

**Fulton County Veterans Empowerment Commission, Inc.**

**Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 1 p.m.**

**Zoom Recording (Passcode: K81\$2&3y):**

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/O6HSXqq84KnIyNOaWTBmThUErnUDS7zn5\\_56K5ImfVtt5aMjwaFdKI-87N9ejbYS.wQoA3t69u\\_JyknXR?startTime=1645120798000](https://zoom.us/rec/share/O6HSXqq84KnIyNOaWTBmThUErnUDS7zn5_56K5ImfVtt5aMjwaFdKI-87N9ejbYS.wQoA3t69u_JyknXR?startTime=1645120798000)

**POST AGENDA MINUTES – RATIFIED**

**This document has been ratified or approved by the Fulton County Veterans Empowerment Commission, Inc. and is not binding on the County or any officer.**

**Call to Order/Welcome**

- The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

**\*\*A QUORUM WAS PRESENT\*\***

**Roll Call**

- **Members Present:** Michael Mizell, Shawn Hanley, Patricia Lewis, Dr. Samantha Brown-Parks, Eldson McGhee, Richard White, Anthony Merritt
- **Members Absent:** Michael Moore, Jim Garcia, Stephen Leake
- **Staff Present:** Dr. Pamela Roshell (Executive Team), Stanley Wilson (Community Development), Michael Shoates (County Manager), Jasmine Campbell (External Affairs), Joey Logan-Pugh (County Attorney’s Office)

**Approval of February 17, 2022 Agenda**

- Secretary Samantha Brown-Parks made a motion to approve the February 17, 2022 agenda. Vice-President Eldson McGhee seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Ratification of January 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

- Vice-President Eldson McGhee made a motion to approve the January 20, 2022 meeting minutes. Treasurer Michael Mizell seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**President Shawn Hanley Remarks / Update**

- Recommended each member go to Google and download a cheat sheet on Robert’s Rules to help meetings stay on track.
- Had a meeting with Mr. Stan Wilson today and believes he will be crucial when organizations are recommended to the Board of Commissioners for support. Learned that 95% of the vetting process will be done by Mr. Wilson’s department and Fulton County sends RFPs annually and rewards dozens of organizations.
- Rev. Eldson McGhee sent an email earlier today to members and his proposals will be heard in the New Business section of today’s meeting.

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### Introduction of Fulton County Government Leaders

*Remarks from Pamela Roshell, Ph.D., COO for Health and Human Services and Public Works*

- Provided brief biography and overview of responsibilities and departments under her leadership. Examples of department programs by Senior Services and Community Development presented to members. For more information on Fulton County Senior Services call 404-613-6000.
- Looking forward to working with VEC to start new veterans related initiatives.

*Q & A between Dr. Roshell and VEC*

#### Shawn Hanley, President

- Can Senior Services be expanded to include Veterans? Are non-seniors that are disabled handled by this department as well?
  - Dr. Roshell: Age eligibility is required for programs by Senior Services for residents 55 years or older. In multipurpose facilities, residents 50 years and older are eligible to participate. However other programs and services in the Behavioral Health and Community Development departments are not connected to age.
- Specific person that leads outreach for disabled persons?
  - Dr. Roshell will gather contacts for each department and share with members.

#### Michael Mizell, Treasurer

- Is there an opportunity to visit with each department to find ways the VEC can partner with Fulton County's current services? This will also help determine potential partnerships with other groups for additional services. A recent home repair for a veteran by Habitat for Humanity was provided as an example.
  - Dr. Roshell: If the VEC identifies key areas of interest then there can be tours and briefings scheduled with Fulton County departments.
- Transportation for veterans is another area where we can learn more and seek assistance. Often disabled veterans no longer drive and can not reach appointments.

#### Eldson McGhee, Vice-President

- Is there any agency in Fulton County that specifically deals with Veterans?
  - No, this is the reason that Commissioner Marvin Arrington Jr. created the VEC.
- DeKalb County's Veterans Department and Home Depot program provided as an example of available resources.
- Would like to join Michael Mizell in touring the Fulton County departments.
  - Dr. Roshell will extend invitation to all members to learn more about specific Fulton County services.

#### Richard White

- Is it possible for clientele forms to indicate if they are a veteran or not, including time served? This information will help VEC provide resources that are already available.

