelson, Assistant to the Commandant and *Recorder*

OTHERS PRESENT:

Anna Marie Rodkey, Spouse of Joseph Rodkey
Constance Stransky, Guest of R. Raymond Lenz
Michele Ivory, Constituent Outreach Specialist, Senator Judy Ward's Office
Lory Liebegott, DAV Service Officer

VACANT POSITIONS:

Jewish War Veterans

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

John "Goose" Marin, Catholic War Vets
Thomas Williams, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Ray asked everyone to stand, and he led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then asked everyone to take a moment of silence.

Call to Order/Roll Call

Ray Lenz called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM and asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves and to provide their title and/or Service Organization.

Review of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Ray asked every member if they had any questions. Ray announced we are still seeking a candidate for the Jewish War Veterans vacancy, but this process will take some time as well. With no other questions, comments or concerns, Duffy said the minutes from January 2024 are accepted as posted. R. Raymond Lenz, Council Secretary, then signed the minutes to make them official.

Employee Recognition

Dana Merritts, RN, was recognized for 20 years of PA state service

Diana Stasko, CNA, was recognized for 25 years of state service

Jason Kost, Wound Nurse, was recognized for 25 years of PA state service

Joseph Summers, CNA, was recognized for 30 years of state service

Theresa Smith, Payroll, was recognized for 20 years of state service

Swearing In New Members

N/A

Matt Smearman

An update on construction – 2 capitol construction projects – one in Mac Hall and one in new building. Upgrades in MH to put new windows, roof, refurbishing kitchen. 69% complete, slated to be finished in June/July, issues with weather may put the target date behind by a bit. 2 weeks to complete each wing, will finish each wing, about a month away from getting finished with resident areas. Elevator modifications were also done, new motors and hoists, etc. Working on CLC building, walls and front of area being about 50% done, waiting on FF&E budget for furnishings to be released, then we can begin the preparations for furnishings. We have started planning meetings with BVH, discussions moving residents and their belongings. ACM or asbestos – we have older buildings here and have had some scares with staff concerning potential asbestos exposure, luckily testing all revealed that there was no asbestos exposure that happened and we are actively encouraging staff to say if they want any precautions put in place.

Barb – HR aspect of potential exposed staff – staff would fill out a packet if they feel they were exposed so that they are covered in the event that there is a future moment in time that determined they contracted the issue here. Any medical issue concerning staff is required to be kept for 30 years, would go through workers comp claims.

Ray Lenz spoke about how he appreciates the staff, and how it shows that they seem to enjoy their work and that the residents are lucky to be able to have them working with them.

Desiree Kearney

Rundown on her record – 1999 started nursing, 2001 LPN, 2010 RN, management began with wound team and became director of nursing, became a prison nurse for a period of time and then came here. Introduce 2 new ADONs – Kelly Cogan – background in long term care, history of DON in long term care. Nick Davis – been with commonwealth for a long time, came from DOC and wanted to introduce them. Working on Activities PIP concerning the secured unit, new IDT working together to best serve the interests of the residents. Working on a missing property PIP, coming up with new plans and new ways to help make sure that residents items are being properly kept. Working currently on digitizing documentation, working on the new Matrix Reloaded program.

Duffy then entered the room, gave permission for Ray Lenz to run the program; said Tom Williams was absent due to a funeral and Goose was absent due to a medical issue.

Dr. Sarah Reinhart

Dr. Sarah Reinhardt attended for Medical Director, Dr. John Reinhardt. She stated that their contract will be ending, and that they all wanted to express that they enjoyed their time working with us and serving the residents. Dr. Froncillo stated that Dr. Reinhardt had no further messages of his own to pass along.

Questions, Comments, Concerns

Ray Lenz asked if they could reapply to work with the HVH again. Dr Sarah Reinhart said that it was a complicated matter, but they would be more than happy to work with everyone again in the future.

Travis Davis, Executive Director of Long-Term Care

Looking at survey activity – last year we had 40 surveys across all 6 homes – our own compliance team also runs a mock survey as well – since last meeting the VA has done surveys at Scranton and Erie, they went well. Infection and respiratory illnesses – right now numbers for COVID are low. Personnel moves across the state – new medical director Dr. Young at sister facility SE, new director of nursing at SE just came down, expecting to be filled soon. Greg Lehman new construction coordinator – Luke Hughes is now facility admin officer – Nick Cortez, will help with VA grants and construction projects. Rich Adams had retired as nursing home administrator, waiting on approvals for replacement. New grievance coordinator from HQ, Michelle Coleman. Personal Care Administrator in Erie recruiting, formal internship program starting, physician group contract will be expiring on June of this year, weighing the benefits of having different options available. Posted physician and nurse practitioner listings to see what all of our options are. 5 star ratings – 3 are 5 star, Pitt is a 4 star, HVH and Erie are 3 stars. Admissions across homes – at 1107 across the state, 2 years ago we were at the 800s. Kudos to Joe Patterson and admissions across the state for getting veterans in the homes. 2 key meetings – governance meeting =. Resident satisfactions survey – if below 80% on a question, put a plan into place to fix it. If a category drops 10%, we put a process in place. Different categories for each home, HVH only had 1 area in question, that is very good. Adjutant General – DOH survey teams data was released – study released, seeing overall 5 star ratings decrease from 2022 to present, total number of deficiencies is rising across the board. Number of G level deficiencies and immediate jeopardy tags being increased across the board. Staffing Ratios – Numbers across the board are very low, average PPD for a facility is below the state minimum, staffing is a serious concern but HVH staffing ratio remains high. 300 vacancies open across the state, struggling with frontline staff. Looking at different things/initiatives that we can do for staffing, looking at getting a VA grant to help. 2% of what we receive, a significant amount, being put into staffing. May 30th fishing event, vet homes week, June 10-16, packed with activities. Women Vet recognition day June 12, hosting VetCon in Pittsburgh, Gen Weigl instrumental in assisting with that planning, expecting a large crowd. **Questions, Comments, Concerns**

