

Village of Gurnee
Veterans Blue Ribbon Commission
Minutes

DATE: February 22, 2024

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room A at the Gurnee Village Hall located at 325
N. O'Plaine Rd., Gurnee IL

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A. Jim Huisel called the meeting to order at approximately 7:01 p.m.

B. Roll Call: Jim Huisel, Michelle Raine-Shepherd, Summer Padoan, Irene Hastings, Allen Lynch, Steve Joseph, Todd Woodson, Konrad Otache, Peter Karlovic and Alan Maeder.

Excused: Jim Richardson, Dan Maher, Janet Maher

C. Other Officials in Attendance: Tom Hood, Mayor, Village of Gurnee

D. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the members and attendees.

2. New Business

A. New members of the Commission introduced themselves to the group

1. Irene Hastings- Blue Star Parent
2. Allen Lynch - Army Veteran & Medal of Honor Recipient
3. Summer Padoan - Navy Veteran, Navy Veteran spouse, and Veteran Service Officer with the Lake County Veterans Assistance Commission
4. Alan Maeder- Army Veteran and Commander of Gurnee American Legion Post 771
5. Steve Joseph - Navy Veteran and Employed by Good Shepard Hospital as a mental health therapist.

B. Mayor Tom Hood addressed the Commission.

- Mayor Hood thanked the members of the Commission for their efforts to help the group make recommendations for the Village Board of Veterans issues.
- The Mayor his sincere interest in the commission work to find areas where the village can be a veteran/military-friendly community
- What the village can do to help the veteran community
- He looks forward to the recommendations that come out of the commission.

3. Discussion Items

- Jim Huisel discussed to veteran encounters of the past week. A veteran looking for emergency housing on a Sunday night and a second veteran is living in subsidized housing that is unsafe due to local drug activity. The system has a problem dealing with these kinds of situations. After-hours situations are a problem.
- Jim H mentioned Psych Armor as a website that offers training to community members and organizations about dealing with veterans and veteran issues

- Discussed how can we support Blue Star families when their loved ones are deployed.
- How can we better support the local active duty community stationed at Great Lakes
- Child care issues
- Employment
- Mental Health
- Physical Health- Park District
- Financial Challenges
- Education
- Family Support- Sorry to inform you
- Access to benefits

Focus Area going forward(Highlighted items will be immediate focused areas)

- **Homeless, Housing & Mental Health- Tiny House Program- Racine**
- **Employment**
- **Consolidation of Resource Guide- Summary of area resources**
- Female Veterans
- Civilian Healthcare Collecting Veteran Data
- USO - Will collect data on local community activities
- Talk with the Mayor about Village resources available for commission recommendations

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 pm.