



Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2022

Time Scheduled: 4:00 p.m. **Started:** 4:15 P.M. **Ended:** 4:29 P.M.

Location: Osceola County Sheriff’s Office Complex
2601 E. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway
Kissimmee, FL 34744
Training Rooms: B & C

Welcome/Pledge of Allegiance: Chaplain Donald Warren

Invocation: Chaplain Donald Warren

1. INTRODUCTION:

2. CALL TO ORDER:

A. Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 4:15 P.M.

3. ROLL CALL: Completed by: Deputy Benjamin Coleson

<u>Committee Members Present:</u>
<u>Committee Members Absent:</u>
<u>Speakers and Presenters:</u>

Mr. Hector Rodriguez, Ms. Rosemarie Morales, Mr. Armando Perez

Mr. Nick Amen, Mr. Gary Spear, Dr. Lewayne Johnson, Mr. Bill Mangan

Samantha Sterthaus

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. The board did not approve the minutes from the May 4th meeting as there was not a quorum.

5. WE SALUTE YOU:

- A. Deputy Benjamin Coleson and Sheriff Marcos Lopez saluted Don Smith for his selfless service.
 1. Don Smith enlisted in the United States Navy at age 17. He is a Vietnam Combat Veteran who retired after thirty years of service. He continued to serve the veteran community after his retirement.
 2. He was awarded Veteran of the Year in 2004 and Outstanding Veteran of the Year in 2008 and 2018.

3. He joined the Veterans Tribute and Museum of Osceola County in 2004 and became the chairman of the board and Executive Director.
- B. Sheriff Marcos Lopez saluted Don Smith for his service and presented him with an award.
- C. Don Smith thanked the Sheriff's Office and spoke about his experience working alongside the agency and with veterans in the community. Mr. Smith spoke of his experience on the Osceola County Veteran's Council, arranging all the military funerals in the county.

6. HOUSEKEEPING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- A. The board did not cover any housekeeping items as there was not a quorum.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Deputy Benjamin Coleson turned the floor over to Samantha Sterthaus to conduct a presentation on the Camaraderie Foundation, a local nonprofit that serves veterans in the community.
 1. The Camaraderie Foundation heals the invisible wounds of war for veterans and family members by offering free counseling services for veterans and their families.
 2. They have a Transition Assistance Program to help veterans get back into civilian life through a Mentor Leadership Program. It is 10 months long.
 3. They have Family Support Service which are Family Fun Days to bring veterans and their families together.
 4. They serve Osceola County and are headquartered in Orange County. They are looking for mentors and volunteers.
 5. The programs do not require any specific discharge status.
 6. There is no wait for counseling services.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- A. No members of the public came forward for public comment.
- B. Chairman Rodriguez turned the floor over to Kurt Fisher.
- C. Kurt Fisher introduced himself as the VSO at the Osceola County Veterans Services. They assist veterans with claims for disability compensation, veteran's pension, survivor's benefits, and education counseling. They are available Monday through Friday.
- D. Ms. Morales asked whether they require appointments or take walk-ins. Mr. Fisher advised they are currently only taking appointments and there is a week wait. They have hired a new counselor.
- E. Mr. Fisher advised that over the past year they have helped veterans bring an additional \$500,000 worth of benefits into the community.
- F. Chairman Rodriguez asked if they have a direct contact with Mr. Fisher or do they have to call the main number. Mr. Fisher advised he can provide Chairman Rodriguez with his number.

9. OTHER BUSINESS:

- A. There was no other business to address.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

- A. The meeting was adjourned at 4:29.

11. NEXT MEETING:

- A. Thursday, July 7, 2022

Hector Rodriguez
Chairman

OCSO Staff Member