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, July 26, 2017
9:00 – 11:00am, Room 460, DHHS

MINUTES (Draft)

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: Sherry Bisson, Court Clerk, 9th Circuit Court - Nashua; John Hattan, Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) Veterans Liaison; Shawn Jones, Child Support Officer, Concord District Office DCSS; Dora Lavigne, Unit Manager, Merrimack County Department of Corrections; Diane Levesque, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator, Manchester Veterans Administration Medical Center; Dan Marcek, President, Vetflix, Inc.; Susan Mead, Community Education & Outreach Director, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center; Philip Meher, LCMHC, Readjustment Counseling Therapist, NH Army Guard/Manchester Vet Center; Jo Moncher, Bureau Chief, Military Programs, NH Department of Health & Human Services; Deanna Monroe, MS, CAMT, Military Liaison/Care Coordinator, Easterseals NH; Tony Paradiso, Veteran Advocate, Commission on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General, NH Adjutant General’s Department; Terrie Raposo, Director of Psychological Health, NH Army National Guard; Sharon Sibley, Attorney I, DCSS Legal Office; Susan Stearns, Deputy Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness-NH (NAMI-NH); Larry Vogelman, Director, Legal Boots on the Ground/Veterans Law Project, Ron White, Executive Director, NH Association of Counties, and; Daisy Wojewoda, M.S., Regional Director of Military & Veterans Services, Easterseals NH.

I. Welcome & Introductions – all in attendance introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes – Thank you to John Hattan from Child Support Services! Daisy Wojewoda moved to accept the minutes. Dora Lavigne seconded. Motion carried.

III. NH Highlighted at Department of Defense, Central VA & U.S. DHHS Meeting on….

Preventing Suicides Among At Risk Veterans Not in VHA Care

Jo briefed those present on her attendance of the above-listed event; stated she had presented on “Ask the Question” outreach to the federal attendees. She shared that DoD leadership commented that the NH “Ask the Question” campaign was a good model for suicide prevention, meaning that we are all “Gatekeepers” for suicide prevention.

- Dan Marcek asked what was shared from the Texas attendees. Jo stated that Texas presented on recent suicide prevention legislation, and the partnerships that were created regarding that work.

IV. NH “Leadership Entity” Update – 3 Possible Options Moving Forward….  

1. Establishment of a Commissioner and Dept. of Military & Veterans Services
2. Enhancement of NH State Office of Veterans Services
3. Creation of the Office of Military & Veterans Services within the NH Adjutant General’s Department

- Daisy Wojewoda wanted the Governor to know that the recommendations brought to him were not necessarily reflective of all 50 stakeholders who went to the meeting that day; that it was a reflection of the Military Leadership Team.
- Warren Perry stated that the State must start this process somewhere; that the Governor had asked the Military Leadership Team to make the recommendations and that is what the Leadership Team had
done. He stated that the Governor must socialize this process within the State and that would allow changes to be made.

- Ron White made the point that we still have to go through the Legislative Process.
- Mr. Perry stated he doesn’t think that what happens due to these recommendations is going to change what is currently happening at JIV Task Force meetings.
- Dan Marcek said we may be soft selling this; that what Jo and the JIV Task Force are currently doing may change.
- Daisy said we still must advocate for what we want. Wants people to know the Military Leadership Team does not represent the 100 people who were part of the planning process. Daisy says everyone should be encouraged to express their opinions.
- Warren Perry reminded all that we will socialize this work.

V. Governor Signed HB 652 on June 28 – Congratulations to JIV Task Force!

A very special thank you to the JIV Legislative Team! – Jo Moncher thanked everyone who participated in the process, for example, Warren Perry, Susan Stearns, Larry Vogelman, Lara Saffo, Daisy Wojewoda and Alex Casale. Susan Stearns thanked Jo Moncher for her efforts in shepherding the bill to a positive solution.

