

**Town of Barnstable  
Human Services Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 12, 2017**

**Names in BOLD indicate action items.**

**Present:**

Scott Fitzgerald (chair), Robin Gunderson, Meghan Mort, Heidi Nelson (recorder), Stacie Peugh, Heather Stassel and Steven Xiarhos

**Absent:**

Jen Cullum, Town Council Liaison

**Guests:**

Deb Krau, Jocelyn Howard, Director, Cape Cod Vet Center

**Order:**

The meeting came to order at 5:05 p.m.

**Membership**

**Deb Krau** will be a member of the committee once she is sworn in.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the August 8, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved as written (Xiarhos motion, Stassel second).

**Public Comment**

None.

**Discussion**

We welcomed Dr. Jocelyn Howard, clinical psychologist and Director of the Cape Cod Vets Center.

Dr. Howard began by explaining the relative roles of the organizations serving vets on the Cape. The two organizations that are part of the US Veterans Administration are the Community Based Outpatient Center on Stevens Street in Hyannis, and the Cape Cod Vets Center, on West Main. The CBOC provides primary care and mental health services, and relates to the VA hospital in Providence, although some services are available to Cape vets in Brockton. They have two psychiatrists, one psychologist, two social workers, and are open weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a nurse call line after hours. They provide outreach services on the Vineyard monthly and to Nantucket quarterly. They also offer walk-in appointments and benefits assistance. Vets must be eligible for VA services to use the CBOC. Many vets choose the VA because there is a special understanding of vets issues, and they are at the forefront of medicine.

The second facility is the Cape Cod Vets Center, which Dr. Howard directs, on West Main Street in Hyannis. This center offers readjustment counseling to combat veterans regardless of their military discharge status. They offer more specialized mental health services for issues such as PTSD, depression and substance use disorder. They also serve drone operators and Gold Star family members, and any vet, regardless of gender, for sexual trauma. The services are 100% free, and 100% confidential. Other services include couples counseling, therapy for children, recreational activities, outreach and community education.

The other two pieces of the vets services system on the Cape are the Cape & Islands Vets Outreach Center (CIVOC) which provides access to services and housing, and operates a food pantry and the Grace Center; and the town Veterans Services Officers, who are part of the state veterans services system. CIVOC is relocating to the Stevens Street location to create a 'veterans campus.' All four organizations work well together and use a 'no wrong door' approach.

How can the Town of Barnstable Human Services Committee help? In general, the Vets Center is adequately funded but does not have access to flexible funds to provide activities for the vets and their families. That is a regular need. And the Vets Center would be happy to receive any sort of in-kind services.

The committee discussed the status of the vets housing project in Dennis (so far the project is still alive), and the usefulness of the Veterans Choice Program, which has not worked very well across the country. This program allows vets to receive services at nearby clinics when VA facilities are hard to reach geographically. Meghan asked about a 'donut hole' in veterans services where some are not eligible based on income. (Later Heidi passed along information about a bill in the statehouse to address this problem.) Deb suggested that coordination between the various agencies may be a need, given that we have the opportunity now that the campus is being created.

There will be a Vets Expo at D-Y High School on October 21.

#### Next Steps

**Heidi** has invited Brenda Swain from Falmouth Service Center and Dr. David Sheinkopf from the Cape Cod Synagogue in Hyannis to speak with us on October 10 about food pantries and food insecurity in Barnstable. We also talked about the need to include programs in Barnstable that provide meals.

#### Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Nelson

Duffy Health Center and Secretary to Committee



**The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, October 10, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.,**