

RESOLUTION NO. 22-17
A RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 35-16
VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD/VETERANS' ASSISTANCE
Increasing Award Limits and Expediting the Issuance of Checks

WHEREAS, Mason County established a levy per RCW 73.08.080 for the purpose of creating the Veterans' Assistance Fund for the relief of honorably discharged veterans or for veterans discharged for physical reason with an honorable record;

WHEREAS, RCW 73.08.035 authorizes the establishment of a Veterans' Advisory Board;

WHEREAS, the Mason County Commissioners adopted Resolution No. 58-13 establishing the Veterans Advisory Board (VAB). The VAB will consist of ten members; two appointed members of each of the following Mason County National Veterans' Organizations: American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, 40 et 8 and Disabled American Veterans and two Mason County resident Veterans.

WHEREAS, RCW 73.08.010 provides for the relief of indigent and suffering veterans and their families or the families of those deceased veterans, who need assistance and on February 10, 2015, the Board of Mason County Commissioners set the annual limit of cash award from the Mason County Veterans' Assistance Fund to eligible veterans at \$800 dollars to be spent on specific types of relief as noted in #2 below and set the catastrophic award at \$300; on February 16, 2016 the annual cash award was increased to \$1,000 per eligible veteran; and on April 25, 2017 the annual cash award was increased to \$1,200 per eligible veteran, the burial assistance was increased to \$1,000 and the catastrophic award to \$1,000.

WHEREAS, the VAB has requested the issuance of checks to the Veterans be expedited and the recommendation is to amend the process allowing Mason County staff to issue checks without prior Commissioner approval.


NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Mason County Commissioners that:

1. The Veterans' Assistance Fund may be disbursed to indigent veterans and their families or the families of those deceased in the amounts not to exceed one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200) per applicant per calendar year.
2. Approval of the \$1,200 dollar assistance shall be granted for only past due rent, mortgage, or utilities:
 - a. Utilities include electric, water, firewood, wastewater (sewer), natural gas and/or propane.
 - b. Necessity Items (Attachment R in Operating Policy) (Not to include tobacco and alcoholic beverages).
 - c. Obtain State ID card (one time only).

- d. Reinstate driver's license (one time only).
3. Veteran Assistance funds shall not duplicate other available assistance for the purposes stated in #2.
 4. If any Veterans' Assistance Committee determines an applicant is in need of assistance due to any event, catastrophic illness or other significant change in circumstance which comes into being unexpectedly and is beyond the applicant's management or control, the Committee may request in writing that Mason County consider approval of an amount not to exceed a one thousand (\$1,000.00) dollar lifetime limit per applicant.
 5. All requests for funding shall be approved by the Veterans' Service Officer and Mason County. Mason County staff who are authorized signers on the Veterans' Assistance Bank Account are authorized to issue assistance checks to qualified veterans without prior Commission approval. Those checks issued will be reported to the Commissioners.
 6. RCW 41.04.005 and other provisions of RCW Title 73 shall govern eligibility assistance to veterans and/or families.
 7. The County defines "indigent and suffering" to mean the current poverty level as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, for a period of time: previous 90 days or average of previous year.
 8. As per RCW 73.08.070, the County shall assist indigent veterans with burial or cremation costs of (\$300.00) minimum or up to one thousand (\$1,000) dollars. This is in addition to the \$1,200 dollar limitation above in #2.
 9. If any applicant knowingly and or unknowingly defrauds or provides false or misleading information, or misuses funds, the applicant will be barred from receiving any further assistance.

Effective this 25th day of April 2017.

