

Veterans Empowerment Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 21 2023, at 1p.m.

Meeting Recording: [https://zoom.us/j/94750938926?](https://zoom.us/j/94750938926?pwd=SW9rWDIBNGlqOFpnU01sbXRWVWhHQT09)
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Call to Order/Welcome

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hanley at 1:00pm

Roll Call

- **Members Present:** Shawn Hanley, Mike Mizell, Dr. Samantha Brown-Parks, Rev McGhee, Rick White, Patricia Lewis, Anthony Merritt (Quorum met)
- **Members Absent:** Michael Moore, Stephen Leake, Brad Mitchell
- **Staff Present:** Ann Isaac
- **Guests:** Montra McKenzie, Emily Thompson, Christylynne Drummond, Patrick Jones, Alicia Higginbotham, Angela Marshall, Lance Wise

Invocation by Rev McGhee
Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of September 21, 2023 Meeting Agenda

- Sam Brown-Parks made a motion to approve. Rick White 2nd.

Ratification of August 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- Rick White made a motion to approve. S Brown-Parks 2nd.

Special Presentation of the Veterans Service Projects previously awarded Grants

1. **Investors Academy** by Montra McKenzie. Program located in SW Atlanta that provides Food, Supportive Housing and Job Training. Additionally they provide on the job training specifically in warehouse skills and assist with job placement for Veterans.
2. **Veterans Empowerment Organization** by Alicia Higginbotham: Program received the VSP for the past two cycles. Located in Grove Park which is inside the city of Atlanta as well as Fulton County they are focused on housing Veterans with transitional and permanent housing as well as community outreach. The Rollins Veterans Center has 20 beds and there are 41 apartment units on campus.
3. **Atlanta Technical College** by Angela Marshall and Lance Wise. Veteran services is its own department located on the main campus of the college, a member of the Technical College System of Georgia. Over 190 students are serviced through the department including the veterans and dependents. Tuition support is provided as well as transitional housing, jobs, basic needs and retirement planning.

More than 80% of the grant funds from the first cycle were used for direct services and greater than 85% are projected for this year. Last year 20 vets graduated with degrees or certificates.

4. **Community Friendship-** by Emily Thompson and Patrick Jones: A psychiatric rehabilitation organization that was formed in 1970 and has a branch to focus on veterans through Residential support, Homeless outreach and Supportive Care. Their goal is to reach 34 Homeless veterans per year through outreach and case management by assessing needs in the field and tailoring support to the needs. They provide temporary housing, referrals to substance abuse programs and employment training/placement.

Announcements

- Rev McGhee- Frontline Community Services is sponsoring a US Military Veterans Suicide Prevention at First Congregational church Atlanta every Monday from 10am-12pm until December 26th.
- Rick White: The 11th Induction Ceremony of the Georgia Military Hall of Fame will take place on 11/4/23 in Columbus, GA. The recipient will be the nominee of Mike Mizell, Mr. Mike Harden. He is being inducted for his work in service to mankind through his program, "No longer bound".
- Shawn Hanley: The SSGT Fox Suicide Prevention Forum will take place on 10/5/23 at the state Capitol.

Meeting Adjourned 2:06