New Hampshire Justice Involved Veterans (JIV) Task Force

The mission of JIV is to serve justice involved veterans by promoting and supporting the development of veteran-centered programs throughout the State

Wednesday, February 22, 2017
9:00 – 11:00am, Room 460, DHHS

MINUTES

Dial-in Number: (712) 432-1212 Meeting ID: 288-605-054 Host PIN: 1157

Thank You to Alex Casale for sponsoring our conference call!

In Attendance: Gino Anctil, NH Military OneSource Consultant; Sherry Bisson, Court Clerk, 9th Circuit Court – Nashua; Bobby Broneske, Director, NH State Office of Veterans Services; Edward T. Drury, Military Liaison, Genesis Behavioral Health; Bill Gilding, Director of Alternative Sentencing Programs, Grafton County, NH; John Hattan, Veteran Liaison, Policy, Planning & Training, Division of Child Support Services (DCSS); Shawn Jones, Support Enforcement Officer, DHHS/DCSS, Concord District Office; Ben Kaler, VA – Veterans Experience Office (by phone); Diane Levesque, LICSW, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator, Manchester VA Medical Center; Dan Marcek, Founder & President, Vetflix, Inc.; Tyler McDonald, UNH Law, Veterans Law Society/Veterans’ Law Project/Legal Boots on the Ground; Susan Mead, Community Educator & Outreach Director, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center; Dan Marcek, Founder & President, Vetflix, Inc.; Tyler McDonald, UNH Law, Veterans Law Society/Veterans’ Law Project/Legal Boots on the Ground; Susan Mead, Community Educator & Outreach Director, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center; Jo Moncher, Bureau Chief, Community Based Military Program, DHHS; Jill O'Neill, Court Liaison, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center; Colonel (Ret.) Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General; Terrie Raposo LICSW, Director of Psychological Health, NH Army National Guard; Sharon Sibley, Attorney, DCSS Legal Office; Susan L. Stearns, Deputy Director, NAMI New Hampshire; Lon Weston, North Country Justice Involved Veterans Team (by phone); Ronald R. White, Executive Director, NH Association of Counties; and Daisy Wojewoda, Regional Director of Military & Veterans Services, Easterseals NH, ME & VT

Welcome & Introductions – all present introduced themselves.

I. Approval of Jan 25 Minutes – Shawn Jones motioned to accept the minutes. Ed Drury seconded. Motion carried with amendments; 1) a misspelled reference to Lara Saffo was corrected, and 2) Glenn Kazan from Easterseals was added to the list of names who attended.

II. New Business – Jo Moncher invited COL Perry to provide an update on last night’s State Veterans Advisory Committee meeting which had been attended by 17 Veterans Service organizations. Gov. Sununu and Senator Hassan had both attended and spoke. NOTE: This is a legislatively convened council which meets monthly. Senator Hassan spoke first. Governor Sununu addressed the body without notes, and asked what 1 or 2 actions must occur over the next couple of years which would most assist the NH veteran and service member population, as well as their families.

- All who attended (from JIV) included Bob Broneske, Jo Moncher, Colonel Perry, Daisy Wojewoda, Ben Kaler, et al., stated that the answer to the Governor’s question was answered by many people and did not reveal sufficiently what work was occurring already and did not prioritize that work. The Statement of Commitment that the JIV Task Force signed was not mentioned.
- Current and pending legislation regarding veterans and military members was discussed.
- Talked about what was otherwise happening, Purple Heart license plates, Gold Star plates, etc.
- Congressional Staffers regarding NH Reps and Senators’ committee assignments:
  - Senator Shaheen serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, in addition to other Committee assignments
  - Representative Kuster serves on Agriculture and Veterans Affairs
  - Representative Shea Porter serves on House Armed Services and Workforce Development
  - Senator Hassan serves on Homeland Security and Education
- Back to the Governor’s question – the feeling was that he was basically asking what was unique about NH’s needs. Did we really need a full-service hospital? According to people the Governor had already spoken to, opinions were about fifty percent for and fifty percent against.
• Colonel Perry agreed that the response to the Governor’s question was not coordinated, yet provided an opportunity for some free discussion.

• Daisy Wojewoda stated the questions caught people off guard.

• Bob Broneske stated we needed to get more groups together regarding the Statement of Commitment and send it to the Governor.

• Ron White stated he thought the nature of the forum was part of the issue, but that the Governor’s interest presented a wonderful opportunity to follow up and present a more organized response.

• Ed Drury stated that as Genesis’ Military Liaison, he is often presented with questions that he cannot answer immediately and that much of what he does is assist not only those who need service but service providers themselves in navigating the various service systems. Stated he often has to call people back after researching the subject.

