

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

IN THE MATTER OF:

RESOLUTION NO. 23-028

INCREASE AND EXPAND VETERANS BENEFITS

WHEREAS, Lewis County provides qualifying Veterans assistance with rent, food and utilities; and

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) passed Resolution 20-142 in April 2020, to establish temporary increases to the assistance provided. The temporary increases ended December 31, 2020, and the rates returned to the following amounts thereafter:

- Utilities assistance: \$450
- Rental assistance: \$750

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has reviewed the attached memo listing recommendations from the Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) to increase and expand Veteran benefits; and

WHEREAS, the VAB has recommended the following Veterans benefits be increased / expanded effective January 1, 2023:

- Utility and gas voucher assistance increased to \$500.
- Rental assistance increased to \$1,000 or 10% of the rent, whichever is lower.
- Eligibility for assistance to include "General Under Honorable Conditions" as long as the Veteran falls under the definition of a Veteran

WHEREAS, it appears to be in the best public interest to increase / expand benefits for Lewis County qualifying Veterans.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the following Veterans benefits shall be increased / expanded effective January 1, 2023:

- Utility and gas voucher assistance increased to \$500.
- Rental assistance increased to \$1,000 or 10% of the rent, whichever is lower.
- Eligibility for assistance expanded to include "General Under Honorable Conditions" as long as the Veteran falls under the definition of a Veteran

DONE IN OPEN SESSION this 24th day of January, 2023.

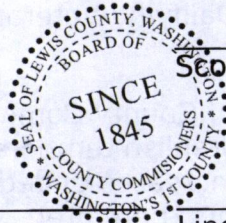
APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Jonathan Meyer, Prosecuting Attorney

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Robert Bradley
By: Robert Bradley,
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Sean D. Swope
Sean D. Swope, Chair

ATTEST:



Scott J. Brummer
Scott J. Brummer, Vice Chair

Rieva Lester
Rieva Lester,
Clerk of the Lewis County Board of
County Commissioners

Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM
Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM, Commissioner

Lewis County Veterans' Advisory Board

Attendance		
✓	Board Members:	Term Expires:
	Kenneth Norwood	
✓	Bill Marshall, Vice-Chair	
✓	George Dodd	6/30/2023
✓	Janice Marshall	
✓	Rico Barrientes	6/30/2023
	Roger Morningstar	

✓	Alternates:	Term Expires:

✓	VRF Staff:	
✓	Heidi Palmer	

✓	Guests:	
	Meja Handlen	
	Comm. Brummer	

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 1030am

Location: Zoom/Veterans Memorial Museum

Welcome/Lunch

Call to Order, Flag Salute, Attendance Quorum present

Agenda (Approval/Changes) Motion – September/2nd – Bill – Passed

April 2022 Minutes (Approval/Changes) Motion - George/2nd - Jan - Passed

Finance Report

Board Discussion Items:

1 – Communications-Message

Nothing to discuss

2 – By-Laws/Policy & Procedures

Nothing to discuss

3 – Jail – Heidi

Heidi saw 0 clients at the jail.

4 – Increase of benefits- Heidi

Heidi talked about a previous conversation the board had in the past about increasing benefit allotments for qualifying Veterans and their families. Rent costs have gone up tremendously along with the cost of food. Currently qualifying Veterans can receive up to \$750 for rent, \$450 for utilities/Food/Gas/Propane, \$1,000 funeral per year. After some discussion there was a motion put in by George Dodd, we increase the rental assistance up to 75% of the rent or up to the max of \$1,000, whichever is the lowest. Rico second the motion. Motion passed. Roger Morningstar made a motion to increase the gas voucher and utility assistance amount to \$500 for the year. Rico second the motion. Motion passed.

5 – Expand Benefit Eligibility - Heidi

Heidi talked to the board about expanding the eligibility of the VRF from just Honorable to those who have a General or General Under Honorable Conditions. There are some reasons individuals may have received a General or General Under Honorable discharge who would not now. After some discussion; Rico made a motion to expand Veteran eligibility to include General Under Honorable Conditions as long as the applicant also falls under the definition of a Veteran. George second the motion. Motion passed.

6 – Veterans Journey Forward – Heidi

We spoke about the update received from Jesse at the last meeting. Heidi let the board know about the grants Jesse had applied for in November. Heidi let the board know she will pass on the information once she receives the hard copy. After some discussion, it was decided that we would need to have a meeting ASAP with Jesse so the VAB could make their final recommendation to be provided to the BOCC by the following Tuesday's BOCC meeting. It was agreed upon to have the emergency meeting scheduled for Friday 12/9 at 1500hrs. Heidi will send out a calendar/Zoom invite to all participants. Heidi will also be sending out a fiscal breakdown of the first budget allotment for VJF.

7 – New Members – Heidi

Heidi talked about needing more board members. Barbara from the Prosecuting Attorney's office who is also a Veteran attending the board meeting since she is a Veteran. She would like to participate on the board. Heidi will send her an application. We need to get more applicants. Roger said he has a couple of Veteran officers that are interested to be on the board. We will need to get a press release done to get the word out.

