

**PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

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Meeting Date: August 22, 2023 [] Consent [X] Regular
[] Ordinance [] Public Hearing
Department
Submitted By: Community Services
Submitted For: Division of Senior and Veteran Services (DSVS)
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I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to adopt: Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Palm Beach County, Florida, creating the Palm Beach County Veteran Services Advisory Board (VSAB); providing for a purpose; providing for membership, appointments, terms; providing for officers; providing for roles and responsibilities; providing for sunshine law, code of ethics; providing for meetings; providing for subcommittees; providing for general provisions; and providing for an effective date, sunset.

Summary: Palm Beach County (County) is home to more than 72,000 Veterans. Many of these Veterans struggle with accessing benefits that may assist with health issues, employment, and other human services support. In response to these challenges, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) directed County Administration to create the VSAB to periodically assess the needs of Veterans in the County and provide more efficient coordination amongst service providers in order to address the needs identified. (Division of Senior and Veteran Services) Countywide (HH)

Background and Policy Issues: On March 14, 2023, the BCC directed County Administration to establish a Veteran Services Advisory Board to advise the commission on the needs of Veterans throughout Palm Beach County. The Community Services Departments' Division of Senior and Veterans Services will provide staffing support for the VSAB. The VSAB will work with a coalition of community partners to improve the coordination of support services and leverage resources for Veterans throughout the County. The VSAB will also conduct a health and human services needs assessment and make policy recommendations to the BCC when requested, in order to improve the quality of life for Veterans in Palm Beach County.

Attachment:

- 1. Resolution establishing the Palm Beach County Veteran Services Advisory Board
- 2. Florida Statute 292.11

DocuSigned by: James E. Green 8/4/2023
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Recommended By: Department Director Date
Approved By: Assistant County Administrator Date
8/14/2023

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS


A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs					
External Revenue					
Program Income					
In-Kind Match (County)					
NET FISCAL IMPACT					
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)					

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes No
 Does this item include the use of federal funds Yes No

Budget Account No.:
 Fund Dept. Unit Object Program Code Program Period

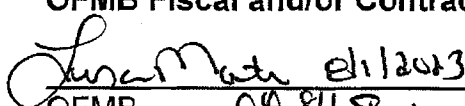
B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

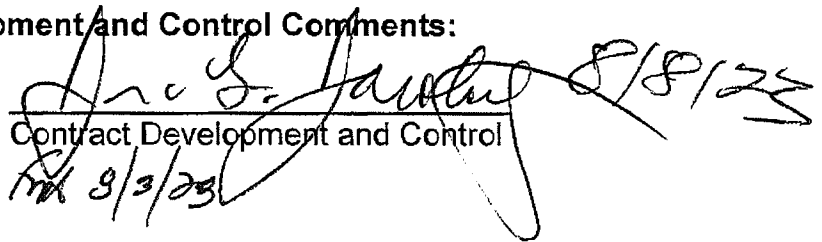
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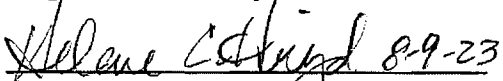
C. Departmental Fiscal Review: _____
 Julie Dowe, Director, Financial & Support Services

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Development and Control Comments:


 OFMB 8/11/23
 8/11/23


 Contract Development and Control
 8/18/23

B. Legal Sufficiency:

 Senior Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

 Department Director

RESOLUTION NO. R-2023-_____

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, CREATING THE PALM BEACH COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD; PROVIDING FOR A PURPOSE; PROVIDING FOR MEMBERSHIP, APPOINTMENTS, TERMS; PROVIDING FOR OFFICERS; PROVIDING FOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; PROVIDING FOR SUNSHINE LAW, CODE OF ETHICS; PROVIDING FOR MEETINGS; PROVIDING FOR SUBCOMMITTEES; PROVIDING FOR GENERAL PROVISIONS; AND PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE, SUNSET.

WHEREAS, Florida has the 3rd largest veteran population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2021 demographics of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, there are 1,492,000 veterans in the State of Florida, with 753,000 veterans age 65 years and over, and Palm Beach County has a recorded 72,340 veterans; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, more than one-quarter (29%) of all veterans in Florida lived in households experiencing financial hardship in 2019, while 6% were below the Federal Poverty Level, and an additional 23%, (nearly 4 times as many), were Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE); and

WHEREAS, the 2023 Palm Beach County Homeless Point-in-Time Count showed an increase in veteran homelessness, with veterans comprising nearly 10% of Palm Beach County's homeless population; and

WHEREAS, according to records from the Florida Department of Health's Fire Watch Project, 6,850 Florida veterans committed suicide from 2010 to 2020; and

WHEREAS, many veterans struggle with accessing benefits that may assist with health issues, employment, and other human services support; and

WHEREAS, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) through its Community Services Department (CSD) established the Division of Senior and Veteran Services (DSVS), and in accordance with Section 292.11, Florida Statutes, the DSVS works in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide Veteran Service Officers; and

WHEREAS, Veteran Service Officers assist and counsel former and current members of the U.S. Armed Forces who reside in Palm Beach County, and assist military veterans and their dependents in preparing and filing claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to obtain benefits to which the veterans are entitled under federal, state, and local laws; and

WHEREAS, the BCC seeks to establish a Veteran Services Advisory Board to periodically assess the needs of veterans in Palm Beach County and provide a more efficient coordination amongst service providers in order to address needs identified.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, THAT:

Section 1. Purpose. There is hereby established an Advisory Board to be known as the “Palm Beach County Veteran Services Advisory Board (VSAB).”

