GINO J. MERLI VETERANS' CENTER
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
February 17, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was held vis telephone conference.
Lisa Solarczyk, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Secretary Ron Faust recorded roll call and attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS

Lisa Solarczyk, President - Marine Corps League
Ronald Faust, Secretary - AMVETS
Robert Cudworth - Military Officers Association of America (Excused)
Robert Smith - Military Order of the Purple Heart (Excused)
Russell Canevari - Veterans of Foreign Wars (Excused)
William Smith - The American Legion (Excused)
Richard Green - Blinded Veterans Association
Joe Sylvester - Disabled American Veterans
Lisa Baker - PA State Senate
Karen Boback - PA House of Representatives
Tim Cleveland - PSACDVA
Lisa Kaye - PSACDVA
Bernard "Bernie" McDonald - AMVETS
Wilson Miller - GJMVC Resident Representative (Excused)

DMVA

Major General Mark J. Schindler - Adjutant *General, Pennsylvania (Excused)*
Maureen Weigl, BG - *Deputy Adjutant General, VA (Excused)*
Travis Davis – Executive Director, Long-Term Care
Barbara Raymond – Director, Bureau of Veterans' Homes
James Miller - GJMVC Commandant
Kathleen Ambrose - GJMVC Deputy Commandant

OTHERS PRESENT / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Lynn O'Day, Recorder
Ashley Adams, CRNP
Sara Butler, Admissions
Carol Sweeney, Representative Karen Boback's office
Jan McAllister, Volunteers

MOMENT OF SILENCE

- Keith Martin who played a major role in the opening of Gino Merli Veterans' Center as the Master of Ceremonies, passed away.

MEMBER STATUS

- Today will be the last meeting for Ron Faust, Secretary. He has retired his position and his seat will be replaced with Bernard "Bernie" McDonald.

- Bernard McDonald was nominated and has accepted to take over the position of Secretary.
- There are 2 openings: Jewish War Veterans and Catholic War Veterans

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Previous minutes accepted as written.
- Lisa Baker added that she would like to introduce a bill that would allow the council to add a family member to the board. This is regarding Sam Greenberg's son wanting to be a part of the Advisory Board.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LONG-TERM CARE

- Travis Davis thanked everyone for the time they give to the advisory board.
- Covid swept through the homes staff. As of today, we have 2 positive residents and 23 positive staff
- Three of our homes had federal surveys
- As of February 9, the bureau has a waitlist of 360 veterans and spouses.
- We have a total census of 900 and a 60% occupancy rate. Our problem isn't filling the beds, it's staffing.
- We are at 85% for staff vaccine rates and we are at 98% for the residents
- Roofing project continues but has been suspended for 2 months and will pick back up after March.
- Medicaid budget increased 911 million. We are going to have 292 positions which will get us to 4.1
- We will have over 500 vaccines. We are working with OA to think of ways to maintain and hire staff.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF VETERANS' HOMES

- Barbara Raymond reported that there are no cases of influenza or any other infectious diseases.
- There is construction being done on our Erie home.
- We are anticipating a new building in Hollidaysburg
- Our staffing is challenging but we are adding to our census
- The DON from Southwest has taken the Nursing Administrator position and Andrew will be filling in there while Maria Coles will be filling in here at Gino.

REPORT OF THE COMMANDANT

- James Miller that we are experiencing small changes but that there should be no disruptions
- Our vaccination rate here at Gino is 99% of our residents and 100% of our staff. Right now there is confusion on what is considered fully vaccinated
- Department of Health was here for their annual survey, and we had 3 deficiencies. Since then, they have come back and cleared us.
- Visitation and leave for our residents is ongoing
- The commandant will continue to send out weekly letters to update family

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

- Ashley Adams reported for Dr. Kazmierski. She stated that January we had a 2nd wave of the virus infections with 44 residents. 4 received monoclonal antibodies.
- We currently have no positive residents, our last being on January 25.
- We currently have 1 positive staff member as of February 7

REPORT OF THE ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR

- We are once again accepting admissions. We have had 5 admissions, 3 more are scheduled and 1 being received today.
- We have 15 deaths since our last meeting.
- There are 60 on our waiting list, 30 veterans and 30 spouses
- We continue admissions committee meetings on a weekly basis

THE GOOD OF THE COUNCIL

- Lisa Solarczyk asked where we were at with the Mission BBQ.
    - Jan stated that she reached out to them, and they told her that they are not interested. They stated that they want to help more needy veterans, not nursing homes
- Karen Boback that on March 31, the Governor's Commission on Women will be celebrating 21 women veterans at the state museum. She was proud to announce that Janice Gavern, has been chosen and will be recognized.
- Lisa Kaye stated that she has attended the ceremony for the last 4 or 5 years and that she serves as chair on the women's committee. They are looking to do good things for our women veterans.
- Ron Faust welcomed his replacement, Bernard "Bernie" McDonald who is the Commander of the AMVETS.
- Jim Miller thanked Ron Faust for his service o the council and the veterans and staff at Gino Merli.
- "Bernie McDonald accepted the role of secretary and thanked everyone for the warm welcome. He did state that things will be a bit slow until he learns the ropes.
- Kathleen Ambrose announced that the Scranton FOP and Dunmore FOP will be having a golf tournament to support Gino Merli's Resident Welfare Fund. It will be held on June 6 at mount Airy. There are 200 slots available, and we will have 2 sessions, 1 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was announced: May 19, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.