ATTEST:



Melissa Drewry, Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Kevin Shutty, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Tim Whitehead, Chief DPA



Terri Jeffreys, Commissioner



Randy Neatherlin, Commissioner

c: Auditor
Nw VAB

MASON COUNTY
VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD
OPERATING POLICY
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I. Organizational Policies

- a. All RCWs (Revised Code of the State of Washington) within Chapter 73.08 RCW VETERAN'S RELIEF, with other RCWs and Mason County RESOLUTION NO. _____ will be used and referred to throughout this policy.
- b. The purpose of the Mason County Veteran's Assistance Fund (VAF) is to provide relief as set forth in RCW 73.08.010 (Att.J) to indigent and suffering veterans, their families and the families of deceased indigent veterans.
- c. Any honorably discharged veterans or veterans with a General Discharge under honorable conditions or a General Discharge with other than honorable conditions (Administrative Discharge), as outlined in RCW 41.04.005 (Att.O) and RCW 41.04.007 (Att.P), and meeting the criteria in I-b may apply.
- d. These policies and procedures are subject to review annually by the VAB.
 - 1) If a revision is made, it is so noted and a narrative of revision is put in VAB minutes.
 - 2) If no revisions are made, the date of review is noted, and put in VAB minutes.
 - 3) Post Commanders will be advised concerning any revisions and reviews recommended by the VAB.
 - 4) MCC has final approval of all revisions.
- e. The VAB will meet the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00am at the Memorial Hall on 2nd. and Franklin St., in Shelton, WA.
- f. A quorum must be met to conduct any business that may come before the board.
- g. If a quorum is not met, the Chair may contact other members via phone/text messaging or by e-mail.
- h. Upon reaching a member, and member agrees to be part of the meeting, thus creating a quorum, the Chair must remain in contact with the member throughout the meeting.

II. Financial Policies

- a. The funds for creating a Veterans' Assistance Fund (VAF) RCW 73.08.080(1) (Att.M), is generated from a tax levied by the Mason County Commissioners (MCC), use of the fund is governed by same RCW. (Att.M)
- b. On April 25, 2017 the MCC in Resolution No. ___ (Att.Q) amended to set the limit of cash awarded to eligible veterans at one thousand two hundred (\$1,200) dollars to be spent on specific types of relief as outlined in II-c.
- c. Approval of the one thousand two hundred (\$1,200) dollars for assistance shall be granted only for the following:
 - 1) Past Due Rent or Mortgage
 - 2) Past Due Utilities:
 - i. Electric
 - ii. Water
 - iii. Natural Gas
 - iv. Wastewater (sewer)
 - 3.) Miscellaneous Items:
 - i. Necessity Items (refer to list - Attachment R)
 - a. Single \$150.00
 - b. Married \$200.00
 - c. + \$50.00 per dependent
 - ii. Needed Fire Wood or Propane
 - 4) Other Items
 - i. Obtain state ID card (one time only)
 - ii. Reinstate driver's license (one time only)
- d. Exclusions will include, but not limited to alcohol, tobacco, lottery tickets.
- e. Purchases in excess of the amount written on the check are the responsibility of the applicant.

- f. No cash back will be given to the applicant if purchases are less than the amount written on the check.
- g. All requests for assistance will be approved by the Veterans Service Officer (VSO), with final approval by the MCC.
- h. If it is determined an applicant is in need of assistance due to any event, catastrophic illness or other significant change in circumstance which comes into being unexpectedly and is beyond the applicants' management or control, the VSO may request in writing that Mason County consider approval of an amount not to exceed a one thousand (\$1,000.00) dollar lifetime limit per applicant.
- i. The intent of the VAF is not to replace assistance from any other agency, and assistance is granted on a "Case by Case" basis only.
- j. The VAF is not intended to provide continuing assistance on a routine basis.
- k. The VAF shall not duplicate other available assistance for the purposes as noted in II. (c)

