GINO J. MERLI VETERANS' CENTER
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
November 18, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was held vis telephone conference.
Lisa Solarczyk, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Secretary Ron Faust recorded roll call and attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS

Lisa Solarczyk, President - Marine Corps League
Ronald Faust, Secretary - AMVETS
Robert Cudworth - Military Officers Association of America (Excused)
Robert Smith - Military Order of the Purple Heart (Excused)
Russell Canevari - Veterans of Foreign Wars (Excused)
William Smith - The American Legion
Richard Green - Blinded Veterans Association (Excused)
Joe Sylvester - Disabled American Veterans
Lisa Baker - PA State Senate
Carol Sweeney for Karen Boback - PA House of Representatives
Tim Cleveland - PSACDVA
Lisa Kaye - PSACDVA
Wilson Miller - GJMVC Resident Representative

DMVA

Major General Mark J. Schindler - Adjutant *General, Pennsylvania (Excused)*
Maureen Weigl, BG - *Deputy Adjutant General, VA (Excused)*
Travis Davis – Executive Director, Long-Term Care (Excused)
Barbara Raymond – Director, Bureau of Veterans' Homes
James Miller - GJMVC Commandant
Kathleen Ambrose - GJMVC Deputy Commandant

OTHERS PRESENT / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Lynn O'Day, Recorder
Dr. Kazmierski, GMVC Medical Director
Sara Butler, Admissions
Maria Coles, GMVC ADON

MEMBER STATUS

- There are 15 seats with 2 vacancies. Replacements are needed for The Jewish War Veterans and the Catholic War Veterans. Ron Faust has made contact with these organizations for steps to be taken in replacement.
- Ron Faust will have a replacement (to be announced) as he will be retiring. He will maintain his position until a new appointment is made.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Previous minutes accepted as written.
- William Smith was nominated and has accepted the position of Vice President.

REPORT OF THE ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR

- Our census is currently at 138. Since our last meeting we have had 9 admissions and 9 deaths.
- We are still doing virtual tours while accepting and processing all new applications. The waiting list for a veteran is about 4 to 6 months. The spouse waiting list continues to grow with a wait of about 2 years.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF VETERANS' HOMES

- Barbara Raymond stated that we are at 65% overall status for vaccines throughout the home's staff. Resident vaccination is over 90%.
- We are tracking the vaccine mandate that came out from the federal government. We are working with labor relations to get vaccinations for our staff as well as the contractors and volunteers.
- Visitation is now less restricted than it had been. We will still be monitoring visitors coming in with signs and symptoms as well as making social/physical distancing and masks a requirement. We are also encouraging any testing.
- Overall covid numbers are 8 positive cases at our Hollidaysburg facility with 3 recent deaths in the past.

REPORT OF THE COMMANDANT

- James Miller stated that we have 99% of residents vaccinated here at the home and 127 of 138 who have also received the booster shot.
- 95% of our staff are vaccinated with 12 employees still pending, 3 have been scheduled.
- We continue to run clinics for Covid and Flu twice a week.
    - Ron Faust asked if we are continuing to give the flu vaccine. Doctor Kazmierski stated that nearly all of our residents have received the flu vaccine. All residents that have given consent as well as staff and visitors can receive the vaccine at one of our clinics.
- We are now in the survey window for the DOH annual survey. Our license date is February 2022.
- We are allowing visitation and passes. We are trying to screen and test visitors, working with families on an individual basis.
- The roofing project continues. There have been no problems with parking.
- We are still awaiting corrective action plan approval from our VA annual survey.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

- Dr. Kazmierski reported that our vaccination rate is very high. 137 of 138 residents have been vaccinate with 127 of those 138 receiving their boosters.
- 283 of 303 staff have been vaccinated with 3 partially vaccinated.
- No recent positive cases among the residents. We have had very few staff positives with one staff currently out for positive covid and one for covid exposure.
- We need to remain vigilant with PPE and constant monitoring.

- We have been concentrating on urinary tract infections and trying to minimize our foley catheters. He will be discussing supra pubic catheter use with local urologists and the feasibility of switching residents. There are many different advantages including lower infection rates.
- We have also been focusing on reducing medication usage as far as antibiotics, antipsychotics etc.

THE GOOD OF THE COUNCIL

- Lisa Solarczyk stated that Mission BBQ wants to sponsor a lunch at the facility. She reminded everyone that Toys for Tots season is here and if anyone would like to donate please contact Lisa. The local Marines serve several counties collecting between 50 to 70 thousand toys every year.
    - Jim stated that we would love for them to sponsor a luncheon and Jan McAllister will be contact with them to arrange it.
- Lisa Baker stated that Sam Greenberg's son, who is not a veteran, wanted to know how to become a member of the Advisory Board. He is interested in serving. He doesn't meet any of the slots allotted in the regulations.
    - The meetings are advertised the Sunday before every meeting. He can always join or call into a scheduled meeting, but he cannot serve on the board as an active member.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was announced: February 17, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.