

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission

Arizona State Veteran Home – Phoenix

4141 N. 3rd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85012

March 8, 2012

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners

Terrie Gent, Chair *

George Cushing, Vice Chair

Gary Fredricks

Philip Hanson

Wayne Krula

Jeffrey Olson

Ron Perkins

Lionel Sanchez

David Toliver, Sr.

*Participated by telephone

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Joey Strickland, Director

Gabe Forsberg, Strategic Planner/Women Vets

Katherine Harding, Exec Assist to Director

Mike Klier, Assistant Deputy Director – Veterans
Services

Dave Hampton, Public Affairs Officer

Guests

Monica Cabrera, Public Affairs – VA Regional

David Lucier, Unified Arizona Veterans

Sherry & Gale Winters, Volunteers at the
Arizona State Veteran Home

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Vice Chair Cushing. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as published.

Communications - Rep. David Stephens responded to an email sent to him by Terrie Gent regarding HB2675, informing her that the bill would not move forward.

Agency Announcements and Updates – Director Joey Strickland, Deputy Director Robert Barnes, and Assistant Deputy Director for Veterans Services Division (VSD) Mike Klier provided an update to agency actions and were available for questions. Dave Hampton, Public Affairs Officer, also provided a legislative summary.

Outreach Strategy Report – Jeff Olson provided a draft of a card that could be used by veterans to write down their issues to replace the comment cards that had been distributed at the regional “town hall” meetings. Commissioners are asked to provide feedback at the next meeting.

Kat Harding will purchase a table-top display and coordinate with Commissioner Olson to identify the types of materials are to be on display. Commissioner Olson will continue to recommend ways to reach veterans statewide.

Gary Fredricks moved to hold an information-gathering meeting in Tucson on Wednesday, April 11 in lieu of the regular monthly meeting. Lionel Sanchez seconded and it passed unanimously. Chairperson Gent will provide all involved with a detailed itinerary to include initial meeting at the

University of Arizona, Veterans Court, and tour of the Arizona State Veteran Home in Tucson. A visiting dignitary will also be invited to accompany the Commission (VA General Counsel) while in the area. Commissioners are asked to notify Gabe Forsberg if they wish to ride in a state vehicle to the **gathering (or should I say meeting?)** in Tucson. The vans will leave at 7 a.m. on Wednesday, April 11, 2012 from the Arizona State Veteran Home – Phoenix.

ADVS Outreach Strategies to Reach Younger Veterans (Facebook and Twitter) –

Chairwoman Gent learned how rapidly some younger veterans were able to communicate their personal concerns over SB2675 using social media. That bill would have required all students to provide \$2000 from their own resources toward the cost of attending a state university. Lawmakers were provided with specific examples of how the \$2000 requirement would have affected veteran students (including those with disabilities on limited incomes). Commissioners were encouraged to look into Facebook as a tool to learn more about the issues of importance to younger veterans. This agenda item will be discussed further at the May meeting.

Boards and Commissions – ADVS will send out nominations to fill the one vacancy when Commissioner Fredricks leaves the Commission 7/1/12. ADVS will attempt to reach out to younger veterans who may be willing to serve as Commissioners.

Open Discussion/For the Good of the Order - Vice Chair Cushing read a letter of appreciation from an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran who praised Fred Irwin for his compassion and excellent customer service. The young vet was at the brink of giving up and was facing marital issues and financial ruin when Mr. Irwin was able to get him the benefits he had earned. Vice Chair Cushing also publicly thanked Director Strickland for his leadership of the agency through the past few years. Director Strickland was grateful for the acknowledgement and said that hundreds of veterans' lives have been changed by accessing their rightful benefits. Dave Hampton and Dave Lucier were both thanked for their role in defeating HB2675.

Dave Lucier invited the Commission to come to the ASU to see their veteran support efforts in person. He is working to actively recruit service personnel to come to ASU.

Vice Chair Cushing adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m. **The next meeting will be held April 11, 2012 at the University of Arizona Law School, Speedway Blvd. and Mountain Avenue, Tucson, AZ ZIP???** (or should I say May 10, 2012).