VI. JIV Facilitation/Leadership Changes – January 1, 2018

- Jo Moncher has served as the JIV Facilitator for the past 4 ½ years. She will be stepping down as JIV Facilitator as of January 1, 2018
- JIV will begin to discuss possible leadership changes, as well as focus, scheduling and other transition changes.
- This discussion will continue throughout the remainder of the year
- Jo stated that her role in the Department is to help develop, facilitate, and support various committees/projects within the State in support of military; she will be working on some new projects within the Department.
- Larry Vogelman asked Jo to share some of her JIV responsibilities.
- Jo stated what she does as JIV Task Force facilitator has evolved and changed over the years. Some of the JIV has included:
  - First year worked closely with SAMSHA on learning about justice involved veterans; worked with NH Judicial Branch on establishing partnership; and secured permission from NH Judicial Branch that Nashua would be first Veterans Track.
  - Second year worked on a 300 person conference at Grappone Conference Center.
  - Third year, provided support to new Veteran Tracks across State.
  - Leadership transition discussion included various options: One possible option is to align JIV work with the Judicial System. Alex Casale has agreed (in a prior conversation) to discuss that with Judge Nadeau later this week.
  - Jo invited members to look at the DHHS webpage that includes JIV work. She stated that there is a lot of info on the site and it might provide ideas. Is the role of JIV to support continued tracks? Perhaps JIV meets every other month or quarterly.

- Larry Vogelman asked again what the JIV Task Force facilitator does. To which Jo responded that she reviews and sends out minutes, drafts an agenda, collects input from committee members (by reviewing various emails throughout the month) and ensures that this input is included on the agenda as appropriate. She works to keep people in the loop.
- Ron White anticipates that the mission of what we do may change. Initial push with this group was to reach out to all veterans regarding a broader mission, not only JIV veterans. With the facilitator gone, we may lose that global connection.
• Susan Stearns respectfully disagreed. Stated that the initial reach out from the JIV Task Force had been to Judge Nadeau because the Courts needed to have Veterans Tracks. She stated that we started asking at the beginning for the courts to own this work and this would be a coup as it would mean the court was getting even more involved.

• Larry Vogelman states having the courts take over the JIV Task Force would be at best cumbersome for the Courts. Stated current JIV task force serves a much broader swath of stakeholders.

• Sharon Sibley stated that she has concerns about the Veterans Track not being able to serve child support Justice-involved Veterans whose hearings are in Family Division court, not Superior Court.

• Warren Perry stated that if a system fails due to one person or point, we don’t have a resilient system. Need to discuss how the system can be resilient. Stated at present we have a good system, but if it goes to court, must make certain to make sure a broad band of veterans are served. JIV is not going to go away.

• Jo offered to share a message with Judge Nadeau for possible guidance.

• Ron White says this group has evolved way beyond being a JIV Task Force and that a like-minded network of individuals who are concerned about veterans has been established.

• Sherry Bisson stated that if the Court takes over it will focus on Court issues, and the question becomes what about all the other stuff the group does.

• Larry Vogelman stated a lot of what the Task Force does cannot be addressed until the Leadership Entity question has been resolved.

• Susan Stearns stated that it would be good to have a family member who participated in this work. Someone with lived experience.

• Daisy stated the organization’s success is based on our ability to blend JIV with the service community. Our message going forward is that we must include both public and private stakeholders in pursuit of a common goal to serve the needs veterans and service member and their families.

VII. Justice for All – Premiere at Red River Theatre, Concord

• Overview & Update

Dan Marcek observed that there are a lot of people in NH and organizations who are engaged with Veterans issues. Asked about how do we talk about the myriad issues facing veterans? One suggested topic was “Justice for All”; another might be “It’s Not All About Problems” (he felt there was sometimes too much focus on problems); and that any dialogue about veterans must include successes. The group agreed. Dan hopes that the MyVA Engagement Board begin to own this dialogue, and that it must be relevant to NH.

Second point is the Justice for All film. Not desire for a solo premiere, but have six premieres. Dan suggests doing an event in October. Maybe need to get a little ahead of it. Get all six premieres done before Veterans Day. Larry Vogelman states that he feels that there is a perception that all veterans are damaged goods. Warren Perry states that the veteran service providers are part of this perception.

• Finalize Date: Tuesday, Sept 19 chosen as this was a date at which the Adjutant General (TAG) was available.

• Finalize Times: 5:30 – 7:30 pm (Plus 1 hour Set Up Time) 5:00 to 5:30 registration – information gathering.

• Cost $540

• Sponsored by: Nixon, Vogelman, Barry, Slawsky & Simoneau (courtesy of Larry Vogelman, Legal Boots on the Ground!)

• Deanna Monroe will reach out to Mr. and Mrs. Kirby, the primary Veteran featured in the film and his wife; though it doesn’t have to be them.

