

VAVS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
VA MEDICAL CENTER, PORTLAND/VANCOUVER
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Director
Chairman, VAVS Comm.

GAYLE CAUTHERS, for KAY HILT
Chief, Voluntary Service
Deputy Chairperson, VAVS Comm.

FLOSS MAMBOURG
Associate Director of Operations
Co-Chairman, VAVS Committee

1. SCHEDULED MEETING: The VAVS Committee meeting for Portland and Vancouver Division FY 2005 convened on Tuesday, February 1st at 11:00 a.m. in the Portland Auditorium.
2. VA STAFF ATTENDING: VA Medical Center staff attending the meeting was as follows:

Gayle Cauthers, Specialist, Voluntary Service
Julie Guichot, Secretary
3. OPENING OF MEETING: Gayle Cauthers called the Portland and Vancouver combined meeting to order and welcomed all present. Mr. George Ruhberg led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. VAVS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS:

VANCOUVER

Paul Sobka, Chairman of the Vancouver VAVS Executive Committee reported that they would be meeting the first Tuesday of every month. On December 15th, 2004 the Vancouver Executive Committee sponsored another bake sale in Vancouver. Due to quick sales and depletion of items during the last sale, volunteers provided more baked goods for this sale and, consequently, made 40% more money than during the July 2004 sale. Special thanks to Freda Fogle, Marjorie Varner, Irene Shropshire, Betty O'Connor, Marjorie Pritchett, Elsie Harper, Sandy Chapman, Toni Davis, Barbara Parker, and all others who contributed to the sale. Special thanks also goes to John Bruening of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association and Paul Mason of the Forty and Eight. The Forty and Eight donated \$150.00 to the account and the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association donated \$100.00. Paul was just notified that two more checks had come in, but he has not had the opportunity to see them yet. He will acknowledge these donations during our next meeting, but offered his personal thanks in advance. Next Tuesday, February 8th, Kay Hilt, Chief of Voluntary Services will be attending the meeting to review the new donation procedures.

PORTLAND

Nita Lucht gave the report for the Portland VAVS Executive Committee. Nita acknowledged the efforts of the Portland VAVS Executive Committee for their work at the January fundraiser. Due

to illness, many were not able to attend, which placed a heavier workload on those who could attend. The Executive Committee did raised \$944.00 in ice cream sales, \$665.25 in craft sales for a total of \$1,609.25. The next Executive meeting at the Portland VA will be on February 16th at 10:30. There has been a change in meeting place, however, so all members are asked to meet in the workroom before going to the new meeting area.

5. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

Gayle again welcomed everyone to the meeting and indicated that there were many items on the agenda to cover.

There are currently issues with the hospital budget resulting in another hiring freeze. This may actually be good news for our volunteers, as it opens the door to further volunteer. For those who have heard rumors regarding the budget, however, we are aware of current issues.

A) Donations

1. CRD Board:

We have a new Community Resource Development Board (CRD) consisting of people from the executive department, fiscal, administrative office, and others. The board, for the most part, will deal with un-earmarked funds coming into the facility. Additionally, in an attempt to simplify distribution, the General Post Funds have been consolidated from around 18 separate fund categories, to six.

2. Specify need and location.

An ongoing problem will exist, however, if donated funds are generically marked. For example, we recently had a donation marked for “stamps”, which we knew was for a specific program. However, the board knew that Social Work also used stamps, and consequently forwarded the funds to them. In order to ensure your donations are forwarded to the appropriate department and for your specified purpose, please be specific when you make a donation. Rather than specify just “veterans items”, specify “veteran comfort items”, or “slipper socks” – please be specific. You may still make your donations thru the volunteer office and we will ensure it goes to the correct location. In this manner we can also confirm that your donation has been recorded in our data system, thus ensuring your organization gets appropriate credit.