Judy Ward - HVH has 3 star CMS rating – can we explain?

Travis - It has 3 parts, the health inspection piece is our issue because the deficiency stays for 2 years after the fact, even after being corrected. Maintaining 4 and 5 stars across the board is our goal; we are currently doing everything we can to have the star level raise. During COVID there was a spike in deficiencies, but overall confused as to why most deficiencies are being handed out more frequently.

Judy Ward – Will the staffing ratio be increased?

Travis – That will be touched on by Barb Raymond.

Barb Raymond, Director

Travis covered a majority of home issues. No COVID last week, this week at SE facility we do have 1 COVID staff. Flu numbers have been great, one issue at DVVH with flu. Spring COVID dose from CDC recommendation, all 6 vet homes are underway delivering the vaccine. Fall COVID dose, CDC recommendation as to wait a number of months after injections, Flu vaccine can potentially make it lag behind. State vet homes week in June, residents looking forward to that. Staffing info – CMS recommendation – discounting the LPN in those staffing ratios – have staffing increase to a 4.0 – breaking down with LPN numbers. Recently meeting at federal level, saying they did not want to do that, hopeful that it gets shut down because we do not want to discount our LPNs in staffing numbers, 3.2 hours per patient day change. We budget for 3.8, our budget is well above that. Our staffing hours across the 6 homes, can be a challenge. Backfill is not there, getting nervous about staff readying to retire. Struggling with retention bonuses, sign on bonuses that we are not allowed to utilize.

Questions, Comments, Concerns

Brian Querry – For the online admissions packet, when following link it gives a printout that does not match what should be there.

Barb – Contracts and applications are currently being looked at for improvement; we will look into those issues and fix them.

Anissa Rosemas, Personal Care Administrator

DHS survey was last month, 5th and 6th of March, 2 day inspection for 1 violation – resident assessment and support plan was outdated by 9 days. Was a good survey, had a good inspector that offered assistance. Barb – DHS is a pain when they come in, it is a very big deal.

Kelly Smith, Deputy Commandant

BVH compliance completed 5 of 9 FPAs for 2024, HVH in Jan 2024, SE feb 2024, GMVC March 2024, DVSS,etc for rest of the year.

Chrissy Dambeck, Commandant

We have our new Director of Nursing and our new Assistant Directors of Nursing here at the facility, working diligently to be brought up to speed with facility happenings and integrating their shared knowledge and experience with HVH nursing staff.

Questions, Comments, Concerns

N/A

Duffy Hines – Report of Status

Gov. Elec and A of governor added to delay of new/renewed memberships – also delays in submission. Jewish War Vets still seeking council. New commander this year still employed so has not made a meeting – awaiting membership for person who qualifies but still going through the process. The election should be in October so that officers can start in the beginning of the year; there will be a position election moving forward. Members all should be working hall of heroes. Attendance is good at this Advisory Council and everyone wants to participate and likes to participate. I hope that new members will also have the same desire to participate.

Old Business

N/A

New Business

N/A

Announcements/Good of the Council

Good of the Council – Joe did a great job at 29th down ceremony, we need to get Veterans the right information, help Joe out. Some of the questions asked blew his mind, younger and older veterans trying to get into things in the past, some are unaware of the changes that have occurred in '09.

For PA Vet Connect – have staff that do that across the state, could we get an FAQ document that would help disperse misconceptions or myths? Outreach does need to clarify frequently that we are not the federal VA. Requested when

people are having enrollment fairs, we have requested that State associations were available to be there as well in order to correct any misinformation.

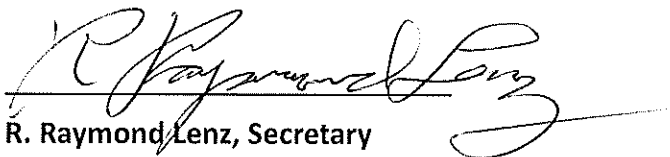
Working on getting counties involved in the service region to start getting people admitted to the HVH

Thursday, July 18 2024 at 10:00 am, if you can make it for Veterans Week and the Carnival, please come. General Weigl was attending on the phone, thanked all present for the points that were brought up.

Adjournment

Ray reminded everyone that the next Advisory Council meeting is set to be held on Thursday, July 18, 2024, at 1000hrs.

Meeting was adjourned at 1138hrs.


R. Raymond Lenz, Secretary