HOLLIDAYSBURG VETERANS' HOME (HVH)

HOLLIDAYSBURG VETERANS' HOME (HVH) ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TELEPHONIC MEETING
THURSDAY, October 21, 2021
10:00 A.M.

Commandant Sam Dunkle conducted a telephonic rollcall with the below findings:

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:
Duffy Hines (Council Present), Marine Corps League Department of PA
Raymond Lenz, American Legion Department of PA
Henry Gaunt, AMVETS
John "Goose" Marin, Catholic War Vets
Brian Querry, Centre County, Director of VA
David Wagner, DAV
Ron Dawson, Resident Representative
Tim Susengill, Vietnam Veterans Association

VIPs:
State Senator Judy Ward
State Representative Louis Schmitt Jr.

DMVA
The Deputy Adjutant General of Veteran Affairs, Brigadier General (Ret.) Maureen Weigel
Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care
Barb Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans Homes

HVH
Sam Dunkle, Commandant
Dr. John Reinhardt, Medical Director
Kelly Smith, Director of Nursing
Chrissy Dambeck, DMVA Nurse Administrator
Kim Vandevander, Admissions & Marketing Director
Joe Patterson, *Recorder*

OTHER:

Jewish War Veterans, Vacant
Military Order of the Purple Heart, Vacant
VFW Department of PA, Vacant

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS & OTHERS ABSENT:
Joe Rodkey, Blinded Veterans
Robert "Hank" Sembower, Military Officers Association of America

Called to Order
Duffy Hines called the meeting to order at 1000hrs and asked everyone to join him in a moment of silence to honor and remember our fallen veterans and lost residents from HVH since our last meeting.

Pledge of Allegance
Duffy asked Brian Querry to lead everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

The Deputy Adjutant General of Veteran Affairs, Brigadier General (Ret.) Maureen Weigel

Introduction
General Weigel greeted the Advisory Council members and HVH staff and apologized that her calendar could not allow for her to join the HVH team (in-person). She expressed her gratitude that Travis and Barb are present at HVH.

The General Weigel said there has been a few leadership changes at the HVH with Sam Dunkle being assigned as the new Commandant and that she will be visiting the home next week. The General said that Sam brings a lot of positive energy and under his leadership morale has increased at the home. The General said the entire HVH team is doing a great job – taking care of our resident/ veterans and she is very proud of everyone.

Questions, Comments or Concerns for General Weigel:
None received.

Duffy said [speaking on behalf of the entire council] this is our first Advisory Council meeting with Sam as our new Commandant – we look forward to the many years a head and working with you to serve our veterans and their families. The Commandant expressed his gratitude to Duffy and to all the Advisory Council members.

Review of Minutes from Previous Meeting
Duffy asked the council members if they had any questions, comments, or concerns to declare? None received, he stated the minutes are accepted as published.

Swearing-In New Members
None

Duffy said there were two (2) names submitted to the State Veterans' War Council to fill the vacant Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) and the VFW positions. He said that by the next meeting (January 20, 2021) these positions should be filled. Duffy also said he continues his efforts to fill the vacant Jewish War Veteran position with someone local.

Employee Recognition

Commandant Dunkle said employee recognition will be postponed to the next meeting.

Dr. John Reinhardt, Medical Director
Kelly Smith explained that Dr. Reinhardt is currently on the nursing units and that he would be joining our meeting once he finishes his rounds.

Kim Vandevander, Admissions & Marketing Director

Admissions

Kim said for the quarter, from July 1st to today there has been:
22-New Admissions
9-Discharges with 7 of them being to other State Veterans Homes
12-Deaths

Kim explained, she is very active with assisting veterans and their family members with the paperwork. She said packets are still being sent in the mail and she continues helping with the paperwork (line-by-line if necessary), over the phone instead of in person. Kim said the home averages approximately two (2) to three (3) new admissions per week.

Marketing

Kim said for the quarter, she hasn't attended any marketing events (most are cancelled due to the pandemic), and she looks forward to local events to start again in the near future. She explained that it's her passion to inform the community, veterans and family members what the HVH has to offer. Kim explained that she always expresses to our veterans and their families – you may not be ready for our home, but we are here if you ever need us. Duffy expressed his gratitude for Kim's efforts.

Questions, Comments or Concerns for Kim Vandevander:
None received.

Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care

Introduction
Travis greeted the Advisory Council members and thanked them for their time and service to the residents and staff at the HVH. Travis also expressed his gratitude for Senator Judy Ward's support to the HVH. Travis mentioned he had the honor and pleasure meeting Senator Ward for the first time while attending the Pennsylvania Healthcare Association. Travis continued and thanked Senator Ward for her advocacy towards nursing and staffing for the Bureau of Veterans Homes (BVH) and fighting for us all at the Capital.