III. Policy Establishing Board

- a. RCW 73.08.035 (Att.K) states each county must establish a Veteran's Advisory Board (VAB), the board shall advise MCC on the needs of local indigent veterans, the resources available to local indigent veterans, and programs that could benefit the needs of local indigent veterans and their families.
- b. The VAB is comprised of veterans from the community "at large", and representatives from nationally recognized veterans' service organizations within Mason County. Per said RCW (Att.K), no fewer than a majority of the board members shall be members from a nationally recognized veterans' service organization and only veterans are to serve on the board. Service on the board is voluntary.
- c. Mason County Resolution NO. 05-15 (Att.Q) allows for appointment of two members residing in Mason County from each Nationally Recognized Veterans' Service Organizations to be appointed to the Veteran's Advisory Board (VAB), and two members "at large".
- d. The VAB will consist of a ten (10) member board; members are appointed as follows:
 - 1) American Legion (2 members)
 - 2) Veterans of Foreign Wars (2 members)
 - 3) 40 et 8 (2 members)
 - 4) Disabled American Veterans (2 members)
 - 5) Two (2) Mason County resident veteran (at large)
- e. Commanders of these organizations will not be members of the VAB .
- f. Commanders will appoint the members from their organization to serve on the VAB for the purpose of overseeing the VAF.
- g. These members may be appointed or removed at the discretion of their commander.
- h. The first appointment of members shall be three (3) members for a three (3) year term, and four (4) members for a two (2) year term.
- i. Thereafter all terms will be two (2) year terms.
- j. The MCC reserves the right to disallow VAB appointee for cause.

IV. Eligibility Policies

- a. RCW 73.08.005 (Att.I) and other provisions in RCW Title 73 (Att.H) shall govern eligibility assistance to indigent and suffering veterans and/or families.
- b. The county defines "indigent and suffering" to mean the current poverty level as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. (HHS) (Att.G)

- b. The county defines "indigent and suffering" to mean the current poverty level as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. (HHS) (Att.G)
- c. Family members entitled to apply for assistance shall be defined as spouse or domestic partner, surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner, and dependent children of a living or deceased veteran.
- d. Applicants must be a resident of the Mason County for at least ninety (90) days.
- e. Applicant must present proof of residency and income.
- f. An applicant may use hotel/motel receipts as proof of residence, provided that:
 - 1) All receipts show a minimum of a 90 (ninety) day stay with in Mason County.
 - 2) The 90 (ninety) day stay must be continuous.
 - 3) All receipts must be in the applicant's name.
 - 4) All receipts must be original (no copies).
- g. Under the federally-established poverty guidelines, the gross income of the veteran and all members of the household must be at or below 150% of the poverty guidelines established by the HHS (Att.G).
- h. Veterans making above the 150% and who do not have an emergency financial situation will not be eligible for assistance.
- i. An applicant may have a source of income above the aforementioned 150% and still be considered indigent on an emergency basis.
- j. Lack of funds because of bad financial management of an adequate source of income does not make the applicant indigent.

V. Referral to Other Services

- a. As per RCW 73.08.070 (Att.L) the county shall assist indigent veterans with burial or cremation costs of three hundred (\$300.00) dollars minimum or up to one thousand (\$1,000) dollars.
- b. The burial assistance is in addition to prior thousand (\$1,200.00) dollars limitation as outlined in II-c.
- c. In an effort to maximize dollars and provide for as many as possible applicants, and when appropriate, the veteran may be referred by the VSO to other veteran services and to other community resources for services.

VI. Appeal and Resolution Policy

- a. If an applicant has either by accident or on purpose falsely filed a claim, or has misused monies from the Veterans' Assistance Fund, the following will apply:
 - 1) A letter is given to the applicant, from the County, denying further use of this fund, until the false claim is resolved.
 - 2) A copy of that letter will be sent to the Veterans' Service Office, to be placed in the offending applicant's file.
 - 3) The applicant's file will then be "Red Flagged", and denied further use until the problem is resolved.
- b. To resolve the claim, the applicant can clear their name by:
 - 1) If applicant feels this is unjustified, they may appeal in writing to the Veterans' Advisory Board within fifteen (15) days of notification.
 - 2) The appeal will be reviewed by the VAB at the next regular scheduled meeting and a decision will be made no later than the next regular scheduled meeting.
 - 3) Approval or Disapproval requires a "Super Majority" vote by the entire VAB.