Section 2. Roles and Responsibilities. The VSAB shall have the following roles and responsibilities:

- A. Collect information related to veterans in Palm Beach County and provide that information with input and guidance to the BCC, along with recommendations on responding to the County’s veteran population.
- B. Advise the BCC on needs of local veterans and resources available to local veterans.
- C. Increase the coordination and interactions between organizations, agencies, and institutions whose mission it is to assist veterans and their families in Palm Beach County.
- D. If requested by the BCC, provide recommendations on positions the BCC may take on local, state and federal legislation.
- E. To perform such other duties as may be required from time to time assigned by the BCC.

Section 3. Membership. The VSAB shall be comprised of eleven (11) members who represent as wide an array as possible of the public sector and private sector organizations whose mission is to assist veterans and their families. All members must reside in Palm Beach County at the time of appointment and while serving on the VSAB. Membership shall be representative of the racial, ethnic and geographic diversity of Palm Beach County. All members must have knowledge of at least one component of the support services available to assist veterans and their dependents. The membership shall consist of:

- A. One (1) member who represents an organization that provides Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder/Suicide Prevention services to veterans (Seat 1).
- B. One (1) member who represents an organization that provides Financial/Emergency Financial Assistance services to veterans (Seat 2).
- C. One (1) member who represents an organization that provides Housing services to veterans (Seat 3).
- D. One (1) member who represents an organization that provides Support services to veterans (Seat 4).
- E. One (1) member who represents the Veterans Affairs West Palm Beach Healthcare System (Seat 5).
- F. One (1) member who represents an organization that provides Mobility Assistance services to veterans (Seat 6).
- G. One (1) member who represents an organization that provides Employment services to veterans (Seat 7).
- H. One (1) member who represents an organization that provides Public Safety services to veterans (Seat 8). This member may be an employee of Palm Beach County.
- I. Three (3) at large members, at least two of whom are veterans (Seat 9, 10, & 11).
- J. Appointment and Termination. Members shall be appointed at large by the BCC, and serve staggered terms of three (3) years, with a limit of three (3) consecutive three (3)-year terms. Vacancies occurring during a term shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term, and

shall not count toward the member's term limits. All members of the VSAB shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners and may be removed without cause at any time.

K. Attendance. Members shall be automatically removed for lack of attendance. Lack of attendance is defined as failure to attend three (3) consecutive meetings or failure to attend more than one-half of the meetings scheduled during a calendar year. Participation in less than three-fourths of a meeting shall be the same as a failure to attend a meeting. Members removed pursuant to this paragraph shall not continue to serve on the VSAB and such removal shall create a vacancy.

L. Conflict of Interest. Members shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees and the applicable provisions of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

Section 4. Officers. A Chair and Vice-chair shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the VSAB and shall serve for a term of one (1) year, but not to exceed two (2) consecutive terms in any one office. The duties of the chair shall be to:

- A. Call VSAB meetings and organize the agenda for the meetings,
- B. Preside at VSAB meetings,
- C. Serve as primary liaison to CSD staff,
- D. Perform other functions as the VSAB may suggest, and
- E. Establish subcommittees, appoint subcommittee chairs, and charge subcommittees with specific tasks.

The Vice-chair shall perform the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence, and such other duties as the Chair may assign. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the Chair, then the Vice-chair shall assume the position of Chair for the remainder of the term. A vacancy in the office of Vice-chair shall be filled through a majority vote of the membership.

Section 5. Sunshine Law, Codes of Ethics. The VSAB is subject to Florida's Sunshine Law. Reasonable public notice of all meetings, including subcommittee meetings, shall be provided, as required by the Sunshine Law, and all meetings shall be open to the public and minutes shall be taken. Records are subject to public disclosure. Members of the VSAB shall comply with the State's Code of Ethics found in Chapter 112, Part III of the Florida Statutes, as well as the Palm Beach County's Code of Ethics codified in Sections 2-254 through 2-260 of the Palm Beach County Code.

Section 6. Meetings. The VSAB shall meet quarterly, or as needed, as determined by a majority of the membership. A quorum, as established by ordinance must be present for the conduct of all meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern meetings.

Section 7. Subcommittees. The VSAB shall be as self-sufficient as possible in that there is no budget for its function. To this end, to carry out its duties, the creation of subcommittees is encouraged. Members shall receive no compensation for services.

