



Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

Veteran Services Office (VSO) Follow-Up

May 15, 2025. 9:30 AM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Danielle Bethell, Kevin Cameron, and Colm Willis.

Board's Office: Chris Eppley, Trevor Lane, Matt Lawyer, Toni Whitler, Heather Inyama, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga, and John Pettifer.

Health and Human Services: Ryan Matthews.

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Update on VSO Discussion

- Current VSO services are contracted with Community Action Agency.
- Total program cost is just under \$300,000.
- County contributes approximately \$66,500 from general fund.
- Remaining funding comes from the State of Oregon.
- Current contract is set to expire on June 30th.

Discussion

- Financial Considerations:
 - Exploring options to bring VSO services in-house or find alternative providers.
 - Administrative charges for in-house services would add approximately \$100,000 to program costs.
 - Potential challenges with administrative overhead and infrastructure expenses.
 - Concerns about increasing costs while maintaining service quality.
- Potential Alternatives:
 - Courtney Place YMCA expressed interest but not ready for 3-5 years.
 - Health and Human Services Department proposed managing the program internally.
 - Potential benefits of integrating services with existing county support systems.
 - Desire to remove VSO from current homeless-focused organizational structure.
- Facility and Access Considerations:
 - Potential relocation to 3160 Center Street facility.
 - Improved ADA access and more professional environment.

- Increased visibility and accessibility for veterans.
- Possibility of leasing space to a nonprofit organization.

Other

- State grant funding requires full expenditure of allocated funds.
- Statutory requirement to maintain resource levels once implemented.
- Importance of maintaining experienced VSO officers.
- Need to improve partnership and service integration.

Next Steps

- Research feasibility of county acting as fiscal agent for VSO services.
- Explore leasing office space to a nonprofit organization.
- Investigate administrative overhead and potential cost-saving measures.
- Reach out to potential partners (Courtney Place YMCA).
- Develop a comprehensive plan for improving veteran services.

Adjourned – time: 10:10 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White