New Business (Gilles Laramee) Jo asked for and was granted a moment of silence for Gilles, who had passed away on February 18. Gilles had been the North Country Regional Director for Toys for Tots and often went into prisons with Pastor Dave Cantor. He had been a Korean War Veteran. Attached please find a link to an obituary for Gilles: <http://www.currentobituary.com/obit/204348>

III. HB 652 Update

• Great Job to JIV Task Force! Jo stated that it had been a two-month whirlwind; and shared many thanks for the legislative leadership from Judge Nadeau, Susan Stearns, Colonel Warren Perry, Lara Saffo, Larry Vogelman, Jill O’Neil, Alex Casale, and Daisy Wojewoda, et al, that everything seemed to be moving forward aptly. Stated that they had had a strong group to testify, with every person’s testimony being critical to the overall message.

• 2/10/2017 Committee Report: Ought to Pass with Amendment #2017-0341h for 02/15/2017 (Vote 18-0: RC)

• Referred to Judiciary 02/15/2017 – Then to full NH House vote and then to Senate. Currently the bill was in the Judiciary Committee.

• See attached bill TEXT: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/lsr_search/billText.aspx?id=632&type=4> Sharon Sibley stated Tim Frazier, DCSS’s Legislative Liaison, had initially testified against the bill due to language regarding veterans’ benefits and child support guidelines. Sharon stated that current language on the bill differed from the bill that had been shared at today’s meeting, specifically the section of the sentence which stated “…and to the extent such benefits are intended to support not only the veteran but also the veteran's family,...” had been deleted.

• Legislative Process – Lessons Learned – During the hearing the question had come up about what the State was doing for other victims of PTSD, for example, rape victims, and why did Veterans deserve special treatment. One answer was that individuals who had suffered traumatically in domestic situations were being served by other State institutions, such as the Mental Health Track.

IV. Tracks, Dockets & Programs – Updates & Discussions

• Nashua Veterans Track - Update – Diane Levesque and Sherry Bisson stated that Nashua hadn’t met in a while, and that the next meeting was with Easterseals on Thursday, March 9. Track had been referred 3 new veterans, and was already serving 8 veterans.
  o Sherry Bisson stated that the Nashua Veterans Track hadn’t met in a few weeks and that it was a relatively quiet time for them. She stated Judge Leary’s presentation at the NH Hospital Rounds had been very well attended and had gone well, but that it had raised the question of how the State can work better together.
  o Susan Stearns brought up the issue that the State’s Involuntary Emergency Admission (IEA) laws were a little antiquated and needed to be looked at.
  o Ron White stated that the State’s Probate Court system was in upheaval; that currently there were a lot of studies about what to do but not a lot of money to do it.
  o Susan Stearns confirmed that a crisis was playing out in the mental health system. Since January of this year through this past Sunday, February 19, when 67 people were on the State’s wait list for emergency psychiatric services. She stated that the Governor, Senator Bradley and Senator Morse were very much aware of these numbers and that the general consensus amongst the service community was in order to better serve the State’s mentally ill population a three-pronged approach must occur:
IV. Tracks, Dockets & Programs – Updates & Discussions (continued)

- Nashua Veterans Track – Update (continued)
  1. State needed more beds, certainly at the State Hospital, but even more in the communities
  2. A State-wide Mobile Response Unit or Units was/were needed

Susan encouraged meeting attendees to follow NAMI-NH on Facebook and stated that the Public Policy committee met the second Wednesday of each month and encouraged interested individuals to attend.

- Manchester Veterans Track – Update – currently serving 16 veterans – all going well

- Rockingham Veterans Track – Update – currently serving 2 veterans - scheduled for a meeting the 2nd Friday of the month, i.e., Friday, March 10.

  o Daisy Wojewoda stated that Glenn Kazan had just started receiving the Rockingham Jail list of Veterans. Diane Levesque stated she had called Rockingham Jail regarding the list and the list was being sent to a former VA employee who had passed away several years ago - Jim Hart.

- Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA) – Able to Provide Flag Donation – Jo stated the details regarding the CVMA donating a battery of flags to the Court – costs about $900.00, no small feat.

- 3 Grafton County Veteran Tracks (Lebanon, Littleton & Plymouth) – Update – Bill Gilding stated that a total of 8 veterans were being served by mental health tracks in Grafton with another veteran starting in June.