Travis said the end of the 2021 will be a busy year for HVH [as well as all the homes] with regard to the pandemic, vaccinations for residents and staff, COVID-19 testing and staffing as well. Travis said the new year and 2022 also brings a lot of excitement for our residents and staff with respect to the design and movement of the new Community Living Center (CLC) at Hollidaysburg.

Questions, Comments or Concerns for Travis Davis:
None received.

Barb Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans Homes

Introduction
Barb greeted all the HVH Advisory Council members.

Homes Report
Barb explained all six (6) of the facilities/ homes are fully licensed through the PA Department of Health (DOH) and several homes have processed their DOH annual surveys. Barb said the Southeastern Veterans Center (SEVC) recently had it's annual survey in the summer and is fully licensed; the Erie facility had its annual survey in July with no deviancies were found; the Delaware Valley facility is awaiting their annual survey; the Scranton facility had its annual survey in February, a reinspection was complied and this home is now in compliance; the Pittsburgh facility had its annual survey in May, a reinspection was completed and this home is now in compliance.

COVID-19 Pandemic
Barb said all six (6) homes are following the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), PA DOH and the DMVA.

Barb there are facilities with current positive COVID-19 cases at the HVH and that the Commandant will brief the details during his report.

Vaccination Rates/ Percentage
Barb said the Philadelphia and Scranton facilities are leading with over 90% of their staff being fully vaccinated and for all six (6) of the homes the staff vaccination rate is at 65%. She said the BVHs continues to educate staff on the importance of receiving the vaccination. Barb said the BVHs continues to work closely with the Governor's and President's Office with respects to additional vaccine mandates; but the homes are not in this situation at this time.

Barb said the resident vaccination rate for all six (6) homes is at 97% and all homes continue to offer booster shots as well.

Influenza
Barb said there is only one (1) case and that is in the Erie facility. She said the BVH is tracking influenza in all six (6) homes as well as each home monitoring and offering the flu vaccine.

Census for all six (6) homes
939 Total Residents Assigned
61% Occupancy Rate

Barb said all six (6) homes continue to receive new admissions; however, and due to staffing concerns five (5) out of the six (6) homes have waiting lists and the process is slow and must be monitored.

Construction
Barb said the Delaware Valley facility recently renovated forty-one (41) Personal Care beds into Skilled beds; however, the home must wait for a VA Occupancy survey before the beds can be utilized.

Barb Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans Homes (cont.)

Barb said the renovation project at the Southeastern Veteran is nearly completion for the facility to assist veterans with other outreach development programs. Barb said the facility in Scranton is currently having its roof replaced, and the new roof will be metal. Barb said the Erie facility is moving forward with its expansion of the resident dining area(s) and therapy gym.

Personnel Updates
Barb said, as the General mentioned, that the HVH now has a new Commandant and she congratulated Sam. Barb said, Sam was assigned to the position for approximately one (1) month ago and morale has significantly improved. Barb noted the promotion of Sam obviously has left his Deputy position open and she is working on getting approvals to announce the individual that was selected.

Barb mentioned the Delaware Medical Director, Doctor Violetta Berdichevskaya was promoted to the position of BVHs Chief Medical Officer to assist all six (6) homes.

Barb mentioned the Erie facility (Soldiers & Sailors Home) is still waiting to fill the Commandant's position.

Questions, Comments or Concerns for Barb Raymond:
None received.

Duffy thanked Barb and Travis for their detailed reports.

Sam Dunkle, Commandant

Sam mentioned The HVHs Commandant's Report was emailed or mailed with the meeting's agenda and briefed:

Census
Sam said the census for the HVH is significantly low and at 222; however, referencing Kim Vandevander already briefed, the home is working on new admissions to build this number back-up. Sam express this will take a little time to build these numbers because from March of 2020 to March 2021 the home did not receive any new admissions.

Personnel Status
Sam said the home continues to hire [referencing the report] there were eighteen (18) new positions filled since the last meeting. He did express the home still has a shortage of RNs and the HR staff have attended several community events to recruit for these vacancies.

Donations from Individuals, Community and Service Organizations
Sam [referencing the Commandant's Report] asked all the Advisory Council Members to take a few moments to look over all the monetary and miscellaneous donations; and mentioned our citizens, community and Service Organizations continues to support the HVH very well.

Sam Dunkle, Commandant (cont.)

Parade
Sam said there is a Halloween Parade schedule at HVH this Saturday, October 23rd. He explained family members and Service Organizations decorate vehicles, trailers and themselves and travel the entire campus.

Sam turned his report over to Kelly Smith

COVID-19 Update and Positive Cases
Kelly said there is currently three (3) skilled and one (1) MacArthur Hall/ Personal Care residents that is positive; and one (1) of these residents is currently in the hospital with COVID-19 ammonia. Kelly said if a resident is exposed to COVID-19 or were potentially exposure – they are isolated.