- 4) The applicant may file an appeal, in writing, with the Mason County Commissioners. A decision in regard to appeal may take up to 30 days.
- c. The applicant may repay any and all monies that have come into question, and may not have access to these funds for one (1) year after payment.
- d. If the applicant elects not to do VI. b. or VI. c. there will be a two (2) year probationary wait period. After the wait period is over, the applicant must "in writing" request to receive these funds once more, a decision will be forthcoming.
- e. If it is found that the applicant has done this two (2) times, they will be permanently denied from using this fund.

VII. Application Procedures

- a. Upon arriving at the VSO office the applicant will be asked to sign-in.
- b. The applicant is then screened about their assistance needs, residence, income, and their eligibility, an "Assistance Fund Application (AFA) (Att.D) and a Rental/ Mortgage Verification" (Att.C) form must be filled out as part of the application process.
- c. If the applicant does not have all needed information or documentation, they will be given a form "Veterans' Assistance Fund Documents Checklist" (Att.B) to help them gather the needed information and return form to VSO.
- d. If an applicant cannot show proof of service, a "Standard Form 180" (Att.E) will be given to them to be filled out and sent in, they can also go to the VA at American Lake to get proof of service.
- e. If two or more applicants are sharing the same physical residency, then all income is considered as one.
- f. Only one application may be used for any single physical residency.
- g. If an applicant has a "Sub-Lease Agreement", then VII (j) will apply.
- h. When an applicant has requested assistance for past due rent or mortgage payment, II. (c)(1), and has gone through the screening process. The VSO will call the landlord to inform them that the veteran has applied for assistance, and that a letter of "Recommendation for Payment" (Att.A) will be forthcoming.
- i. The applicant will then be given a form "Rental/Mortgage Verification" (Att.C) to be given to the landlord. This form must be filled out by the landlord or lien holder, notarized and sent back or taken to the VSOs' office. The VSO will then verify all information on the form.
- j. Shared Dwelling:
 - 1) In the case of a veteran sharing a dwelling with another person who is not a family member as defined in Operating Policy item IV (c), the rental amount will be prorated by the number of people living in the dwelling.
 - 2) In the case of a veteran sharing a dwelling with another person who is not a family member as defined in Operating Policy item IV (c), the utility expenses will be prorated by the number of people living in the dwelling.
 - 3) In the case of a veteran sharing a dwelling with another person who is not a family member as defined in Operating Policy item IV-c, the firewood/propane expenses will be prorated by the number of people living in the dwelling.
- k. When an applicant has requested assistance for past due utilities (electric, water or natural as) II (f)(2), and has gone through the screening process. The applicant must have a "Past Due" pink slip(s) stating that service will be discontinued.
- l. Some utilities companies, i.e. Shelton Utilities, do include garbage within the water bill, in this situation where the bill is "combined", the whole bill is paid.
- m. The VSO will call the utilities company to verify the current amount to be paid, and inform them that the veteran has applied for assistance and that a letter of "Recommendation for Payment" (Att.A) will be forthcoming.

