



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BOROUGH OF THE BRONX
COMMUNITY BOARD 7



HON. VANESSA L. GIBSON, BOROUGH PRESIDENT YAJAIRA ARIAS, CHAIRPERSON VACANT, DISTRICT MANAGER

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Chair:	Chad Y. Royer
Meeting Date:	March 15, 2023
Meeting Time:	6:30PM
Meeting Recording:	https://youtu.be/wZZIHjcxH3M
Members In Attendance:	✓ Chad Royer ✓ Emmanuel Asamoah ✓ Hugo Gonzalez ✓ Jean Hill ✓ Helene Redd
Minutes done by:	Chad Y. Royer

Minutes:

- I. Meeting Guidelines**
- II. Introductions**
- III. Review of previous minutes**
- IV. Follow-up from previous month (If applicable)**
 - A. VA Medical Center Update**

1. Shawn Kingston From the Bronx VA reminded everyone about the PACT Act that was passed last August. There is the Infrastructural Phase, Retention and Hiring Phase, the Toxic Screening Phase. If anyone was exposed to burn pits in any period, they can file a claim at the VA for monetary compensation. Each Veteran would have to go through a toxic screening, which is non-evasive. The VA needs help in spreading the word and are looking to partner with other colleges to conduct these screenings.
2. The VA is looking to hold an open house in April. The VA would like the community boards to reach out to Veterans to



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inform them about the PACT Act. Flyers will be shared and distributed once they are ready.

V. New Business

A. Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS): Peter Kempner, Legal Director

1. VOLS is a small legal services organization who works with volunteer attorneys from some of the largest law firms in New York City. Their senior law project has been around for four decades and they provide assistance with wills, power of attorneys, health care proxies and other advanced directives for low income seniors.
2. About 4 to 5 years ago, a special Veterans initiative was launched to focus on older Veterans in New York City. Veterans must be 60 years of age and older, have low income (under \$55,000 per year) and limited resources while living in the five boroughs. The organization focuses on end of life and incapacity planning. The services are free for Veterans.
3. Attorneys in the program are VA accredited and familiar with benefits and programs. They help clients with things like drafting and executing documents, and doing public education. For comprehensive legal services, a referral can be made.
4. Common goals for Veteran clients are to have their wishes carried out, to stay in the community as long as they can, and to continue getting the care they need while they are alive.
5. Micro enterprise project focuses on the legal needs of small businesses where they help Veteran small business owners with

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compliance, forming the legal structure, dealing with operating agreements and dealing with employment matters and tax issues.

6. For legal assistance, call 347-521-5704, or go to <http://www.volsprobono.org>

B. Archival Project: Pastor Crespo Jr. , Research Librarian Archivist of Bronx Historical Society

1. Starting in July 2023, Bronx Veterans Archival Initiative will engage in conducting oral history interviews from Bronx Veterans. This will collect documentaries of the experiences and sacrifices that the Veterans have faced. This will give an opportunity for our Bronxites to be recognized and to share the stories for members of the public.
2. Family members of Bronx Veterans will also be contacted for their experiences as well. Pastor Crespo asks if anyone knows Bronx Veterans who would be willing to participate to reach out to him.
3. In 2024, there is a plan to have an oral history screening at the Museum of Bronx History where the exhibits will have documentation and photos to share.
4. On June 17, 2023, the Bronx Graffiti Arts Exhibit will take place where it will be highlighting student graffiti art. This will have an anti-gun violence theme and about 40-50 pieces of art to display. More details will come soon. The address is 3266 Bainbridge Avenue at the entrance to Williamsbridge Oval Park.

C. VA Coalitions and Outreach Initiatives

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1. Raul Gonzalez Of Union Community Health Center discussed some of the coalitions that the VA has formed or is forming in order to prevent suicide. The VA wants to educate the public and involve communities so that Veterans can get the help they need so that they avoid taking that last step. About 17 Veterans die daily because of suicide, and 10 out of the 17 may have been entitled to get services, but did not.
2. There are currently 6 coalitions
 - Bronx Student Veterans Coalition
 - Project Brave Coalition
 - Bronx Hospitals Coalition
 - Bronx Arts Base Healing Coalition
 - Bronx BIPOC Coalition
 - Coalition for Families and Caregivers (March 28)
3. Research has shown that people who have gone from ideation to attempts will not go forth with ending their life if they have the proper social support and medical support. Those who eventually end their lives are usually those who have intense PTSD, are isolated, and have been using substances.
4. The partners in the coalitions would like to involve others who have contact with Veterans.

D. Committee Business

1. The Bronx Victory Memorial Flagging event will be Saturday, May 20, 2023. Flyers will have all the information of the event and will be distributed in the near future.

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2. The Veterans Committee is planning to host a flagging outing at the Woodlawn Cemetery. The date has not been confirmed yet. The intended date would be between May 20 and May 29.
3. The idea of a Veterans Resource Fair was brought up at the last meeting. A tentative date of June 3, 2023 was mentioned, but we do not have a guaranteed space for the event.

- VI. Next meeting date: April 19, 2023**
- VII. Discussion on next agenda**
- VIII. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn meeting by Jean Hill, seconded by Helene Redd.**

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