



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
*PO BOX 41150 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1150 • 360-725-2167*

**Town Hall Meeting Minutes**

<b>Meeting attended by</b>	Dick Marcelynas, Rob Lougee, Lloyd Burroughs
<b>Date</b>	July 23, 2014
<b>Time</b>	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
<b>Location</b>	VFW Post 379, 118 S. 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Yakima, WA
<b>Call to Order</b>	Meeting was called to order by Rob Lougee Invocation given by Rob Lougee and he also led the group on the Pledge of Allegiance.
<b>Welcome</b>	<p>Gary Condra – gave the welcome and thanking the audience for their attendance and he gave WDVA update. He shared the vision, mission and goals of our agency and also given the update on the status of the Walla Walla Veterans Home</p> <p>Micah Cowley – Yakima Mayor – also gave welcome and thanking the VAAC for bringing the town hall meeting to his city. The City of Yakima is doing their part in supporting and giving assistance to veterans and their families.</p> <p>Thane Phelan – Vice President of the Yakima Chamber of Commerce – he brief on what the Chamber is doing to support veterans in the community.</p>
<b>Areas Discussed</b>	<p><b>Veterans Employment (Jon Ison – ACTNOW, Inc.)</b> –he used to work for Employment Security as the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) after he retired he was recruited by ACTNOW, Inc. as their Director for their Veterans Division. His main job is to assist veterans in job placement in the community. Each week he compiles a job inventory lists. His office provides placement assistance and assists veterans in their quest for employment opportunities and this is no cost to veterans. They make hiring process for prospective employers by presenting them with applicants that meets the job specifications for the position that are being hired for.</p> <p><b>Yakima Vet Center (Maria Rivera – Team Lead)</b> The Yakima Vet Center serves veterans and their families in Yakima, Kittitas, and Douglas, Klickitat, Grant and Adams counties. Since its opening in March 1995 they have served over 3000 veterans and their families providing them with various professional counseling services (MST, readjustment, drug abuse, etc), employment and other services. They provide key access link between the veteran and other services within the US Department of Veterans Affairs, community partners, etc.</p>

	<p><b>Yakima County Veterans Program (David Brown – Program Manager)</b> The Veterans Program provides temporary emergent relief and case management to low income veterans. The program provides information and referral for federal, state and local services to all veterans and their families. This office also oversees the Veterans Relief Fund – this fund assists qualified veterans with temporary emergency needs such as food, utilities, transportation, rent, etc. The veteran or a family member must meet all the guidelines describe on the RCW and also Yakima County Policy. Proof of services, residency and status are verified to qualify for this program.</p> <p><b>State Veterans Cemetery – Medical Lake (Rudy Lopez – Cemetery Director)</b> The state cemetery opened in 2010. To date they have 2,000 interment. 40% Columbarium capacity has been used so far. WDVA is working on applying for a grant to build an additional columbarium walls. Eligibility for interment is outlined on WDVA website. Pre-registration can be done by visiting the cemetery and providing the necessary documentation. Funds from the purchase of Armed Forces License Plates pay for the maintenance and operation of the State Veterans Cemetery.</p>
<p><b>Issues Discussed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation (DAV Volunteer Drivers) – there is a shortage of volunteer drivers – issue is for the volunteer driver to get their physical completed. Current Drivers are waiting for appointment to get their yearly physical done at the Walla Walla VA Medical Center. <b>(Alfie sent and e-mail to Brian Westfield to see if he can expedite this issue – and issue is resolved – drivers that are awaiting for physicals have been scheduled)</b></li> <li>• Mileage reimbursements – a lot of veterans cannot afford to wait for their mileage reimbursements – before a veteran can get their reimbursement right away. The process had changed and a veteran has to sign up for direct deposit. Veterans are wondering if there is a way they could issue a pre-loaded VISA/MasterCard especially for those that do not have any bank accounts.</li> <li>• Outside referral for specialty clinic – is there a way to speed up the process for getting outside referral?</li> <li>• Possibility of getting the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) reinstated. This program ended on March 31, 2014</li> </ul>