3. New donation guidelines for distribution.

We also have a problem receiving donations that are inappropriate for distribution. Now that both facilities have remodeled workrooms, we need to attempt to keep them looking nice. We must make a better attempt at accepting only those items that we can re-distribute to our veterans. We have created new donation guidelines, which clarifies what we can and cannot accept. Please refer to these guidelines when making donations.

4. Specified donation times – Tuesdays/Fridays, 8:00 am – 2:00 pm.

We would also like to implement the use of specific donation times, so that we can check items coming into the facility. In this manner, we can immediately reject items, such as clothing that is unwashed and/or has holes, magazines that are years old, used personal items, etc. We have decided to accept donations on Tuesdays and Fridays, between the hours of 8:00 am and 2:00 pm at both the Vancouver and Portland facilities. Please call for an appointment if Tuesday/Friday does not work for you.

B) New Volunteer Committees

Voluntary Services currently has around 1000 volunteers on the Portland and Vancouver database. We wish to utilize all of our volunteers, even those who can only volunteer once per month, or even once per year. We feel we can utilize some of these volunteers during fundraisers, holidays, and special events. We are in the process of setting up a fundraising and a special events committee. If anyone is interested please let a staff member in the Voluntary Service office know, so we can develop these committees and apply your creative skills. Some fundraising activities discussed to date are silent auctions, flower sales, bake sales, and cook-offs. We would also like to make better use of our Holidays and special events, such as National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, POW/MIA day, decorating the facility during Christmas, and others. Your creativity and energy will be sincerely appreciated, so please volunteer. We would like to have these committees in place by the end of February. We are also interested in having a summer picnic so that all our volunteers and staff can get together and have a great time.

C) VAVS Recognition Ceremony

Our recognition ceremony has been scheduled for April 12th, at the Monarch Hotel. This is the same location we have used the past few years. Our theme this year is, “Volunteers Light the Way”. Our Christmas party was extremely successful this year. So successful, in fact, that we did not have sufficient room for all those attending, and ended up in fairly cramped quarters within the Vancouver Theater. Our VAVS Recognition ceremony at the Monarch Hotel has always been successful as well as enjoyable. By a raise of hands, nearly everyone present expressed interest in having our Christmas party next year at the Monarch Hotel to accommodate all those attending.

D) Accurate records of Representatives and Deputies appointments.

We have not been receiving some notifications of Rep and Dep changes within organizations. We are attempting to update our records, so please note any changes on the log in sheet. In addition, we are asking you to provide us with copies of your appointment letter from your National Headquarters. If you do not have a letter, please provide us with some kind of notification for our records so that we can include it in our organization files.

E) Food Distribution

We would encourage all volunteers to check with Voluntary Service staff before bringing food to the hospital for patient distribution. Care needs to be taken to ensure that patients

are not given food they may have adverse reaction to. Even items, such as fruit, needs to be cleared through the nurses-station prior to distribution. Patients will eat food they know they should not have, so please take appropriate precautions when distributing food and snack items. All food and snack items must be commercially prepared and individually wrapped.

F) Volunteer Hours

Please do not log into the volunteer database when you come to the VAVS Committee meetings. Again, we remind everyone to use the sign-in sheet. Lunch tickets will be distributed at the end of each meeting. Two hours of volunteer time will be manually input into the data system for all those attending the meetings. We have had some reports of volunteers logging in when they come into the facility for medical appointments. We would also like to remind everyone that you should only log in volunteer hours when you are coming into the facility to volunteer.

G) Parking

There have been some complaints regarding volunteers receiving tickets while parked in patient/visitor parking. At one time volunteers coming on a regular basis were issued parking stickers for their vehicle. It appears we may be returning to this practice. We are working with facility parking on the issue. In the meantime, if you receive a parking ticket, please bring it to the office so we can get the matter resolved for you. The parking stickers seem to be taking care of the problem in Vancouver.

