

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission

4141 N. 3rd Street (North S. Herrera Way), Phoenix, AZ 85012

Thursday – May 12, 2011

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners

Gary Fredricks, Chairman
Terrie Gent, Vice Chair
George Cushing
Phil Hanson
Jeffrey Olson
David Toliver, Sr.
Ken Yamanouchi

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Joey Strickland, Director
Dave Hampton, Public Information Officer
Katherine Harding, Exec. Asst. to Director
Gabe Forsberg, Strategic Planner/Women Vets

Absent

Lori Kiefer (who tendered her resignation)
Lionel Sanchez

Guests

Tom Sloan, Commander, American Legion Post 137
Don Leonard, Service Officer, Am Leg Post 137
Monica Cabrera, Public Affairs, VA Regional Office
Joe Cortez, Minority Vets Rep, VA Regional Office
David Alegria, Exec VP, Vietnam Vets of America
Ted Baker, member of the American Legion

Call to Order –The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Gary Fredricks. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as prepared.

Communications: No official correspondence was received by the Commission, but the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services received a letter of resignation from Commissioner Kiefer. Her change of jobs in Tucson interfered with her ability to attend the meetings. Director Joey Strickland forwarded the letter to the Governor's Office.

Agency Report

Director Strickland provided the status on various activities statewide.

- The military women's conference was a success and he will be working with the planning committee for the 2012 conference at the May 19 After Action Report meeting.
- He may have an opportunity to acquire land south of Marana for use as a veteran cemetery.
- Vice Chair Gent recommended that master gardeners be used to help with landscaping at cemeteries and Director Strickland suggested she also speak with Wayne Ellis with the National Cemetery (480) 513-3600.
- The National State Directors of Veterans Affairs is also working to address the backlogs of VA claims.
- The Phoenix VA Medical Center administrator medically retired and Dr. Robbins is the temporary director there.
- Each state is working on a 50 year anniversary event to commemorate the Vietnam War. The agency is working to host a dinner by partnering with the Purple Heart this fall.

Legislation

Dave Hampton provided a recap of the last legislative session. Sine die (the end of this session) was April 20.

- March has been a very difficult time to hold a regional meeting because it is in the thick of the legislative session. The Commission should look at moving the date of the regional in future.
- Linda Fulkerson intended to attend the Commission meeting to propose that the Unified Arizona Veterans (UAV) and the Advisory Commission work together to support legislative issues of importance to the veteran community. She is a former Commissioner and is on the UAV Legislative Committee. She was ill, but Chairman Fredricks was able to discuss the proposal and will add it to a future agenda.
- The Hopi tribe was very appreciative of the Commission supporting its resolution to recognize the Hopi Code Talkers.

Proposal for ADVS In-house Counsel

Jeff Olson moved to send a letter to the Governor, recommending that she include an in-house counsel in the department's budget. George Cunningham seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Vice Chair Gent will draft the letter.

Chinle Action Items and Matrix Issues Status

Commissioner Cushing categorized all of the actions and presented his report at the last meeting. There are no pending actions.

Next Regional Meeting

The next meeting will be in region #4 under the leadership of Commissioners Olson and Toliver. They are looking for hotels in the region. They will need the lapel microphone on September 10, 2011.

- There are about 15 media contacts for the area that they will be reaching.
- They have a book that lists city and other officials in the area who will be invited. State lawmakers will also be invited.
- Colorado River Indian Tribe (CRIT) should be invited.
- Golden Valley is an excellent place to locate vets who would be interested in attending the meeting. Bill Messer, State Commander for the Vietnam Veterans of America is also a good contact.
- Director Strickland emphasized the need to get in touch with the individual posts and chapters to get good attendance.

Honoring an Outgoing Commissioner

Ken Yamanouchi was given a certificate of appreciation from Governor Janice K. Brewer for his six years of service on the Commission. He was also provided with a plaque by Director Strickland acknowledging his leadership over this time, especially while the Chairman of the Arizona Veterans' Service Advisory Commission. During his two terms, Commissioner Yamanouchi has witnessed two deaths of Commissioners, four resignations, and three department directors. He suggests that incoming Commissioners be provided with a tour when the Chairman orients the newly appointed Commissioners. Chairman Fredricks thanked him for his service during tumultuous times with both the agency and the department.

Commission Guidelines

Commissioner Yamanouchi provided a document that could be incorporated into the Commissioner's guidelines that could help Commissioners identify areas where they need assistance. Chairman Fredricks opened discussion of meeting frequency, including regional meetings. The Commissioners

agreed to meet each month, which means that the June and July meetings will be held in 2011. Chairman Fredricks will prepare a cover letter for the guidelines and revise the guidelines accordingly.

For the Good of the Order

David Alegria presented an award to Col. Strickland from Mayor Walkup from Tucson. The agency was instrumental in supporting the 23rd annual NAM Jam and this was an opportunity to thank him.

Commissioner Cushing introduced Tom Sloan from the American Legion in Tonopah. His Veterans Service Officer passed out talking points which will become part of the permanent record. He requested support for the 1260 square miles in his area as he requested assistance from the federal government. Col. Strickland met with the former administrator of the VA Medical Center about issues relating to Community Based Outpatient Clinics to bring treatment closer to the veterans that need service. Additionally, there were significant issues relating to the delivery of health care. Commander Sloan's issues are not unique. George Cushing moved to prepare a letter to Susan Bower, the Director of VISN (Veterans Integrated Services Network) 18, for a meeting regarding CBOCS and issues relating to the health services delivered. Vice Chair Gent seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Commander Sloan was also invited to attend the Unified Arizona Veterans meeting on the 1st Saturday of each month.

Vice Chair Gent suggested that all veteran consortiums follow the lead of the Unified Veterans Council in Sierra Vista; invite the ombudsman from the responsible VA Medical Center so that their organizations have a specific contact. At the UVA, the Community Contacts person actually handed out cards to all present and invited them to call with any issues.

Chairman Fredricks adjourned the meeting at noon. The next meeting will be held June 9, 2011.