- n. When an applicant requests assistance for firewood or propane and has gone through the screening process, the VSO will call a vendor to confirm prices and amount needed. The VSO will inform the vendor, the veteran has applied for assistance and that a letter of "Recommendation for Payment" (Att.A) will be forthcoming, VII (J)(3) also applies.
- o. The VSO will then fill out a "Purchase Order" (Att.F) to be sent with "Assistance Fund Application" (AFA) (Att.D) for approval from MCC.
- p. When an applicant requests Miscellaneous Items or Other Items and has gone through the screening process, the VSO will, to the best of their ability, determine the needs of the applicant.
- q. The VSO will fill out the "Assistance Fund Application" (AFA) (Att.D), determine the amount, the vendor, and have the applicant sign the application with a full understanding of the request.
- r. Necessity Items check (s) are issued in fifty dollar increments. The applicant will be given an itemized list of authorized items that may be purchased. (Att. R)
- s. After all needed information and documentation is gathered from the applicant and outside sources, the AFA is then completely filled out and the packet is complete.
- t. It is the VSOs' responsibility to ensure all information in the packet is correct and verified.
- u. When the completed packet is sent on to MCC, it will have a copy of "Recommendation for Payment" as a cover sheet (Att.A) or "Assistance Fund Application" (Att. D).
- v. The VSO reserves the right to refuse service to disorderly or abusive individuals. Service will be refused to individuals under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Applicants who are disorderly or abusive to Mason County employees or volunteers will be not be provided assistance and will be asked to leave the building.

VIII. Processing of Packet Procedures

- a. Once the packet is received at the MCC office, it is date stamped and reviewed to ensure all information is correct and all supporting documentation is there.
- b. Applications submitted to the MCC for processing and have been determined to meet the necessary guidelines will have checks issued within three business days.
- c. Applicants who pick up his/or her check(s), must have proper picture ID, and must sign for check(s). Check(s) are sent out by mail the next business day following approval.
- d. Necessity Item check(s) that are issued will be stamped with: "No Alcohol or Tobacco", "No Cash Back".
- e. Some delays may result if a legal holiday falls within the time period or if there are insufficient funds to release the check.
- f. A weekly list of "Approval of Expenditures" is sent to the VSO's office from the MCC office.
- g. A monthly list of "Approval of Expenditures" is sent to the MCC.

IX. Records, Files, Forms and Reports

- a. It will be the responsibility of the VAB Chair, acting in concert with the VSO's to establish and maintain a record of each applicant requesting and /or receiving assistance from the VAF.
- b. The VSO will provide forms and reports of attendants, decisions, and record-keeping for clientele, e.g., forms for vendors, initial applications, and VAB decisions.
- c. Each October, the VAB, acting in concert with the VSOs shall produce an annual report for the MCC, containing the following information:
 - 1) The number of requests for assistance received during the calendar year.
 - 2) The number of requests for assistance for which assistance was given.
 - 3) The number of requests for assistance for which assistance was not provided and a narrative description of the reasons assistance were not provided.
 - 4) The total dollar value of assistance provided on a monthly basis.

- 5) A narrative description of non-monetary assistance provided by the VAB.
- 6) Meeting minutes as an attachment.
- 7) A copy of appeals as an attachment.
- d. If any section of these policies or procedures is determined to be in conflict with federal, state, or county laws, ordinances or directives, then said section will be void and the aforementioned laws, ordinances or directives shall prevail.

X. Attachments (Att.)

A. Recommendation For Payment

B. Veteran's Assistance Documents Checklist (S&S form)

C. Rental/Mortgage Verification

D. Assistance Fund Application (AFA)

E. Request Pertaining to Military Records (Standard Form 180)

F. Mason County Veterans Service Office-Purchase Order

G. Income Guidelines for Mason County (HHS)

H. Chapter 73.08 RCW-Veterans' Relief

I. RCW 73.08.005-Definitions

J. RCW 73.08.010-Provides Relief for Indigent Veterans

K. RCW 73.08.035-Establishment of Veterans' Advisory Board (VAB)

L. RCW 73.08.070-Burial of Indigent Deceased Veterans

M. RCW 73.08.080-Tax Levy Authorized

- (1) Establishment of Veterans' Assistance Fund (VAF)

N. RCW 73.08.90-Public Assistance Eligibility

O. RCW 41.04.005-"Veteran" Defined for Certain Purposes

P. RCW 41.04.007-"Veteran" Defined for Certain Purposes

Q. Mason County Resolution No. _____

R. VAF Necessity Itemized List