

**Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission**  
4141 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (North S. Herrera Way), Phoenix, AZ 85012  
Thursday – June 9, 2011

**MINUTES**

Advisory Commissioners

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

Guests

Linda Fulkerson

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Homer Rodgers, Assistant Deputy Director  
Michael Booker, Fiduciary Dept. Accounting Mgr.  
Katherine Harding, Exec. Asst. to Director  
Gabe Forsberg, Strategic Planner/Women Vets

**Call to Order** –The meeting was called to order at 9:56 a.m. by Vice Chair Terrie Gent. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as prepared.

**Communications:** Chairman Gary Fredricks sent a letter dated 6/3/11 to the Governor, recommending she approve in-house counsel for the Fiduciary Department. An invitation to attend the Navajo Stand Down on June 17 was also received (which will be attended by key leaders from the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services leadership).

**Plans for 2012 Legislation:** Linda Fulkerson, former Commission Chairwoman and currently on the Unified Arizona Veterans' (UAV) Legislative Committee, asked to partner with the Commission. The UAV asked Linda to meet with the Commission to see if there might be a way to join forces to legislatively address issues of importance to Arizona veterans. Vice Chair Gent proposed tabling this agenda item for the July meeting and there was no opposition.

**Agency Report**

Director Joey Strickland had a scheduling conflict and was not able to attend the meeting. Assistant Deputy Director Homer Rodgers provided the status on various activities.

- The Tucson veteran home is on schedule and construction is 98% complete. October 18 is the anticipated date for the first admission. The dedication will be on Veterans Day.
- Expansion/enhancement of the Sierra Vista cemetery is a priority for the VA and the department hopes to receive funding at the start of federal fiscal year 2012. If the project is funded as anticipated, construction could start as early as February 2012.
- There is another parcel of land at Camp Navajo which would be more appropriate for use as a cemetery than the previously selected property. The ball is now in the court of the department to coordinate the land survey and acquire the land.
- Each state is working on a 50 year anniversary event to commemorate the Vietnam War and the agency will host a dinner this October.

**Fiduciary:** Chairman Fredricks indicated that he first learned about the Auditor General report from an article in the newspaper. Vice Chair Gent indicated that Director Joey Strickland and Robert Barnes talked with her June 8 to discuss the findings of the Auditor General on the Fiduciary Division. Vice Chair Gent recommended that the performance audit be added to the July agenda, which would allow the Commissioners an opportunity to read the report in its entirety and ask questions at that time.

## **Regional Meetings**

September 2011

- The next meeting will be in region #4 under the leadership of Commissioners Olson and Toliver on Saturday, September 10, 2011. It will be held at Manzanita Baptist Church (MBC) Gymnasium *[added after the meeting: 2040 Golden Gate Ave., Kingman, AZ 86401]*.

Future regional meetings

- Chairman Fredricks, who was participating by telephone and not leading the meeting, made the following motion, "For planning purposes for the 2012 regional meetings, meetings will be scheduled during the months of February, May, August and October." The motion was seconded by George Cushing and unanimously passed.
- Chairman Fredricks and Vice Chair Gent will meet with Mike Klier, Veterans Service Division Director, to discuss opportunities to maximize veteran participation.

### **Status Report on Letters Assigned in the May Meeting:**

- The letter recommending that ADVS hire in-house counsel was sent out June 3, 2011. Copies were distributed to all present.
- Request to meet with the VISN (the VA's Veterans Integrated Service Network) 18 Director, Susan Bowers:
  - George Cushing moved to table the preparation of the letter, pending a briefing from Director Strickland about actions he has taken to address service delivery concerns. The motion was seconded by Lionel Sanchez and passed unanimously.

**Plans to Orient Incoming Advisory Commissioners:** Vice Chair Gent asked the Commissioners that they email her a list of the information that would have been helpful to them as new appointments. Lionel Sanchez indicated he would help her develop an orientation curriculum. When the new Commissioners have been appointed by the Governor, they will be invited to an orientation.

**Enhancing the VA's National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona:** Vice Chair Gent will see if there is interest from the Master Gardeners of Maricopa County to assist the National Cemetery. If so, she will get them in touch with Wayne Ellis, Cemetery Director who is also reportedly a master gardener.

Vice Chair Gent adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m. The next meeting will be held July 14, 2011.