Section 8. Administration. Staff for the VSAB shall be provided through the Community Services Department.

Section 9. General Provisions. All members of the VSAB shall comply with the Uniform Policies and Procedures governing advisory bodies as set forth in Resolution No. 2013-0193, and any amendments thereto. Members will be provided a copy of the resolution and are expected to become familiar with the various requirements, including the provision for automatic removal for lack of attendance, conduct of meetings, and compliance with state and local laws pertaining to financial disclosure and other requirements. The VSAB is not established to duplicate efforts that County programs and departments were established to address. No member shall represent the VSAB before any governmental body or public or private entity or group unless approved to do so by a majority vote of the membership.

Section 10. Effective Date and Sunset. This Resolution shall become effective upon approval by a majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners, Palm Beach County, Florida. The VSAB will sunset five (5) years from the effective date unless the BCC extends its service through official action.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____, and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

- Gregg K. Weiss, Mayor - _____
- Maria Sachs, Vice Mayor - _____
- Commissioner Maria G. Marino - _____
- Commissioner Michael A. Barnett - _____
- Commissioner Marci Woodward - _____
- Commissioner Sara Baxter - _____
- Commissioner Mack Barnard - _____

The Mayor thereupon declared the Resolution duly passed and adopted this ____ day of _____, 2023.

ATTEST:
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT
Joseph Abruzzo

PALM BEACH COUNTY, Florida
By its Board of County Commissioners

By: _____
Clerk of Court & Comptroller

By: _____
Gregg K. Weiss, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM &
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

By: Helene C. Hvizd
Assistant County Attorney

By: _____
Reginald K. Duren
Assistant County Administrator

The Florida Senate

2022 Florida Statutes (including 2022C, 2022D, 2022A, and 2023B)

<u>Title XX</u> VETERANS	<u>Chapter 292</u> VETERANS' AFFAIRS; SERVICE OFFICERS <u>Entire Chapter</u>	SECTION 11 County and city veteran service officer.
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292.11 County and city veteran service officer.—

(1) Each board of county commissioners may employ a county veteran service officer; provide office space, clerical assistance, and the necessary supplies incidental to providing and maintaining a county service office; and pay said expenses and salaries from the moneys hereinafter provided for. The governing body of any city may employ a city veteran service officer; provide such office space, clerical assistance, and supplies; and pay expenses and salaries. A county or city veteran service officer must be a veteran who served as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States during a period of war, as defined in Title 38, U.S.C.; who served at least 18 months' active duty in the Armed Forces; and who was separated from such service under honorable conditions, or the surviving spouse of any such veteran. Any honorably discharged wartime veteran who was so discharged for service-connected or aggravated medical reasons before serving 18 months of active duty; who completed a tour of duty other than active duty for training, regardless of the length of the tour; or who satisfied his or her military obligation in a manner other than active duty for training or reserve duty shall be eligible for employment as a county or city veteran service officer. Every county or city veteran service officer, in order to be eligible for employment as a county or city veteran service officer, shall have a 2-year degree from an accredited university, college, or community college or a high school degree or equivalency diploma and 4 years of administrative experience.

(2) Any county or city desiring to employ a county or city veteran service officer under the provisions of this section may notify the Department of Veterans' Affairs of its intention to do so and may furnish the department with the name or names of any person or persons applying to fill such position, along with documentation supporting the qualifications thereof. The department shall thereupon certify to such county or city the name or names of candidates for such position who meet the requirements and qualifications prescribed by the department. The county or city may thereupon employ any person or persons so certified by the department. Duties, compensation, and terms of employment shall be prescribed by the board of county commissioners or, where applicable, by the governing body of the city.

(3) Any person employed by any county or city under the provisions of this section shall, from the time of his or her employment, be subject to such rules as the Department of Veterans' Affairs may from time to time prescribe. Appropriations made by any county or city, or both, for the purposes set forth in this section are hereby declared to be appropriations for a county or municipal purpose, as the case may be.

(4) The Department of Veterans' Affairs is directed to establish a training program for county and city veteran service officers. Every county or city veteran service officer employed under this chapter shall attend the training program established by the department and successfully complete a test administered by the department prior to assuming any responsibilities as a county or city veteran service officer. The department shall further establish periodic training refresher courses which each county or city veteran service officer must attend and complete as a condition of remaining in employment as a county or city veteran service officer. County and city veteran service officers shall be reimbursed for travel expenses, as provided in s. [112.061](#), in fulfilling the requirements of this section.

(5) The provisions of subsection (1) shall not apply to, or in any way affect, the employment of any county or city service officer who was so employed prior to July 1, 1974.

History.—s. 2, ch. 23017, 1945; ss. 1, 2, 3, ch. 74-288; s. 5, ch. 77-330; s. 121, ch. 79-400; s. 30, ch. 81-167; s. 3, ch. 81-288; s. 30, ch. 83-55; s. 20, ch. 88-290; s. 242, ch. 95-148.