

Veterans Event Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

11 January 2024

By Tammy Keaton

Present

1. Angela Jameson, Community Engagement and Partnerships Coordinator, Suicide Prevention Program, Central Virginia VA Healthcare System, Massaponax CBOC, VISN6
2. Anthony Barns, Military & Veterans Affairs Director, The office of Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton, 10th District, Virginia
3. Scott Bennett, Board Member, representing Madison County, Encompass Community Supports, formerly known as Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services
4. Steven A. Jones, Sr., Retired Marine Combat Veteran with 20+ Years of Service, former Virginia Department of Corrections Veterans Coordinator
5. Elliott Madl, Region 1 SMVF Navigator, Region Ten Community Service Board,
6. MacKenzie Heidelberg, District Coordinator, The office of Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger, 7th District, Virginia,
7. Jennifer Sztalkoper, Ph.D., North Regional Assistant Manager, Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program, Virginia Department of Veterans Services, works with Caleb Johnson,
8. Jim LaGraffe, Executive Director, Encompass Community Supports, formerly known as Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services
9. Tammy Barboza, Director of Communications and Public Relations, Encompass Community Supports, formerly known as Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services
10. Tammy Keaton, Executive Assistant, Encompass Community Supports, formerly known as Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services

Invited: Jeff Say, Manager of Community Engagement, UVA Health Culpeper Medical Center, Tom Pratt, Board Member, representing Orange County, Encompass Community Supports, formerly known as Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services,

Minutes

The meeting began at 10:05 AM.

Jim welcomed Tammy Barboza our Director of Communications and Public Relations to the group and advised that she will be helping with some of the logistics and advertisement for the event.

Breakout Sessions and Exhibitors. Jim shared a document that was put together showing the current suggested breakout topics and hosts, the exhibitor list that had been talked about in past meetings, and where we are with registrations through the website. The group reviewed the document. There was some discussion about Germanna and space for the breakouts and exhibit tables. Tammy B. assured the group there is ample space along the back walls of the room for tables. She is happy to coordinate with Germanna from an audio visual perspective, powerpoint presentations. She and Jim have a meeting coming up to do a site visit with an AV vendor January 26th who is good with setting up rooms, laptops, microphones, etc. There was discussion about having three different breakouts at each, having repeat breakouts so groups can switch during the intermittence, and if one takes longer to have it span over an hour and a half.

★ Next Steps for Breakout Sessions and Exhibitors: Jim will have a follow-up chat with Tammy B., check the options he knows of as well, and circle back to Angela about follow-up with her nominations. Tammy K. will send Angela the document.

Pinning Ceremony. Anthony confirmed we are all set on the arrangement of the ceremony however, he is still awaiting confirmation as to if it will be General Rose or the substitute speaker, who hosts the segment. He is also waiting for the confirmation for the band, specifically the funding approval from Sargent Carr, VA National Guard. They have to make sure they are cleared because they come up from Roanoke. Because it's an internal clearing, it is not something we can try to fund to ensure they come. They volunteer their time, and the VA pays for their transportation, but it's about cutting their orders.

How do we find veterans for the pinning? Jim asked how we would know who was being pinned. One of the things Tammy B. will assist with is getting the word out, including the encouragement of having veterans and families sign up for the pinning piece. He asked Anthony if he has any avenues to generate interested parties for pinning as well, and how people know they are eligible. Anthony shared that there is quite a bit of literature available that can be sent out. He can send it to us, from the Vietnam Pinning Ceremony Commemoration. It goes over eligibility and things of that nature. What he has done before is send targeted emails beforehand and then open them up for registration. It can help identify if they are going to have gold star families there, etc. Anthony's office will definitely blast this out and include the pinning portion. advertise. This event will also go on the Vietnam 50th Commemoration page as well, and the website will be linked, about a month before the event.

There was discussion about if there should be a separate registration mechanism for the Pinning. Anthony suggested we could add Vietnam-Era Service Veteran Pinning to the current registration form. Two months out, hit pretty heavy. The event will go on the commemoration page on their calendar site. Jim proposed that we have a separate registration for the pinning ceremony. Anthony added that they have done the pinning ceremony for a quantity of six and some for as many as seventy-five.

Targets: Anthony shared that typically they have targeted retirement communities and centers where there is potential to reach higher populations of veterans. Jim noted that we have programs for seniors within our organization that he will loop in. Scott shared he has sent the information out to all members of his post and approximately 50% of them are Vietnam Vets. He confirmed Madison does not have a Vietnam Veterans of America post.

★ Tammy K. will modify the website for the Pinning registration and add the eligibility criteria. Jim will loop in Senior Programs.

