

**GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

2650 LaFranier Rd, Traverse City, MI 49686  
Public Services Building

**Thursday, November 29, 2018 @ 8:00 AM**

**BOARD MEETING**

**Minutes**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / MOMENT OF SILENCE / CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Robert "Art" Eisner, Jim Wegener, Neal Horning, Ron Hofmeister, John Block, Jakob Rossi, Michael Roof, Erin Whitney

Absent: LaVern Broughton

Benzie Rep:

Leelanau Rep:

Guests: Reining Liberty Ranch director Becki Bigelow

**CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE**

None

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve – Horning

Seconded – Hofmeister

Approved unanimously

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

## NEW BUSINESS

- A. Roof reported that the Grand Traverse County Veterans Affairs office applied for the 2% grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, approximately \$41,000, to allow office to provide emergency financial assistance to peacetime veterans, establish peer mentor groups, and help fund outreach and advertising for the office to spread awareness of services. Wegener asked if the application is denied, is there funding in the budget available, and Roof stated there is \$50,000 in "Contract Services." Eisner suggested looking into leasing costs for an office vehicle to transport outreach materials, which Roof will gather and present to committee at December meeting.
- B. Roof stated he has already spoken with the 86<sup>th</sup> district court and judges, who are supportive of Roof running the court, and with the Saginaw VA Medical Center to ask the VA to pay for local treatment instead of requiring veterans to travel to Battle Creek or Kalamazoo, and Saginaw wants estimates of cost. Rossi asked if the director's estimation of ¼ of his duties transferring to the veterans' court would be ongoing, and Roof said it probably would, but eventually other staff would also be trained and able to take part. Rossi also asked if there would be overlap with the veterans' court and drug and sobriety courts. Eisner stated we wouldn't have numbers until the program had been established for some time, and Roof clarified that the court would catch those veterans who don't qualify for drug or sobriety court. Eisner further clarified that Roof would be seeing more veterans than the justice outreach coordinator, as Roof is able to see veterans with bad conduct discharges, criminal sexual conduct records, etc. Roof requested motion of support from committee of his involvement.

Motion to support director in involvement of veterans' treatment court – Rossi

Seconded – Wegener

Approved unanimously

- C. President of the Veterans Coalition John Lefler has been handling the DAV Transportation Network program by himself. Roof proposed the Grand Traverse County Veterans Affairs office take over answering calls requesting rides to VA appointments and pass distilled information to Lefler daily.

Motion to approve – Rossi

Seconded – Horning

Approved unanimously

- D. Roof met with director from Grand Traverse County Senior Network 11/28. The veterans' affairs office will attend monthly meetings and present talks on a rotating

basis. Their director would also like the Veterans' Affairs office to cover \$2-\$3 fees for senior veterans to attend classes in yoga, meditation, or Reiki. The Veterans' Affairs office may be able to utilize a non-profit the Senior Network uses for senior companions who can assist in transportation to and from local appointments. Roof requested motion of support from committee to explore this proposal, saying if granted support, he will provide additional details at the next meeting.

Motion to support director in exploring Senior Network's proposal – Hofmeister  
Seconded – Wegener  
Approved unanimously

E. 2019 meeting dates

Motion to approve 2019 meeting dates – Rossi  
Seconded – Hofmeister  
Approved unanimously

#### **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Roof clarified for committee that not listed on financial report is \$100,000 that goes into contingency fund each year starting in 2019.

Motion to approve – Horning  
Seconded – Block  
Approved unanimously

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Roof reported that Benzie County is transitioning to having their own county office/hiring a part time VSO. Reining Liberty Ranch's board has approved having a Grand Traverse County VSO weekly from 2-4:30 on Thursdays to assist veterans with claims.

Motion to approve – Horning  
Seconded – Wegener  
Approved unanimously

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM