

STATE OF WASHINGTON

VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*PO BOX 41150*  *Olympia, Washington 98504-1150*  *360-725-2167*

**Meeting Minutes**

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| **Meeting attended by** | Larry Alcantara, Bob Wallace, Charles Wharton, Rufus Hoffer, Mike Mickunas, Jim Sims, Bob Garrison, Jerry Fugich, Jerry Wilkins, Linh Thai, Jerry Wilkins, Erin Mulka, Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, David Puente & Liza Narciso |
| **Date**  | December 2, 2020 |
| **Time** | 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm |
| **Location** | Zoom |
| **Call to Order & Roll Call** | Larry Alcantara |
| **Minutes** | **Year End Review**January 2019 – VAAC met in person to conduct strategic planning as well as set time, location for town hall meetings for the year. Due to COVID-19, face to face meeting was cancelled. VAAC conducted a Survey Monkey to solicit topics for Virtual Town Hall Meeting. The topics that that was suggested are:* **Benefits (Compensation)**
* **Access to US DVA Health Care System – Hospital, CBOC, Vet Center, Mission Act (VA Referral), Etc.**
* **VA Appeals for Denied Disability Benefits**
* **Other VA Benefits – Pension, Aid and Attendance, Burial, Education, Vocational Rehab, Extended Care**
* **State Benefits**

**Emblem Fund –** VAAC received various application for the emblem fund, committee members reviewed applications received and distributed funds to various organizations. Michelle Love, Jerry Wilkins, Bob Wallace personally delivered checks.**Outstanding Service to Veterans Award and Legislator of the Year Award for 2020** – Committee met and reviewed applications received and selected winners. Due to current pandemic, award winners were given the information on the Auburn Veterans Day Parade that host the yearly award and luncheon on how to participate for the parade. Luncheon was cancelled due to pandemic. Award was personally delivered and VAAC and WDVA hosted a virtual award presentation to acknowledge 2020 Winners.**State Safe Start Guidelines for Reopening –** Each VAAC member solicited recommendations from their respective veterans’ service organization regarding safe start – reopening. Committee members agreed that there is no need for this, each VSO should comply to state, federal, county and city guidelines regarding current status of COVID-19 in their respective communities. Each VSO should be responsible in policing and adhering to the guidelines for COVID-19.Various VSO in the state are closing doors permanently due to loss revenues caused by COVID-19. Some VSO’s have to revert to alternative ways to solicit and fund raise to be able to keep their doors open.**2021 Virtual Town Halls:*** **February 24, 2021 – VA Medical Center/Electronic Health Record**

**VA Puget Sound****Lead: Bob Wallace*** **April 22, 2021 – Mission Act**

**Lead: Jim Sims*** **June 23, 2021 – Topic – TBD**

**Lead: Charles Wharton*** **September 29, 2021 – VA Medical Center – Mann Grandstaff & Walla Walla**

**Lead: Erin Mulka*** **December 8, 2021 –Commander’s Call - TBD**

**NOTE: Each lead is responsible for securing the speaker for the town hall. Liza is responsible for making the flyer, setting the virtual platform** **Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the Committee:*** Nominations for Chair – Bob Wallace nominated by Larry Alcantara – no other nominations from the floor. Votes was taken and Bob was voted unanimously to be the Chair of the VAAC
* Nominations for Vice Chair – Linh Thai nominated Erin Mulka and Jim Sims also voiced that he would like to be considered for the position. Votes were taken and Jim Sims garnered the most votes from members to be chair of the committee (Erin received 4 votes and Jim received 7 votes)
* **Chair – Bob Wallace and Vice Chair – Jim Sims**

**VAAC Strategic Session and WDVA Agency Overview – This will be a joint meeting with the WVAC (Women Veterans Advisory Committee) – to be scheduled late January mid February via ZOOM****State Veterans Homes Liaisons:*** Washington Veterans Home (Port Orchard) – Jim Sims
* Washington Soldiers Home (Orting) – Chuck Wharton
* Walla Walla Veterans Home (Walla Walla) –
* Spokane Veterans Home (Spokane) – Rufus Hoefer

Each VAAC member familiarize themselves with WDVA website as well as VAAC webpage - [www.wdva.wa.gov](http://www.wdva.wa.gov) |
| **Next VAAC Town Hall Virtual Meetings Via Zoom:** | **2021 Virtual Town Halls:*** **February 24, 2021 – VA Medical Center/Electronic Health Record**

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| **Good of the Order** | Next meeting via zoom January 28, 2021 at 2:00 pmJoin Zoom Meeting<https://wdva.zoom.us/j/92750500837?pwd=Y3o0MUVjd3ZYQzQ5SWVEc3haTjJkdz09>Meeting ID: 927 5050 0837Passcode: 446231One tap mobile+12532158782,,92750500837# US (Tacoma) |