H) National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans – February 13th – 19th

February 13th thru 19th has been set aside nationally to recognize our hospitalized veterans. We will have Girl Scout, Boy Scout, and Campfire groups at both the Vancouver and Portland facilities on the 12th to make Valentine banners and posters to distribute throughout the facilities. We will also have the Trail Blazer dancers, and the Mrs. Oregon Pageant Association at the Portland facility. Both organizations have visited in the past and their visits continue to be appreciated by our hospitalized veterans.

H) Organization Recruitment Fair

There are currently a few veteran organizations using the atrium on a periodic basis to gain easier access to those veterans interested in joining and/or using the services of their organization. We want to make sure all the organizations have the opportunity to participate in this type of recruitment. If you would like a representative or deputy from your organization to participate in the Recruitment Fair during National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans week, please sign up before you leave today. We will have four tables set up in the Atrium in Portland, and two in Vancouver. We predict a good veteran response and look forward to your participation.

I) Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom

Many volunteers have called asking about our current veterans serving in OEF/OIF. We do have some statistics to share with you. Within the Oregon National Guard, 1500 veterans currently serve overseas. Of those, 400 have already returned; one thousand are being deployed overseas, and seven hundred will be returning in March.

Of those who have already returned to the Portland area, 260 have enrolled in the VA and 106 have received care. Of those receiving care, eight are enrolled in the substance abuse program, three in the homeless program, two groups for PTSD treatment, and the rest are being seen in the primary care clinics.

Of the patients being treated at the VISN 20 level, which includes Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, and Northern California, 30% are recovering muscular/skeletal care, 25% digestive care, 19% nervous system care, 13% respiratory care, 30% substance abuse care, 20% Mental Health care, and 16.5% PTSD care.

6. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

- The DAV articulated that the annual drivers safety classes would be held during the month of February and March. If anyone is interested in participating in the DAV program, please contact the DAV or Voluntary Service office.
- One question was voiced about the hiring freeze and the affects this would have on replacing physicians who are leaving. Gayle responded with the information that essential positions will not be affected and veterans will receive the immediate care they need.
- A final question on the timing of VAVS meetings in Vancouver and Portland was expressed. In reply, Gayle indicated that future VAVS meetings in Portland and Vancouver would be held at 11:00 am due to past confusion related to differing times.

7. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Gayle closed the meeting with a little comic relief from a list called “16 things that took me over 50 years to learn”, and “The World’s Easiest Quiz”:

- ✓ Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
- ✓ If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve it’s full potential, that word would be “meetings.”
- ✓ There is a very fine line between “hobby” and “mental illness.”
- ✓ You should not confuse your career with your life.
- ✓ Never lick a steak knife.
- ✓ You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight savings time.
- ✓ You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she’s pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment.
- ✓ There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday. That time is age eleven.
- ✓ The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers.
- ✓ Never be afraid to try something new. Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark. A large group of professionals built the Titanic.

The World’s easiest Quiz:

Q: Which country makes Panama Hats?

A: Panama hats are made in Ecuador.

Q: What is a camel’s hair brush made of?

- A: A camel's hair brush is made of Squirrel fur.
- Q: The Canary Islands in the Pacific are name after what animal?
A: The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after Dogs.
- Q: What was King George VI's first Name?
A: King George VI's name was Albert
- Q: What color is a purple finch?
A: A purple finch is Crimson
- Q: Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
A: Chinese gooseberries come from New Zealand.
- Q: What is the color of the black box in a commercial airplane?
A: The famous "Black Box" in a commercial airliner is Orange

8: BENEDICTION/ADJOURNMENT:

Father Bill then gave the closing Benediction. The next VAVS meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 3rd at 11:00 AM in the Vancouver Theater.

Submitted By:

APPROVED/DISAPPROVED:

Kay Hilt, CTRS,
Chief, Voluntary Service
Deputy Chairperson, VAVS Committee.

Floss Mambourg, RN, MS
Associate Director for Operations
Co-Chairman, VAVS Committee.