

MACV MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 19, 2019

The February meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Council was held on February 19, 2019 at the Marriott-East, Indianapolis. Approximately 39 members were present. (Noted: because we are aware that several did not sign in at the computer. This number is from those who did.) The meeting was called to Order by Chair, Don Hawkins. A prayer was given by Tom Harris and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dave Sassman.

Lisa Wilkins was present to speak about the program at the State House for Military and Veteran's Day. This was the 5th year for the event. The event was started because a lot of veteran issues were not being considered by the Legislature. We can thank Representative Bartlett for creating this day. The Lieutenant Governor spoke this year and there were 43 vendors to explain Veteran services available.

Lisa indicated "it is never not about the money", but veterans are a special interest group. She stated that planning for the event began in August and they have to raise about \$4,500.00 to put on the event. The event is necessary to bring the Veterans' message to the Legislature. She indicated that there is great bipartisan support for Veterans, but money make it difficult. Lisa feels there needs to be a dedicated committee in house to address Veteran issues.

Lisa stated there are several bills being considered. Senate Bill 483 is a bill to fund county service officers through the counties receiving a lump sum from Lottery funds. House Bill 1257 is about the Indiana Department of Veteran's Affairs. The changes are with the Family Relief Fund. Applications will be through the commission and appeals. House Bill 1191 deals with War Memorials of last resort. Some are in great disrepair --- this will be assigned to a Summer Study.

Our special Guest, Dennis Wimer, the new director of the Indiana Department of Veteran's Affairs spoke to the meeting. He indicated that his goal is to restore trust and faith and be a solid partner in the community. He said they have under 30 employees and are in the "listening and learning" mode. He also indicated the Family Relief Fund is still running and gave out 1.2 million this fiscal year.

Committee Reports

Charlie Russell gave the report for the Education and Employment Committee. He reported progress with the goal to provide Ivy Tech with a resource center and believes that there are services we can provide. On April 22, 2019 at 10:30 a.m., Ann O'Conner will be opening the new Veteran Resource Center. There will be free food. The goal will be to overwhelm them with resources as 10% of Ivy Tech students are Veterans. Charlie reminded everyone that Indiana has over 700 National Guard members currently deployed.

Heather Harvey gave the report for the Legislative and Policy Committee. She indicated that they are trying to solidify their agenda for the year and will focus on state level. They are also defining their role. Resources is an issue.

Don reminded all that there are six (6) different committees and to contact Dave Sassman, if you are interested in serving on any. The Steering Committee will meet in March to start planning fresh ideas, how to get new members and to further the organization.

Mayors' Picnic

This year the picnic will be on July 20, 2019 at the Marion County Fairgrounds. The Planning Committee will be meeting soon to begin the process of planning for vendor participation, presentations and getting dignitary participation. If any one knows of any Veteran's bands in Marion County, please let Charlie Russell know. The vendor forms are all on the new website and can be filled out on the website and payment made. If you have any suggestions, please let Don know.

Rachael Sample of CHIP gave a short presentation. She keeps Veteran numbers and manages a large database of Veteran information. She indicated the Indianapolis Veteran Task Force in Marion County has received some national attention for its work on trying to end Veteran homelessness. They want to have no veteran with chronic or long-term homelessness and assist those with disabilities. Homelessness is defined as those who are unsheltered, in emergency shelter or victims of domestic violence in shelters. The goal is to find permanent housing within 90 days. They hope to ID the Veterans who have served active duty, regardless of qualification of service.

Ms. Sample indicated that the challenges of working with the homeless is reduced funding for Veterans and end of priority funding. There is a lack of resources for Veterans who don't qualify for the usual forms of rental assistance. There is a change the transitioning housing model to help address these needs as a community. Implementation of the new models has reduced veteran homelessness and increased the number of veterans moving into permanent housing.

Gordon Smith (formally of the of the Marion County Veteran's Court) has started a 501(3) (c) organization called Community Action of Greater Indianapolis. (CAGI) The mission is to support those who served. They will be doing PTSD Programs for Veterans and First Responders. He is planning a week-long program on April 22-26, 2019 that will be free for Veterans and First Responders. They will also be assisting with case management and opportunities to assists Veterans who have been incarcerated.

