

**CITY OF LAKE STEVENS
VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, September 18, 2017
Lake Stevens Community Center
1808 Main Street, Lake Stevens

CALL TO ORDER: 6:58 p.m. by Commissioner Kurt Hilt

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Shawn Frederick, Gayle McCurdy, Stacy LaFlam, Dennis Ives, Melissa Ballou, Richard Russell, Leif Hamar, Cameron Balazic, Kim Daughtry, Kurt Hilt

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Marcus Tageant

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor John Spencer, City Administrator Gene Brazel, and Deputy City Clerk Kathy Pugh

OTHERS: Mike Shindler and Lori Grant, Operation Military Family Cares, Tom Thorleifson, American Legion

Call to Order: Commissioner Hilt called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m. and noted for the record that Commissioner Tageant was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Hilt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Administer Oath of Office: Mayor Spencer administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Leif Hamar.

Open Remarks and Introductions: Commissioner Hilt welcomed everyone and said that he is very excited to see this board formed and taking shape. He commented that this board is different from the City's other boards and commissions in that it will be focused on leveraging services and support both to veterans in the community and also by veterans for the community. He then asked that the commissioners introduce themselves.

Commissioner Frederick said that he served in the Navy and is experienced in emergency management. He is currently the Region 1 Healthcare Coalition Coordinator.

Commissioner McCurdy served with the U.S. Air Force and has a strong background in security. She would like to see veterans services offered more locally than Seattle or even Everett.

Commissioner LaFlam served with the Marines. She commented Snohomish County Veterans Assistance is not reaching the veterans and wants to improve on this.

Commissioner Ives serves with the Army National Guard in logistics. He has experience with emergency management and encouraged that veterans need to be active in the community.

Commissioner Ballou has not served in the military, but she does work with a nonprofit to provide scholarships to the children of active military members. She would like to see better support of schoolchildren whose parents are in the military.

Commissioner Russell is on active duty in the Coast Guard doing search and rescue. He has training in emergency management, applied suicide prevention and critical management stress skills. He would like to identify veterans in the community to better align them with available benefits.

Commissioner Hamar is serving in the Army National Guard. He believes it is important to bridge the gap as to what benefits are available to veterans and how those benefits can be accessed. It is important that the community understand what veterans can bring to the community utilizing their skills and training.

Commissioner Balazic served with the Air Force. He would like to see the commission be a resource to all veterans, and he is also interested in tackling the homeless issues.

Commissioner Daughtry said he is retired from the Navy. One of his priorities is helping veterans get involved in the community, as he believes they have lots to offer.

Commissioner Hilt said his background is as a federal employee with Health and Human Services, paired with FEMA. Establishing the Veterans Commission has been a passion of his.

Commissioner Hilt referenced the email that was sent to all commissioners advising of the requirement to complete Public Officials Training and stressed that it is very important that everyone do so.

Commissioner Hit noted that Mike Shindler and Lori Grant, who are with Operation Military Family Cares, are here this evening and will be assisting the commission as they move forward.

Action Items:

Election of Officers:

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner McCurdy, seconded by Commissioner Frederick, to elect Commissioner Hamar as Chairperson. On vote the motion carried (10-0-0-1).

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Daughtry, seconded by Commissioner McCurdy, to elect Commissioner Russell as Vice Chairperson. On vote the motion carried (10-0-0-1).

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner McCurdy, seconded by Commissioner Hamar, to elect Commissioner Balazic as Secretary. On vote the motion carried (10-0-0-1).

Establish 2017 Meeting Schedule: There was consensus to schedule regular meetings on the first Monday of each month. Meetings will be held in the Community Center unless otherwise noticed.

Draft Rules of Procedure: Commissioner Hilt introduced the draft Rules of Procedure and said the rules help guide the meeting process. The commission may adopt the rules as presented, or they may choose to take no action at this time. The rules may be amended at a later date if needed.

Under Section 1, Date and Time, there was consensus to hold the meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m., and to include language that the meetings will be held at the Community Center.

In Section II, Organization of the Veterans Commission, Terms of Office, there was consensus to add the sentence, "Appointments shall be as specified in LSMC 2.70.020."

A correction was requested under Section III, Operations and Conducting Business, Quorum, that six commissioners constitute a quorum.

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Daughtry, seconded by Commissioner Ballou, to approve the Rules of Procedure as amended and corrected. On vote the motion carried (10-0-0-1).

Commissioner Daughtry requested that a commissioner contact list including terms of appointment be distributed to all.

Operation Military Family Cares: Commissioner Hilt introduced Mike Shindler and Lori Grant and turned the meeting over to them.

Mr. Shindler reviewed his background, saying that he served in the Navy and that he is now with Operation Military Family Cares (OMFC). This nonprofit was started in 2006 to assist with improving the veteran transition process from military to civilian life. OMFC works with cities, states, and the Institute for Veteran Affairs to assist veterans and their families. Mr. Shindler reviewed some of the services OMFC provides.