Date & Time of Next Meetings:

- Business Meeting (Zoom) - Wednesday, November 2, 2022, 1030am
- Workshop (Zoom) – Wednesday, October 19, 2022, 1030am

Adjourn

Lewis County Veterans' Advisory Board

Attendance		
✓	Board Members:	Term Expires:
	Kenneth Norwood	
✓	Bill Marshall, Vice-Chair	
✓	George Dodd	6/30/2023
✓	Janice Marshall	
✓	Rico Barrientes	6/30/2023
	Roger Morningstar	

✓	Alternates:	Term Expires:

✓	VRF Staff:	
✓	Heidi Palmer	

✓	Guests:	
	Meja Handlen	

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 4, 2023, 1030am

Location: Zoom/Veterans Memorial Museum

Welcome/Lunch

Call to Order, Flag Salute, Attendance Quorum present

Agenda (Approval/Changes) Motion – September/2nd – George – Passed

April 2022 Minutes (Approval/Changes) Motion - George/2nd - Jan - Passed

Finance Report

Board Discussion Items:

1 – Communications-Message

Rico got some information about advertisement so we can get the word out about VAB and VRF. We want to look at using the billboards on Kresky. Roger suggested using the theater for advertisement. You can get it shown before every movie and it would reach a large number of people. Rico is going to look into it. There was a suggestion to get on the radio as well and to speak with Isabell at the Chronicle.

2 – By-Laws/Policy & Procedures

Heidi typed up the memo requesting the changes to increasing the benefit dollar amounts. The board would like the change to happen as soon as possible.

There was a request presented asking if we can change our board requirements since we are having a hard time getting board members. George made the motion going from 7 to 5 board members, quorum from 4 to 3. Having a total of 7 board members and 2 alternates. Heidi will check with Robert Bradley for legal advice. Roger second the motion. Motion passed.

3 – Jail – Heidi

Heidi saw 0 clients at the jail.

4 – VAB Application- Heidi

Barbara Russell submitted her application to the VAB. Barbara has experience in the Reserves and Active Duty with Honorable Discharge. The board feels Barbara will be a great asset to the VAB. George made the motion to accept Barbara's application. Rico second the motion. Motion passed.

5 – Veterans Journey Forward- Jesse/Chip/Kylie

Heidi reminded the board about the BOH meeting happening on the 9th where we will update the Commissioners on VJF and the VAB's recommendation.

Jesse provided everyone with a packet. In the packet is the financial breakdown for the VMM and VJF, ads for two classes, Jesse's calendar, and December excel benchmarks. Jesse told the board there will be a CPC training happening in April. He is getting rosters and sign ups ready for the training. Those who are interested will be directed to take the pre-qualifying application and training/certificate.

LCVAB went into executive session to discuss VJF update.

Date & Time of Next Meetings:

- Business Meeting (Zoom) - Wednesday, November 2, 2022, 1030am
- Workshop (Zoom) – Wednesday, October 19, 2022, 1030am

Adjourn



Public Health & Social Services

360 NW North Street
Chehalis WA 98532

MEMO

January 12, 2023

From: Lewis County Veterans Advisory Board (VAB)
To: Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
RE: Recommendations

The Veterans Advisory Board members have agreed to submit the following recommendations to be considered by the Board of County Commissioners:

1. Reappoint Roger Morningstar, add Barbara Russell in place of Bill Marshall to the Veterans Advisory Board as voting members. Remove Jan Marshall, Bill Marshall and Frank Corbin. This leaves the Veterans Advisory Board with 2 vacancies and 2 alternate positions.
2. To have an increase to eligible benefits:
 - a. The utility and gas voucher assistance increase to \$500. This increase would start 1 January 2023.
 - b. The rental assistance will increase to \$1,000 or 10% of the rent, which ever is lower. This increase would start 1 January 2023.
3. Expand eligibility for assistance from the Veterans Relief Fund to include General Under Honorable Conditions as long as the Veteran also falls under the definition of a Veteran. This change would start 1 January 2023.

Public Health & Social Services staff will process the appropriate resolution to make the above changes should you approve them to move forward. Thank you for your consideration.

BOCC AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Resolution:**BOCC Meeting Date:** Jan. 24, 2023**Suggested Wording for Agenda Item:****Agenda Type:** Deliberation

Increase and expand Veterans benefits

Contact: Tailor Arrington**Phone:** 3607401148**Department:** PHSS - Public Health & Social Services**Description:**

Starting January 1, 2023 the following Veteran benefits will be increased / expanded:

- Utility and gas voucher assistance to \$500.
- Rental Assistance to \$1,000 or 10% of the rent, whichever is lower.
- Eligibility for assistance to include "General Under Honorable Conditions" as long as the Veteran falls under the definition of a Veteran.

Approvals:

User	Status
Erik Martin	Pending
Meja Handlen	Pending
PA's Office	Pending

Publication Requirements:**Publications:****Additional Copies:**

Tailor Arrington, Heidi Palmer, Kendra Garrison, Jill Nielson, Sherri Dokken, Grace Jimenez, Michelle Sauter

Cover Letter To: