

## KC-FEB Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2020 – 1:30 PM (Thursday)

Location – Kansas City VA Medical Center, Hall of Heroes, 4801 Linwood Blvd, Kansas City, MO 64128

ITEM	<u>DISCUSSION</u>	<u>ACTION/ASSIGNMENT</u> <u>/POC</u> If/As Applicable
Opening / Introductions		Melissa Jacobson
Attendees	<p><u>In person</u></p> <p>1. Melissa Jacobson (Chairperson)</p> <p>2. Vernon Stewart (Vice Chair)</p> <p>3. Larry Hisle</p> <p>4. John Cleveland</p> <p>5. Shawn Moore</p> <p>6. Diana McCoy</p> <p>7. Ryan Martin</p> <p>8. Michael Ciliege</p> <p>9. Jeffrey Perfield</p> <p>10. Vanessa Thomson (scribe)</p> <p>11. Dean Scott</p> <p>12. Arian Gilyot</p> <p>13. Jonni Christian</p> <p>14. Helen</p> <p><u>Via teleconference</u></p> <p>1. Dennis Branson</p> <p>2. Jose Torres</p> <p>3. Dave Stepp</p> <p>4. Daniel Harper</p> <p>5. Heather Mayo</p>	N/A
<b>GUEST SPEAKER</b>		
Rear Admiral Jeffrey R. Penfield, USN (RET.), Chair of Greater Kansas City Friends of Fisher House	<p>Jeffrey Penfield (USN Ret) is on the board to raise money for a new, 16-suite, 14,000 square foot Fisher House in Kansas City that will serve families of veterans eligible to receive health care from the Kansas City VA. For more than 25 years, the Fisher House program has provided free lodging for more than 335,000 families of patients receiving medical care at major VA and Department of Defense hospitals. On any given night, up to 1,000 families can be staying at a Fisher House, allowing them to be close to their loved one during a medical crisis and to focus on what's important—the healing process. The Kansas City Fisher House will add up to 6,000 nights of lodging per year.</p> <p>The Greater KC friends of Fisher House is the 35th community group associated with the Fisher House which is a foundation that is a 4-star national charity HQ in Rockville, MD. \$55M is raised per year and \$50M spent per year. Fisher Houses are built with architects and designers, built independently to the quality they want. After they are built, they are given to the VA and it becomes a federal building. All “friends” groups do better than Fisher Houses without one, because they are an asset that the building manager can use.</p> <p>The Greater KC Friends of Fisher House is a 501(c)(3) organization in MO, and the board is 80% manned. They have 3 objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spread the word about this tremendous resource; both to the community who would want to support but also to the deserving veteran who's family may need this home away from home (around a 50-mile radius).</li> <li>2. Fundraise to support both the construction and sustainment of the House;</li> </ol>	<p><a href="https://www.kcfisherhouse.org/">https://www.kcfisherhouse.org/</a></p>

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	<p>3. Lay the foundation for an enduring relationship between our Fisher House and the local community — critical to ensure our veteran’s families receive the love and support they deserve while staying at the House.</p> <p>Regarding fundraising, they plan to raise about \$7M, which is half needed to build the house. They can fulfill last minute needs (\$150-200K per year) to sustain house. Regarding the local community relationship, they plan to have a book of resources the house manager can reach out to for help (for example, landscaper).</p> <p>The board is currently looking for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Someone who has experience fundraising (development officer with thick rolodex with locals),</li> <li>2. Community relations person (using local radio, but need word to VFW and legions to get more word out beyond just radio),</li> <li>3. Looking to build volunteer list and looking to get it enclosed by June to work on inside. It’s the Ronald McDonald house, but for veterans.</li> </ol> <p>Since they are built to standard, not taking construction-in-kind. So if it’s Ethan Allen that’s damaged, must replace with same. To replace with federal funding might take forever, so faster to get remodeled with Fisher House friends.</p> <p>Shawn Moore commented that Caregivers on the Homefront serves members that may be at a Fisher House sometime. They are veteran-centric, but it is harder when explaining supporting families. When outreaching, speak to specific family groups since vets don’t tell families what is available for them, so they use Caregivers on the Homefront (partners with Dole fellow association) to get info. She will contact Jeffrey Penfield to be a resource.</p>	
<b>OLD/NEW BUSINESS</b>		
1. Future Meetings / Meeting Locations Needed	<p>KC FEB Veterans Affairs Committee meetings will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month from 1:30-3:00pm. They can be held at the KC VA Medical Center every month in 2020 except for April and October, so please notify Melissa if your organization can host a meeting. Jonni mentioned the DOT can host April, at 901 Locust.</p> <p>Michael Ciliege mentioned wanting to visit a community-based outreach place, like the Honor Annex.</p>	

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2. Guest Speakers Needed	<p>Dean Scott volunteered to be the Guest Speaker Program Coordinator beginning in March. He will get ideas from others in the group for speakers, and coordinate with Melissa Jacobson to let her know what the speaker needs (AV capability, etc).</p> <p>One idea was offered to have a veteran's service officer speak on how to and not to file a VA claim. Another idea is to have a suicide prevention speaker come to speak on tips and tools that people can look for to prevent suicide. 65% of suicide victims report pain (chronic pain and the link to suicide is on further investigation). Another idea is to have a speaker talk on medical cannabis.</p>	Dean Scott
<b>PROGRAM COORDINATOR REPORTS</b>		
a. Discounts & Events	No update.	Michael Ciliege
b. Veteran Benefits	No update.	Jeff Winters/Alan Edmonds
c. Stand Down - <a href="http://kcstanddown.org/">http://kcstanddown.org/</a>	Not present.	Dennis Johnson (Providers) (816) 510-9802 <a href="mailto:DKJ@POBox.com">DKJ@POBox.com</a>
d. Women Veterans	Not present.	Jonni Christian
e. Guest Speaker	Vacant.	
<b>Open Discussion</b>		
Patriot Features	Dennis Branson spoke on Patriot Features which is a 501(c)(3) organization. Dennis is retired Coast Guard and has worked with FEMA for the past 6 years. Patriot Features started out in the hospice space to honor veterans. WWII heroes' stories are coming out and interviews recorded with the veteran history project. In late Aug to early September (victory in Japan day), they are planning an event to honor the 75 <sup>th</sup> recognition of WWII victory in a public way. His vision is to work with the WWI museum and get a major contributor for money to fund the event and be able to distribute recognition awards.	<a href="https://www.patriotfeatures.org/">https://www.patriotfeatures.org/</a>

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Email traffic	Melissa Jacobson said she wants to share about one email a month with the Committee that is veteran-centric, along with the agenda and minutes.	
Veteran engagement	Melissa Jacobson said that at the end of each meeting monthly, she would like to invite everyone to walk around the VA Medical Center and do some veteran engagement; just spending a few minutes to visit and hand out any donations (blankets, etc) if there are any at the time.	
<b>NEXT MEETINGS:</b>	<p><b>Feb 20, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Mar 19, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Apr 16, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>May 21, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Jun 18, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Jul 16, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.</p>	<p><b>Aug 20, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Sep 17, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Oct 15, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Nov 19, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.  <b>Dec 17, 2020 at 1:30pm.</b> Location – Kansas City VA.</p>

**Upcoming dates from prior meeting minute updates and emails:**

- Feb 11, 1230-1600      Greater KC Veteran Career & Transition Fair (3rd annual), Overland Park Convention Center 6000 College Blvd, Overland Park, KS 66211
- Mar 13, 2020          Public Employees Recognition Day Awards, nominations due