• Sherri Bisson says Judge Leary will be a panelist.

• Larry Vogelman suggested that the keynote be the movie.
If the Governor will be there, he can speak but the hope is the emphasis will be the film.

Diane Levesque said please recognize Judge Coughlin and Judge Murphy.

Tony Paradiso says the moderator must be able to tee up the film to set up the conversation afterwards.

Dan Marcek also asked that context setting must occur before the film.

Group agreed that the moderator of the panel discussion would be Larry Vogelman with the emcee being Jo Moncher.

Diane Levesque states she can get veterans to appear.

One suggestion is for Seth Gahr. Sherry Bission suggested also getting a prosecutor, for instance, Lara Saffo.

Group decided that the five panelists would hopefully be:

1. & 2. The Kirbys (back-up Diane Levesque’s veterans)
2. Seth Gahr; (back-up Joe Tessier, Lara Saffo)
3. Diane Levesque
4. Judge Leary (back-up, Judge Coughlin). Jo will check with Trooper Gahr. Dan will confirm date and times.

DRAFT Format:
1) Registration & (1-3) Resource Tables – half hour before show time
2) 5 Minutes: Welcome, Thank You’s & Program Overview
3) 10 – 20 Minutes: Keynote Message (including successes & challenges) – maybe the Governor, the TAG, somebody from the program. If you want Adjutant General to be there, time to ask is now.

4) 17 Minute Video
5) 45 – 60 Minutes: Panelist Presentation & Discussion – should be four people with strategic messages
6) Emcee closes it out. Governor probably won’t give us a yes – until closer to the event. Invite TAG and Justice Leary as a panelist, and Judge Nadeau as a dignitary but not as a speaker.

Tony Paradiso asked the question about what the end goal is? Want audience to engage? Want to hear what the audience has to say? Panel responds to questions.

Possible Messages to Share:
1. Snapshot of NH Veteran Population; JIV Overview; 4 ½ year JIV Journey; Purpose & Accomplishments of JIV Task Force; JIV National & Local Stats; NH Interest (i.e. filled up 300 person conference in 2 weeks); Significant Media Interest Over Years; 5 Veteran Tracks; Serving over 60 NH JIV Clients in past 4 years; Passed Legislation – HB 652.

Need Brochure to Support Video – Dan, Jo and JIV Team need to work on this.
VIII. Fundraising – Premiere Event in Concord and Statewide Events

- Need Community Contacts (for each community event)
- Idea that we can raise funds to allow Vetflix to recoup costs and also to support the Veterans Law Project’s (VLP’s) mission – are there any of us who can help? Larry Vogelman says he can help. John Hattan suggested that VLP could have a table at event with literature on it. Warren Perry stated that we were obligated to tell the Governor about any fundraising that might occur. Group wanted to emphasize that this event was not a fundraiser, and that there should be no fundraising asks in front of people. Committee wanted us to stay focused on the event. Jo will reach out to Governor’s office about attendance.

IX. Community Clergy Training Program

Neither Ed Drury nor Ben Kaler was available for comment. Dan Marcek stated he had attended one of the events and that it had assisted him in framing appropriate questions in regard to service members and their families.

X. Division of Child Support Services (DCSS)

Shawn Jones stated he had recently attended a Military Culture Training at the Health and Human Services auditorium on Hazen Drive and that it had been very helpful. Shawn stated the training would be beneficial to those who are new to military culture and recommended others attend and participate. There was a large presence of service providers there as well as other DHHS workers.

XI. JIV Intern – Data Collection & Analysis – Still Looking

XII. Tracks, Dockets & Programs – Updates & Discussions

- Nashua Veterans Track - Update – Diane Levesque stated she had spoken with Judge Coughlin and he is interested in meeting with Judge Spieth about the Merrimack Superior Court Veterans Track. Diane stated that Joe Murphy would be the liaison for this happening.
- Manchester Veterans Track – Update
- Rockingham Veterans Track - Update
- 3 Grafton Country Veteran Tracks (Lebanon, Littleton & Plymouth) - Update
- Potential Coos County Veterans Track – Will Wait for Drug Court to Be Established

XIII. Other Updates, Events or Opportunities

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 23, 9:00 – 11:00am, DHHS, 129 Pleasant Street, Concord