

MAVSA – Military and Veterans Service Alliance of the Lowcountry, South Carolina

www.mavsasc.org

Minutes

Quarterly General Membership Meeting – April 24, 2018 – AMVETS Hall, Port Royal

Introductions

Col. James Moore, HHI MOAA called the meeting to order at 11:00am. The group said the Pledge of Allegiance. Col. James Moore provided a review of MAVSA's role as a networking and educational organization that is also a Together for Beaufort Coalition. All of the people in attendance provided an overview of the organization(s) they represent as well as upcoming events and any brochures/informational materials they brought with them to the meeting.

Danielle Breidung, MAVSA's Facilitator, encouraged people in attendance to send her copies of flyers related to their upcoming events. She also asked for volunteers to give an organizational spotlight at one of MAVSA's upcoming meetings. Danielle shared MAVSA's new email address facilitator@mavsasc.org with the group, and encouraged everyone to check the website for updates.

Organizational Spotlight

Ms. Jill Schepp, Program Director at Augusta Warrior Project/SC Serves, spoke to the group about AmericaServes and the work that this organization is offering specifically in South Carolina. SC Serves offers its services free of charge, and makes data available to its member organizations that they can use to write grants and draft reports. There are 50 providers currently in the network. 76% of people who come into the program exit with a positive outcome; this is the highest percentage in the AmericaServes network. SC Serves is both HIPPA and FERPA compliant. Veterans sign a release that allows their information to be shared with other member organizations. Veterans can walk in, call in, or be referred by way of another provider. SC Serves can make inter-network referrals, which means that a veteran who seeks assistance from an AmericaServes location in another state can be referred to an AmericaServes office in another area.

Guest Speaker

The Honorable P.J. Tanner, Beaufort County Sheriff, thanked MAVSA members for the work they do to serve active duty military members, veterans, and their families in our community. He said that officers are always looking for more information and training about PTSD, mental illness, depression, homelessness, etc.

Sheriff Tanner mentioned that the dispatchers and officers now, because of Smart 9-1-1 and other technologies, have more information than they did historically about the location and callers prior to arriving on the scene. In conjunction with local mental health organizations, the Sheriff's Office is looking for ways to be better prepared to manage situations involving mental illness. He would like to see counselors involved at the time of dispatch, rather than after the person has been detained and transported to a local hospital. Sheriff Tanner specifically mentioned that many of his officers have received training from NAMI to become better prepared to effectively interact with people who are incarcerated and suffer from mental illness. He also mentioned an emerging community mental health program that will operate out of the Beaufort and Hilton Head Sheriff's Offices.

Sheriff Tanner encouraged the community to call the Sheriff's Office if they see issues involving mental health, homelessness, and other public safety. Fortunately, the officers are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and trained to help manage situations that promote the public good.

General Discussion

- Update on Circle of Hope (Rev. John Dortch) - Suzi Oliver mentioned that the grand opening will be delayed at least four weeks. This facility will serve female and male veterans.
- Question from Sarah Eliasoph (NAMI Lowcountry) to the Sheriff Tanner: All calls to the Sheriff's Office are recorded. Sometimes people do not want an officer to come out to the scene, but if they make a report/call dispatch, the incident will always be recorded. The Sheriff's Office's service population is 275,000, and the county's (bed/residential) population is 183,000. Issues involving mental health and law enforcement are likely to continue growing as the population continues to expand.

The next MAVSA meeting will be held on July 24, 2018, 11 a.m. at Palmetto Electric Cooperative's Meeting Room in Hardeeville. A reminder email will be sent out one week prior to the meeting. If you do not receive this message, please reach out to MAVSA's facilitator to ensure that your email is added to our contact list.

Please send all brochures, information about upcoming events, and questions to facilitator@mavsasc.org If you would like to provide a 5-10 minute organizational spotlight at the next meeting, please reach out as soon as possible.