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- Dr. Roshell believes this question is a great idea to include on intake forms to funnel veterans to the correct resources. Suggested public-facing departments such as the Library, Arts and Culture, and Senior Services can work to help on this effort.

### *Remarks from Stanley Wilson, Director, Department of Community Development*

- Provided brief overview of Community Development department services and discussed upcoming potential partnership with Habitat for Humanity.
- Current programs include the community services program (CSP), down payment assistance, homeless efforts and emergency rental assistance. His department will start to look at helping veterans through these programs.
  - Will provide criteria for Community Services Program to members. Recently the Veterans Empowerment Organization received grant funding from Fulton County.

### *Q & A between Mr. Wilson and VEC*

#### Shawn Hanley, President

- Will the October bidding plan for the Community Services Program include veterans?
  - Dr. Roshell: Guidance by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners was to create a look alike program for veterans that is separate from CSP program. Stan Wilson's department will create funding mechanisms that will be brought to VEC for approval.
- Should the VEC identify key areas to be included in the RFP?
  - Dr. Roshell: Yes, this will be helpful. Stan Wilson can provide framework to insert VEC recommendations. Once complete, the Board of Commissioners will need to approve the solicitation package.
- If there is a VEC agenda item for next month to discuss the key areas should they be included in the meeting?
  - Dr. Roshell suggested Stan Wilson share CSP package to allow VEC to see framework and determine if they need to be invited again.
  - Stan Wilson offered to attend the meeting next month.

#### Eldson McGhee, Vice-President

- What programs does Fulton County have for reentry?
  - Dr. Roshell: Reentry is addressed with a Behavioral Health Program and programs at the jail itself. Will provide information to members.

#### Patricia Lewis

- Is Fulton County looking to expand reentry resources? If so, she is aware of an organization that focuses on reentry and can share information.

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- Dr. Roshell: On January 19, 2022 the Board of Commissioners approved the reentry budget so for 2022 there would be no expansion. Offered to share program details with members. If reentry is selected as a key area, there could be a new competitive program adopted by the VEC in 2022.

### Michael Mizell, Treasurer

- How will money be handled? Under impression that there is \$1 million allocated to the VEC. Please explain this process.
  - Stan Wilson: RFP process includes review by his staff and the procurement department to ensure organizations meet all outlined criteria. Once vetting is complete, allocations are recommended and then approved by Board of Commissioners.
  - President Shawn Hanley: Dorsha Simmons, Chief of Staff to Commissioner Marvin Arrington Jr., explained how funding would potentially need to be raised by VEC in a call earlier today.

### **Old Business:** *Development of Non-Profit Database*

### **New Business**

#### Shawn Hanley, President

- Fulton County's RFPs will go out and be enhanced by VEC organization nominations. 99% of vetting will be done by Stan Wilson's department and must follow the Fulton County Procurement Process.
  - Confirmed for Patricia Lewis that VEC is a recommending body that must find veteran serving organizations.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs does not have a good dental program and that needs to be considered by members before the next meeting.
  - Vice-President Eldson McGhee: The Department of Veterans Affairs is currently hiring and does have a dental program that can be encouraged to be better by the VEC. If necessary, a meeting with Dr. Brown can be arranged.
- Transportation, healthcare, and home improvement were mentioned today. Requested members be ready to discuss in detail five or six issues that will be included in the October RFP process since Mr. Wilson will be at the next meeting to hear them.
- Spoke with Dorsha Simmons this morning and she said the VEC would have to fundraise in order to hire staff, suggested barbecue. Believes as a 501c3 it might be tough raising money, requested clarity on purpose of this status from Joey Logan-Pugh.
  - Joey Logan-Pugh was told the purpose of being a 501c3 was to apply for grant funding not to fund salaries of employees. Because the VEC currently has no

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funds for employee salaries and is voicing an immediate need for staffing, VEC could request that the County provide an employee to help for now.

- Jasmine Campbell informed members that Fran Calhoun has shared VEC staffing requests with the County Manager and Commissioner Marvin Arrington Jr. and this is why Dorsha Simmons was provided as a contact for this matter.
- Suggested VEC's budget recommendations include an Executive Director position to be hired instead of fundraising to pay staff. Would like a formal letter signed by all members to make this request.
  - Joey Logan-Pugh believes a different title should be used in the letter since this person will likely be liaison from the Community Development department assigned as VEC staff. Fulton would likely have a current employee take on additional duties that include working for the VEC. This request could be made to the BOC, and the VEC would need to ask Mr. Wilson or Commissioner Marvin Arrington Jr. if a request should be placed as an item on the Board of Commissioner's meeting agenda. Also suggested VEC take a vote on this matter.

