

**Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission**  
4141 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (North S. Herrera Way), Phoenix, AZ 85012  
July 12, 2012

**MINUTES**

Advisory Commissioners

Terrie Gent, Chair through the election  
George Cushing, Vice Chair (Elected Chair in the meeting)  
Wayne Krula  
Jeffrey Olson (elected Vice Chair in the meeting)  
Ronald Perkins  
David Toliver, Sr.

Absent

Philip Hanson  
Lionel Sanchez (ill)

AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Joey Strickland, Director  
Robert Barnes, Deputy Director  
Homer Rodgers, Assistant Deputy Director  
Gabe Forsberg, Strategic Planner/Women Vets  
Kathering Harding, Exec Assistant – Director

Guests

Pacer Reina, Vet Rep for the Salt River Pima  
Maricopa Indian Community (Desert Storm  
Veteran)

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Chairperson Terrie Gent. The minutes were approved as published.

**Communications**

1. Letter to Governor Brewer as discussed in the June meeting, requesting (1) her continued strong support of the veterans' transition programs at each of the state's three universities and (2) advising her of the establishment of veteran treatment courts in various parts of the state.
2. Letter of appreciation from Jonathan Gardner for the Commission's participation in the Memorial Day event at the VA hospital in Tucson.
3. Request for assistance in an email from ArmedZilla to help them find 300 veterans to provide feedback on their veteran social network site.

The Commission felt it was unable to assist ArmedZilla with its request and Chairwoman Gent will respond to the email request as such.

**Agency Updates** – Director Joey Strickland provided the same overview to the Commission as he gave to Governor Brewer on June 23. At that meeting, he hand delivered the letter described above. Additionally, he asked Deputy Director Robert Barnes, to inform the Commission of the VA survey being conducted at this time, which will enable the state veteran home in Tucson to receive payment for service-connected disabled veterans who wish to be admitted.

Assistant Deputy Director Homer Rodgers recapped some of his activities, such as expanding the existing state veteran cemetery in Sierra Vista, working with the Corps of Engineers to convey land for use as a cemetery near Bellemont, negotiating to obtain land from the National Guard for use as a state veteran home, and installing the solar array at the state veteran cemetery in Sierra Vista.

Director Strickland and Deputy Director Barnes recently met with Sharon Helman, Administrator for the VA Hospital in Phoenix. They asked Brian Mancini and Dan Schrader

to accompany them to discuss issues they have experienced as recently discharged veterans. Chairwoman Gent thanked him for his prompt follow up with both of these veterans. These two individuals were both very articulate about their issues and the staff with Mrs. Helman's took copious notes during the briefing. Director Strickland was very impressed by Mrs. Helman, who appreciated his bringing these two well spoken veterans to their meeting. While they are young veterans, they are seen as very mature in how they reported issues. Both were asked to service on advisory groups to improve health care service delivery at the VA.

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair** – Chairwoman Gent asked if there were a motion to name a Chair and Vice Chair. Ron Perkins moved to name George Cushing as Chair and Jeff Olson to serve as the Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by David Toliver and unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

**Commission Guidelines and Strategic Plan Review Committee** – Chairman Cushing had received feedback from the rest of the committee, but emphasized the need to work on the strategic plan first. The Guideline spells out how the strategic objectives can be met. He also mentioned that the regional assignments for commissioners was still an effective means to continue to collect information and conduct outreach statewide.

Wayne Krula moved to assign two commissioners to each of the four regions in the state. After a second, the motion passed unanimously. The task of the region assignments will be assumed by the Commission Guidelines and Strategic Plan Review Committee.

Commissioner Toliver asked that the other Commission Guidelines and Strategic Plan Review Committee members consider meeting an hour before the monthly Advisory Commission meetings to work out verbiage issues. While much of the work is being done by email, this will be a good work to work out details prior to presenting documents to the entire Commission.

**For the Good of the Order** – Chairman Cushing thanked Gabe Forsberg for coordinating the women veteran session during the American Legion state convention and will be recommending that it be continued.

Commissioner Krula wanted to formally thank Terrie Gent for her year of leadership as the Chair, which was applauded.

When asked if there were any support that could be provided by the Commission for the next women veteran conference, transportation continues to be a problem for some. Military sexual trauma (or MST) continues to be an issue for a large population within the women veteran community.

Ron Perkins asked for support in collecting funds to be used to purchase bottled water for homeless veterans. He will get that information to the agency's Public Information Officer, Dave Hampton, if additional assistance is needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 p.m. The next meeting will be held August 9, 2012.