  Michael Owens, from White River Junction VA, had been helping out a lot. One of Grafton’s big concerns was identifying veterans. He felt a state-wide initiative for law enforcement was needed.

  o Much discussion regarding how to address this issue occurred. On the one hand it was felt JIV needed buy-in from diverse parties, for example, the Judicial Branch as well as Law Enforcement entities. On the other hand, it was also not clear that there was adequate tracking and sharing of justice-involved veterans data.

  o One possible solution was for someone in the Justice First Committee to incorporate the question into their system. Chris Keating and the Judicial Branch were working on Justice First. NOTE: Larry Vogelman, who was not present today’s meeting, had told Jo Moncher that his meeting with Chris Keating had gone well, but that Chris did not think there will be any changes to forms regarding including AtQ language.

  o We must talk to supervising judges; ask Larry Vogelman to talk to Judge Nadeau.

  o Diane Levesque stated we should talk to Judge Kelly, or better to ask both him and Judge Nadeau, with Judge King being asked as well. Talking to judges on the Circuit Court level was felt to be the most effective.

  o The issue was not only about asking the question, but getting data about the answer. We need to be able to get data from the court and for the Court to be able to provide it.

  o We also must identify issues of cost effectiveness and the recidivism rate. For example, data provided by the mental health tracks has been very helpful.

  o This sort of work falls to liaisons that also have a strong relationship to the jails. Someone who is not in jail makes for savings.

  o Next steps: 1) Reach out to President of the New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police, Chief Glen Droulet, and 2) New Hampshire Sheriff’s Association. The question was asked if Ron White could contact them to set up one-to-ones with Glen Droulet and his NHSA counterpart. He would suggest - as a selling point - that knowing a veteran’s status can provide access to better service and also can represent cost savings to the system and community.

  o Jill O’Neill and Sherry Bisson will talk to Judge Leary about a possible conversation with Judge Kelly

  o Diane Levesque stated she would like to attend the meeting with Ron White.
IV. Tracks, Dockets & Programs – Updates & Discussions (continued)

- 3 Grafton Country Veteran Tracks (Lebanon, Littleton & Plymouth) – Update (continued)
  - Another person who might be a good advocate/presenter of Ask the Question is Stephanie M. Higgs who was the manager of the AtQ Campaign.
  - Next ask was where does the information from Ask-the-Question go. Diane Levesque stated it doesn’t necessarily have to go to anywhere, other than giving the veteran a brochure; that you just want to start the conversation.
  - We need recidivism data. Need to be able to check criminal records one to five years down the road. Diane Levesque thought we already had this.
  - It was mentioned there had been an article in the Business NH magazine that had been good.
  - Ed Drury stated that his research on how other states addressed the issues of veterans in rural districts was moving forward and that he hoped to be able to present something at the March meeting.
  - To Do List:
    1. Ron to talk to NHACP and the NHS
    2. Daisy – verify data sources within Nashua Superior Court
    3. Sherry – talk to Judge Leary
  - Ron White stated that the jails have data, but that it was a question of getting at it. The Courts had the same issue. He stated that the JIV Task Force needed a data subcommittee. Alex Casale was suggested for the committee as well as Jill O’Neill and Dora Levine. He also warned against recidivism being loosely defined. He stated that the definition we use must be easily interpreted by an individual. He asked us to be cautious and stated that we needed a specific identifier.

- Potential Coos County Veterans Track – Drug Court Grant - (Alex will write grant) – Lon Weston stated that the Coos Committee who supported a Coos County Veterans Track had met, and that they were considering forming a nonprofit. Someone suggested that they reach out to Michael Owens, who did Veterans Justice Outreach out of White River Junction. Alex Casale continued to work on the Grant.

- Possible Interest in Merrimack County Superior Court - (WAIT until March....) Topic tabled until March.

V. Division of Child Support Services

John Hattan stated that Child Support continued to work on a shared database.

VI. JIV Video – Update

Dan Marcek

Interview with Nashua Track and family will be a major part of video. Video might be ready for next meeting.

VII. Thank You & Closing Remarks

- Ed Drury stated again that he hopes to share his research about how other states are addressing the problems of rural-based Veterans and military members
- He and Larry Vogelman were hoping to sponsor a Veterans’ Family Law Clinic at the end of March
- Saturday, April 1, 2017, the fifth and final Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans will be convened at Alvirne High School at 200 Derry Road in Hudson NH from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Anyone interested in attending should call 402.1584.
- Why is our work so important? Just remember that NH continues to deploy people. 75 or 80 military members just got back. Initially, they will be okay but as time progresses, some of them may have a hard time. Remember, NH is a small state where everyone knows everyone; our loop is smaller. NH is first in a lot of different ways, so let’s work to make that first positive.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 22, 9:00 – 11:00 AM, Room 460, DHHS - Brown Building