

Coalition of Veterans Organizations (CVO)

Minutes of May 15

, 2019

1 Call to order: The meeting was called to order by W Mack, Chair, at 7:05 PM at Jesse Brown VA Hospital, Chicago, IL.

- A. Pledge of allegiance recited.
- B. Moment of Silence.
- C. Mission of CVO: The Coalition of Veterans Organizations is a group of individuals and member organizations whose purpose is to educate and advocate for veterans and the public on issues that impact veterans and their families.

2 Approval of Agenda: Motion- Travis/Nazimek. *Addition to Old Business: A. Dick Durbin office and B. Poor People Campaign ~~June~~ 17-20.* Unanimous approval.

3 Approval of Minutes of April 17, 2019 Meeting: deferred as not available.

4 Approval of Financial Report from Treasurer Parry: Motion- Travis/Nazimek. *Discussion: Travis questioned feel of UPS mailbox- response by Parry.* Unanimous approval.

5 Roll Call/Introductions of those present: **See sign in sheet.**

6 CVO Committee Reports:

A. Veterans Affairs Committee: L Nazimek reported that Congress, at the end of the last session, issued a provision in a larger bill that required the VA to initiate a study about feasibility of providing dental care as part of the medical benefits package; however, we have no more information about it. M Weiman DMD addressed positive reasons for dental care within VA Healthcare System including pain control before it becomes problematic.

Discussion: Nelson requested information about HR 96. O'Connor: Veterans for Unification has invited Congressman Lauren Underwood on Veterans Affairs Committee and Linda Chapa LaVia, State of IL Veterans Affairs Director, to hear Mark Weiman at August meeting.

Other veteran-related affairs: Cook County sticker for veterans is in a six month pilot program which has frustrated many veterans. **Discussion:** about parking for veterans only. Difficulty with obtaining "veteran" on license.

Old Business

Poor Peoples Campaign: Bruce Parry stated that CVO should look into working with the Poor Peoples' Campaign to establish a political base. Visits to law makers offices are needed.

Anthony Travis commented on HB 348 and related that McHenry County is being used as a test for eliminating units of Government. The chair asked Travis to work with the Economic Committee and put in writing what is he is asking of CVO and show a case for how this topic fits into the CVO mission statements and specifically how veterans are affected.

New Business

Election results for 6 positions on the CVO Executive Committee: Two Year terms (5): Latanya Gamblin, Russ Hopkins, Christopher LaFayette, Willie Mack, and Bruce Parry. One for 1-year term Mark Weiman.

CANTV: Sylvia Snoden requested CVO to take on one of the monthly Thursdays for a discussion of veterans' information. Mark Weiman had originally stated he would be the lead person on that if CVO chose to go forth. However, he withdrew stating a preference to spend his time on the dental legislation for veterans. CVO will need to pay \$50 per person to be trained to be on the procedures for the show and to operate the phone for a live call in show. Latanya stated she will volunteer and so did Earlene Donnelly. \$100, transcription fee.

Procedures for CVO making donations to other Organizations

Bruce Parry presented the following motion: Any motion that has a fiscal impact on CVO of \$50 or more be referred to either the Executive Committee or the next Membership Meeting before being voted on so it may be seriously considered. This motion may not be overridden in order to circumvent the decision. The motion carried.

CVO Internship Program with the University of Chicago: Chris LaFayette reported that the last meeting of the academic year between CVO and University of Chicago staff for the collaboration on interns to CVO was held May 4, 2019. Mike Wallace, Chris LaFayette, and Kim McGraw helped with "a big event" at the University of Chicago related to community service for U of C students.

Presentation: Firearm Restraining Order Law: Peter Contos and Mark Jones presented their roles in educating the public and veterans about the Firearms Restraining Order Law. This will be a Civil law and not a criminal one. The law is intended mostly for prevention of suicide and to delay escalation of suicidal ideations by veterans during a mental health crisis. Doctors can give a patient a gun lock if the patient asks for one. Suicide Prevention among veterans is a major concern. There is no added protection in the law for domestic violence. A delay of suicidal ideation is the real focus of the law. For additional information one can contact Michelle Sample at JBVAMC. CVO will look into adding a link to the Speak for Safety Illinois group on the CVO website. Persons may contact Peter Contos at info@speakforsafetyill.org. He suggested that one should contact local law enforcement, sheriff Office or Police department to see if they have a protocol for in place to support the FRO in that local community. There is detailed information about the initiative on the website:

www.speakforsafetyill.org.

Announcements

Veteran for Unification will have legislators available at its August 3 meeting to hear Mark Weiman speak on dental health for veterans. Mark mentioned gratitude for one day dental clinics and onetime emergency care for veterans by clinics such as Aspen Dental. However, veterans need more long-term availability of dental care that will require changes in legislation related to the matter. The VA has come up with H. R. 2138 that refers only to expansion of dental care for low income veterans. CVO supports a serious look at the association between lack of proper dental care, opioid addiction and several other health problems, including those that contribute to dental problems as imperative in considering changes in legislation for more complete health care for all veterans.

Fundraising opportunity: Christopher LaFayette said he knows of a night club that will donate their space for CVO fundraising. That matter was referred to the fundraising committee.

The National Women Veterans United has been asked to administer a dental care program for critical dental care, "Veterans Smile". The funds for that program are "soft money" and is open nationally to veterans. For further information one may call Patricia DeVore at 630-664-0245.

Lockhart Foundation: Frank Thompson said he has been working with the Lockhart Foundation in David Rogers' place following David's death. Russ has also been attending programs for veterans there. The Foundation has asked for a support letter from CVO that the Foundation can send to the VA for a grant to coordinate HUD housing vouchers.

Veterans Stand downs: Several stand downs will be held in the Chicago geographic area before the next CVO meeting.

Travis on Facebook Live: Travis reported he will discuss tax on the second Monday of the month from 7:30 to 9 PM.

Humanitarian Activities by Vietnam Veterans: Steve Nelson stated that some Vietnam veterans have returned for Vietnam to remove mines known to have been left and to help build clinics in Vietnam, especially in areas that were affected by Agent Orange.

Adjournment: 9 PM

Next meeting: June 19, 2019 at JBVAMC, Second Floor

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Edwards, Recording Secretary and Francine O'Connor (first page)