Questions (for the Q&A session). Jim thanked Tom Pratt who successfully arranged to have Sandy Markert, Assistant Director and Administrator, at Fredericksburg Health Care Center facilitate the moderated discussion with questions. He has an action item to have a pre-meeting with her to get acclimated to the structure of the session. He talked about generating the questions ahead of time.

★ If there are suggestions for questions, or if anyone believes specific questions should be included, please email them to Jim and Tammy K.

Opening Remarks (Event). Jim reiterated that Congresswoman Spanberger graciously accepted to do the opening remarks for the event.

Logistics. Tammy B. prepared a logistics cheat sheet for Jim which includes things to think about such as backdrops, flags, lecterns, microphones, signage, etc. (Jim and Tammy B. will take care of this). There was a discussion about flags in the background and MacKenzie will get back to Jim if she comes across anything.

Food. In the morning we'll offer coffee and donuts. For lunch, there was some discussion about prewrapped sandwiches, chips, cookies, and drinks. Jim spoke with Jersey Mike's and will also reach out to a local company. Everyone seemed to agree on this menu.

★ Jim is working on securing a food vendor.

Press Coverage. Tammy B. will be recording some radio spots to be played on the local WJMA 95.3FM and 103.1FM (WJMA) all part of Piedmont Communications in the next couple of weeks. It will be a 60-second ad focused on the event. Tammy B. will create a draft of what will be said during the spot and run it by the group to make sure we don't use any language that should be different.

Monthly TV Show. Angela will join Jim and Tammy B. (as host) for the next Culpeper Media Network segment. These TV spots are on-demand and have received pretty good views from the community.

★ Tammy B. is awaiting dates from Angela that would be good studio choices. Angela is waiting on approval from public affairs.

Social Media. Encompass Community Supports' social media department is crafting ads for the event to push on Facebook.

★ When they are done, Tammy B will share the social media ads with the team so all of the community partners we have within the larger group can also send them out using their social media and e-blast contact groups.

Press Releases. After this meeting, Tammy B. will craft a press release. Scott shared that there is an organization that covers Madison and Rappahannock very well, called MadRapp. They're very good about covering Veterans events, Chuck Jones. Tammy B. made a note of this.

★ Tammy B. will send the copy around.

Volunteers. Jim shared his assumptions that everyone on this call would be attending that day and that he could count on them to help with various logistical tasks that day. Everyone nodded yes. Jim and Tammy B. will develop a chart for the day of things they need to worry about and review it with the group at a future time to sort of assign bodies to the list.

Moderator. For the job of moderator, doing introductions and speaking during intermissions, we're looking for someone who can do that.

★ If anyone is willing or knows someone, please let Jim know if anyone would like to take that role for the day.

Giveaways/Gift. Tammy B inquired about if there was a recommended item in memory of the event. There was some discussion about this and then a coin was recommended. The majority thought that it wasn't necessary, as exhibitors would have giveaways. The vote was, no, not needed.

★ Jim and Tammy B will look into a coin.

Inclement weather plans. Having a rain-check day will be challenging. We may be at the mercy of the school's inclement weather policy.

★ Tammy B will ask them.

Final Remarks

Developing Breakout Session - Angela spoke with John Maxwell about the CVEB. He's in charge of the CVEB in Richmond. He is registered for the event and is happy to speak to this as a breakout session if possible. He had the idea of having a panel if he could get them to commit. He also recommended Sarah Maddox, in charge of the Piedmont Area Veterans Council who can speak to what they are doing in a rural area. Also, John Lesinski who is the Chair of the Virginia Veterans Service Foundation and lives in Warrenton, might be someone who would want to be part of the panel.

★ John Maxwell will work on getting this confirmed and let her know.

Event Postcards. A new order has been placed and they are expected on Jan 18th.

Exhibit Tables. Jennifer spoke with Guy at DVS Benefits, and he is going to have a staff member from the Quantico office available to man a table and speak to the benefits process, aid in attendance, and file disability claims. Yes. Because VVFS and the Resource Specialist are completely different from the Benefits piece, they will need two tables (one for each).

★ Tammy K will make sure there are Exhibit registrations for two tables.

Scott confirmed that the American Legion Post 157 in Madison will also need a table. He inquired if we have received a response from all of the local American Legion Posts and VFWs. Jim has spoken with Lori Malory who is going to start joining the bigger group. Steven gave her a stack of cards and briefed her as well.

★ Tammy K will make sure there is an Exhibit registration for American Legion Post 157.

There are a total of 23 exhibit prospects at this time and there was a question about if there should be any concern for limited space. Tammy B. believes that twenty-three is not too aggressive.

Next Meeting. This group will report back to the larger group at the next meeting scheduled on Tuesday, January 30, at 11 am.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 a.m.