Ms. Grant said she has been with OMFC for six to seven years and works to provide technology services to support veterans. She works at the state, county and local levels, and with the Department of Commerce to identify stakeholders important to supporting veterans. One area of concern she has is what will happen at the local level if there is a big draw down of active military personnel.

Mayor Spencer added that the city has a contract with OMFC, to help the commission with developing a scope of work and to then develop a work plan that will assist both the city and the community. He would like to see both veterans and active military members connected with services. He would like everyone to know that Lake Stevens is welcoming to veterans and military families, and he would like to see veterans and active military personnel be community leaders. There are areas and resources in the community that would benefit from the skills and talents of veterans, including the Food Bank, the Family Center and the Senior Center.

One of Mayor Spencer's ideas is that a new Community Food Bank/Family Center could also act as an emergency center if needed. It is important to help determine the multiple ways in which such a facility could be a benefit to the community as a whole and become a dynamic center for all types of services.

Mr. Shindler said he believes in leveraging the veteran talent in the community by utilizing identified and proven best practices. He commented that while there are veterans commissions at both the state and county levels, Lake Stevens is the first city in the state to have a Veterans Commission. Turning to the OMFC Scope of Services, he said this is modeled after the state plan. He said OMFC can help develop a blueprint of how the commission wants to move

forward and suggested the commission identify three top priorities. Once the priorities are identified, a game plan and timeline can be developed.

Mayor Spencer would like to know what services are available for veterans, but not available in Lake Stevens because the city does not have a facility.

Commissioner Russell would like to see goals of ending veteran homelessness, creating a veterans center that would offer resources and include an employment opportunity center, and create an initiative, "Lake Stevens Hires Our Veterans" to leverage the skills and talents of veterans.

Commissioner LaFlam said it is important to include the active military as well.

Commissioner Russell wondered about a veterans memorial park, and Mayor Spencer suggested North Cove Park could be renamed "Lake Stevens Memorial Park" and include veterans, and the Lake Stevens Police and Fire Departments.

Commissioner Daughtry reminded that the American Legion is active and a good resource.

Mr. Shindler suggested the commissioners look at the City of Edmonds' Veterans Memorial, and commented it raised awareness about veterans in the community when it was established.

Mr. Shindler identified the three initiatives he is hearing as (1) veteran homelessness, (2) establishment of some sort of multi-use center, and (3) hiring veteran talent.

Commissioner LaFlam commented it is important to keep mental health as a priority as well.

Commissioner Hilt said he likes the idea of three broad topics as a starting point.

Mr. Shindler said that with three to five identified priorities, he and Ms. Grant can develop a timeline and deliverables. He cited to LIFT as an example, which is similar to UBER, and said if a veteran is driving for LIFT and picks up a passenger who is a veteran, there is an immediate connection and benefit for both the driver and the passenger.

Further discussion ensued and Commissioner Balazic suggested the initiatives be identified as (1) establishing a plan of action to end veteran homelessness, (2) establish a multi-use Veterans Community Center, and (3) Establish a way to leverage veteran talent and encourage employment of veterans in Lake Stevens.

Commissioner Daughtry identified the other nonprofit organizations in Lake Stevens, including the American Legion, Kiwanis and Lyons Club, and said it is important to partner with these organizations, who are also working to address many of the expressed concerns.

Mr. Shindler suggested that once the Veterans Commission has put together its work program, that the other organizations could be invited to provide their input.

Commissioner Hilt added it will be important to leverage funds to accomplish the work plan once it is adopted, and this could be done by establishing a nonprofit corporation.

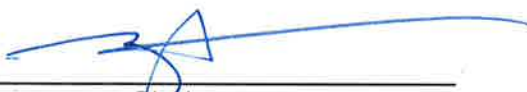
MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Hilt, seconded by Commissioner McCurdy, to approve the following three objectives: 1. Establish a plan to address Veteran homelessness in the city; 2. Support and partner with ongoing efforts for a multi-use community center; and 3. Establish an initiative to leverage veteran talent in Lake Stevens. On vote the motion carried (10-0-0-1).

Tom Thorleifson said he is a veteran and has been with the American Legion for fourteen years. He commented that Lake Stevens is unique because of the number of nonprofit organizations it has coupled with the high number of members who have multiple memberships in these nonprofits. This makes for great partners. Mr. Thorleifson said there is a great need by the veteran community and a facility would be a huge benefit.

Commissioner Ives said that Boy Scout Troop 42 will be doing a flag retirement on October 7 and invited the commissioners to attend.

Adjourn:

Moved by Commissioner Hilt, seconded by Commissioner Daughtry, to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. On vote the motion carried (10-0-0-1).



Leif Hamar, Chairperson



Kathy Pugh, Deputy City Clerk