### Patricia Lewis

- Based on presentations today, it seems like Fulton County needs a component focused on veterans to add to programs they already provide such as Senior Services. Do we need to find these organizations that work with veterans determined by our key areas?
  - President Shawn Hanley: Yes, there will be a budget for VEC key area requests. The 501c3s we find must respond to Fulton County's RFP and go through that process.
- Do we have to raise money for ourselves?
  - President Shawn Hanley: RFP money is budgeted by Fulton County and based on recommended areas of VEC. Any money raised by the VEC as a 501c3 is separate. Ms. Simmons informed me that money must be raised by VEC to hire staff for example. However, would prefer to go to other organizations and ask for donations to 501c3 to fund staff support and other goals.

### Michael Mizell, Treasurer

- An Advisory Commission and 501c3 have separate responsibilities. Initially we were told we are a 501c3 but now we are told we are not controlling the money which means we are only an advisory commission the Board of Commissioners on veterans related issues.
- Based on previous experience, believes no matter VEC recommendations that RFP awards will go to the lowest bidder.
  - President Shawn Hanley believes we are the subject experts. We are going to provide recommendations and help write RFP key areas that will be used to help Mr. Wilson and the Board of Commissioners focus on veterans related issues.
- Agreed with Patricia Lewis that VEC will just expand current Fulton County programs to include veterans.
  - Joey Logan-Pugh: Senior Services programs have age requirements, but Community Development services typically do not have age requirements. Senior

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veterans and disabled veterans do not have to be the only focus of the VEC. All veterans can be helped through this new RFP for broader veterans related programs.

- President Shawn Hanley: Mr. Wilson stated over 100 501c3s are selected for services annually by Fulton County but do not include focus on veterans currently. VEC must recommend organizations that only deal with veterans and will be funded separately.

### Eldson McGhee, Vice-President

- Believes VEC should be both a 501c3 and advisory board. The 501c3 can be a tool to raise money when the County does not provide enough funding in the budget. There are numerous fundraising opportunities besides a barbecue, provided examples.
  - Patricia Lewis agreed and believes being a 501c3 can work to VEC advantage. A grant writer can be hired via contract or volunteer by the 501c3 and this will help obtain funds for more employees. Being a 501c3 helps VEC not have limited money or resources.

### **Other Business**

#### President Shawn Hanley

- Made a motion that he write a letter to Commissioner Marvin Arrington Jr. and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners to request a dedicated employee for the VEC. Secretary Sam Brown-Parks seconded the motion. The motion passed.
  - Secretary Sam Brown-Parks wanted clarification if this employee would be carved out funding from RFP.
    - President Shawn Hanley: Details of role and funding source will be negotiated after the Board of Commissioners agrees to provide an employee so we will not include the specifics in the initial request.
  - Joey Logan-Pugh provided the April 2022 Board of Commissioner meeting agenda submission deadline to members and encouraged President Shawn Hanley to complete this request as soon as possible.

#### Joey Logan-Pugh

- Articles of Incorporation require filing fees and we can't move forward yet with it so please let her know when the VEC would like to address this matter.
  - President Shawn Hanley: This item will not be included on an agenda until we get more clarity on 501c3 status.
- Did VEC hear back about an available County grant writer?
  - President Shawn Hanley: Mr. Wilson says that 80%-90% of grants received by his department are from HUD. They have never had a grant awarded from the VA so this will be a new endeavor. Did not ask about a specific grant writer that can be used by the VEC but will make the request at the next meeting.

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Michael Mizell, Treasurer

- Currently a new Office for Veterans Services in North Fulton or South Forsyth is being considered by State. VEC should recommend the new office be located in North Fulton since there is already an office in Canton.
  - President Shawn Hanley requested this be placed on agenda next month to allow Mr. Mizell time to present details.

Eldson McGhee, Vice President

- Will hold off on presenting his proposals to allow time for VEC to determine what the focus areas will be.

**Announcements**

- None

**Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.