Casey Robertson Howe from Salesforce spoke about Pathfinder training at Salesforce. Indianapolis has the 2nd largest Salesforce hub in the nation. They have made a commitment to train 500 Veterans people by 2020. The program was launched in 2018 and is leading to a career path and jobs for Veterans in marketing, technology and customer management. It is also open to military spouses or family. Salesforce partners with DE Lotte who hires about 10% of the graduates from the program. Pathfinder fulfills a need and gives back to the community. It is a great opportunity for Veterans, is free and has no age limit. They will be re-opening applications for their summer program soon. The class requires a 4-month commitment of 7-8 hours a week.

Dave Sassman reported that VFW Post 1587 would be having a fundraiser for Veteran suicide on June 15, 2019. It is called the Veterans' Suicide Awareness Walk. Dave reminded everyone that there are at least 22 veteran suicides every day. He said that 2 years ago, the Post Commander decided to have a walk-through Speedway and raised \$10,000.00. Last year they raised \$12,500.00. This year their goal is \$15,000.00

Larry Patch --- Chaplain of District 11 attended to meet everyone and get his name out in the community.

Paul Norris of the Ken Cooper Post 64 was present, Legislative Chair for the State of Indiana. They donate a lot of money to veterans through gambling.

Pat Cowan - introduced himself. He is the Wayne Township VSO. This is the only township VSO in Marion County.

Paul Norton of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Honor Guard advised they do an average of 28 funerals a week. They are a 501 (3) (c) organization and a professional group. If anyone is interested and a veteran, contact Paul. They will provide training and a uniform.

Mike Clark, Vern Rensling and David Franklin of Rolling Thunder announced the 32nd Annual Ride to the Wall. It is the last ride to Washington, D.C., but there will be state events in the coming years. They stated the cost of putting on the national event was becoming prohibitive along with the traffic congestion the event caused in Washington, D.C

Ken Morgan of the World War II Roundtable invited everyone to the monthly WWII Roundtable at the Knights of Columbus. It is open to all and they have a lot of great speakers coming in.

John from Indy Honor Flight announced the upcoming Honor Flights in April and that they will be 4 flights this year.

Andy Janovitch – Marine Corps for Life. They are having a networking event next week at the Ale Emporium in Carmel.

Bill Moylan - Indy Mobile Vet Unit, (317) 988-6001 gave out his number for those who might want to request the van.

Brian Smith --- VSO officer for Indianapolis, announced that they are trying to be more accessible to veterans and will be scheduling out in the community. They are looking at 2 days a week and Ivy Tech. On April 22, 2019 they will be having a resource fair. Contact vet.indy.gov

Rees Morgan – American Legion, announced that the Indiana winner of the national oratory competition came in 9th in the nation.

Jacob Harkin --- representative for Senator Braun was present for constituent representative. Their office is located at 115 Pennsylvania St, Indianapolis, IN.

Mike Stevens of the Regional Office of Veteran Affairs announced that there is a new appeals modernization process and that his officers are available on the 3rd floor of the Federal Building.

Tabitha Ingram of Voluntary Services of the VAMC, announced that the medical center will be doing Post Deployment Health Assessments on about 300 returning military this weekend.

Ayden Jent – City of Indianapolis, Business and Minorities, reminded everyone that Veterans are classified as minorities for the city and Indiana

Amber Applebee of Homeless Initiative Program will have an event next week at 3908 Meadows Drive, Indianapolis

Bonnie Wooten of the Daughters of the American Revolution announced that on March 29, 2019 (National Vietnam War Veterans' Day) the Caroline Scott Harrison Chapter will be hosting a dedication of 51 memorial bricks to honor Indiana's 51 MIA at 11:30 a.m. on the North Quadrant of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. A reception will follow at the Indiana War Memorial. RSVP **only** if you intend on going to the Reception to Janet Shelton at dj2dd2sh4@hotmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Bonnie K. Wooten
Acting Secretary