Vaccinations & Boosters
Kelly said 91% of the residents have been vaccinated and every available resident who has a compromised immune system, and willing, have received a booster.

Flu Vaccines
Kelly said the COVID-10 boosters have been paused by the Medical Director so that flu vaccines can be administered. She said after a two (2) week time lapse the boosters will resume.

Questions, Comments or Concerns for Kelly Smith, Director of Nursing
None received.
Kelly turned the meeting over to Commandant Dunkle

Visitation
Sam explained that resident visitations have been a challenge during the pandemic; however, the home continues scheduling Compassionate Care and End of Life visits. Sam said the home also offers residents the opportunity to use iPads to conduct Virtual Visits with their family via the support of the Activity and Social Service department. He said the home has approximately ten (10) iPads and they are a remarkable tool for the residents to communicate with their family from the comforts of their room or while outside.

State Veterans' Home Week
Sam said the State Veterans' Home week was moved from June (normally the week of Flag Day) to August 23rd thru the 27th. Sam said the week was a huge success to include a carnival and a Disney Day [he referenced photos in the report]. Sam said it was unfortunate that family members could not attend the carnival this year. Sam explained in details of the carnival being split into two (2) separate locations for Social Distancing – one (1) at Arnold Hall as well as one (1) at Eisenhower Hall.

PA Department of Health Annual Survey
Sam said the facility had its annual survey on September 20th thru 23rd and it was the first survey for the home over the past two (2) years. Sam mentioned the home received six (6) tags that are at a low level and one (1) tag the home intends to submit an Informal Dispute Resolution (IDR) for the G-tag.

Sam Dunkle, Commandant (cont.)

Kelly explained the home's Plan of Correction was submitted last week and it was accepted and the home's Date Certain is November 16th. Kelly said the home is working on policy revisions and updates as well as staff training.

Life Safety Survey
Sam said the home received its Life Safety Survey the week after the DOH and the home only received four (4) tags and the Plan of Correction was accepted for the tags. Again, Sam expressed his satisfaction with the survey based on the fact the home hasn't received a Life Survey over the past two (2) years due to the pandemic.

New Community Living Center (CLC) | Skilled Building
Sam said a meeting was held yesterday with the design team and efforts were to finalize the location. Sam said if all goes well the breaking of ground will be late fall of 2022.

Service to the Residents and Staff
Sam mentioned he served as the HVHs Deputy for over eight (8) years; and honored to be assigned as the new Commandant to serve the residents and staff.

Questions, Comments or Concerns for Sam Dunkle, Commandant
Sam said Brian Querry, Centre County, Director of VA requested Kim to report the origin as to where the new admissions are coming from. Sam reported the last forty (40) admissions by county or location are: 1-Bedford County, 13-Blair County, 3-Cambria, 1-Centre, 3-Clearfield, 2-Franklin, 2-Huntindon, 1-Indiana, 1-Philadelphia, 1-Somerset, 1-Union and 1-York.

Sam said the Kim will continue to track the new admissions as requested by Brian and report during the Advisory Council meetings.

Dr. John Reinhardt, Medical Director

Dr. Reinhardt said he has some good news and some bad news. He said the bad news is that the HVH, as well as the hospital and his office – there has been a COVID-19 positive outbreak. Dr. Reinhardt said the good news is the intensity illness and level at the HVH as well as the hospital has been relatively mild. He continued by noting, to date, none of the breakthrough cases at HVH have been severe.

Questions, Comments or Concerns for Dr. Reinhart, Medical Director:
None received.

Review of Council Member Status
Duffy said he has been working diligently with the PA War Veterans Council to receive new council members for the vacant Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), VFW and Jewish War Veteran. He expressed his hopes that the PA War Veterans Council will certify the names that he submitted so they can be forwarded to the Governor's Office.

Old Business:
None received

New Business:
John "Goose" Marin, Catholic War Vets #1691, mentioned a letter was sent to him from William Wright, (tel. 717-314-9463) Department Adjutant of the Catholic War Veterans; stating he [William] attended a State Veterans Commission (SVC) meeting and questions were brought up if our HVH Advisory Council could produce Meeting Minutes and the Agenda(s) via John "Goose" Marin every quarter.

Duffy asked John "Goose" Marin if knows of the intention of the SVC? John said he doesn't know the intention of the SVC or William.

Announcements/ Good or the Council:
None received.

Adjournment
Duffy reminded everyone the next Advisory Council Meeting will be on Thursday, January 20, 2022.

Meeting was adjourned at 1117rs.

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Duffy Hines (Council Present)

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Joseph Patterson, Recorder