

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

San Diego County Veterans Service Office
5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310, San Diego CA 92123
June 11, 2016

Meeting Held at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park (VMC)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Benjamin Dillingham, Member at Large; Nancy Owen, Member at Large; Mary Beth Newton, District 1; Michael Robledo, District 5; John Weaver, District 4; Ted Kagan, District 2; William Rodriguez, Member at Large.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Laurie Martell, District 3

OTHERS PRESENT

Ray Flores, Executive Director of the San Diego Veterans Coalition, County of San Diego;
Michael Channick, Physician Advocates for Veterans (PAVE)

1. Call to Order

Called to order by Mary Beth Newton

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Introductions/Public (3 minutes)

Michael Channick, retired physician, served 2 years as a physician at Clark Air Force Base hospital in the Philippines Vietnam years of 1971-1973, here representing the non-profit 501(C)(3) called Physicians Advocates for Veterans or PAVE. This organization pairs veterans, at no cost to the veteran, with a retired physician who acts as their medical advocate for educational navigation purposes; explaining medical terminology, defining medical terms, explaining tests, and helping them prepare questions for their next visits as well as going to medical visits with them if they request it. PAVE is part of the San Diego County Veterans Coalition. They have an office at 2-1-1.

4. Approval of Minutes Previous Meeting

Motion to approve the prior meeting minutes by Ben Dillingham, seconded by John Weaver and approved by all.

5. Chairman's Report

Mary Beth reminded members to complete the Ethics Training and the Incompatibility form.

Legislative:

John Weaver gave an update about the Toxic Exposure Research Act and said the bill cleared all committees and is before the House and the Senate for adoption.

Mr. Dillingham said that the United States Senate had passed an appropriations bill that allowed the VA to provide in vitro fertilization (IVF) to veterans forced into retirement due to their injuries. The Pentagon provides IVF services to active duty personnel, but the VA is currently prohibited in providing the services to veterans.

Mr. Dillingham noted that Mira Costa College received a \$250,000 grant from the Small Business Administration to open the only center in Southern California designed to help veterans to go into business for themselves.

One VA

Nancy Owen said next meeting on Wednesday May 18 at 9:30 am and the VA Hospital.

Last meeting updates:

- Robert Smith is the acting director at the VA Healthcare system alternates with Cynthia Abair. The announcement for a new director has closed but it is unsure how soon the new director will be selected.
- Rex Kearn is the new Director for the Fort Rosecrans and Miramar National Cemeteries and Patrick Prieb is the Director for the VA Regional Office.

Nancy will give a point of contact at the regional office if anyone has an event and they want to have the Vietnam Veterans Commemoration Certificates and pins presented. They will do this through next year as part of the 50th Anniversary.

Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)

The Foundation meeting was last week and the same officers were re-elected:

- Dennis Schulz, President
- Bruce Brown, Vice-president

- Bob White, Treasurer
- Nancy Owen, Secretary

There are 303 veterans currently at the home. The Memory Center is still at the forefront of discussion. Assembly-member Lorena Gonzales and Senator Ben Hueso are on board with discussion with Supervisor Greg Cox. Obtaining funding for staffing of a memory Care Unit is a major issue.

The CVVH Naval Officers' Spouse Club (NOSC) recently donated 3 large televisions for the CVVH. The previous televisions were smaller and outdated. Each year they are able to grant about \$2000 in equipment needed. Total amount on hand currently for the Foundation is \$163,000. The other major fund raiser for foundation is the VFW Fun Walk in November besides the Golf Tournament in May.

United Veterans Council (UVC)

John Weaver attended. Points discussed was veterans Homelessness

Office of Military & Veterans Affairs (OMVA)

Ray Flores gave the OMVA update for Wil Quintong

- South Region Live Well Center opening was a success. Very well attended. All areas are fully functioning and the center is very busy.
- Outreach offices are extended to Poway and Alpine through vet-connect, and Ramona face to face.
- The OMVA is very busy due to the College Fee Waivers processing season.

The San Diego Veterans Coalition (SDVC) members are now 142 from 130 earlier this year. 30 new members are in process of being vetted. There are new member applicants of about 7 per week.

The SDVC was invited to speak at the California VA Conference in Sacramento earlier this year. A number of other cities were also asked to speak and the feedback was the collaborative model that the Coalition and the San Diego Veterans Community embodies is far and above other cities in California.

The SCVC was also invited to Dallas, TX to attend a national level conference and is being asked to be the model at the national level of how military veterans support organization and offices can come together in a collaborative and be successful and effective in providing support to the community.

211 San Diego is looking at implementing a new technology, "Unite Us Platform". The ability to for the veteran to establish a profile and being given the all resources available based on their needs and original profile.

6. Community Reports

Mr. Dillingham remarked that the United States Marine Corps owed many of its traditions and practices to the Royal Marines. He wished to honor the Royal Marines in recognizing that this was Queen Elizabeth II's 90th Birthday Observance and that Her Majesty serves as Commander in Chief of the United Kingdom's Armed Forces.

Mr. Dillingham stated that this was King Kamehameha the Great Day (1782-1819). King Kamehameha was an early practitioner of amphibious warfare in uniting the Hawaiian Islands, and would have been a United States Marine had Hawaii then been part of the United States.

Mr. Dillingham noted the recent passing of Muhammed Ali, and observed that, while he was not a veteran, he served the cause by protecting the United States Constitution in exemplary fashion from domestic enemies.

Mr. Dillingham mentioned that he would be attending Globe & Anchor Salute 2016 on Saturday evening, which is a benefit for the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Museum Foundation.

Michael Robledo spoke about studies being conducted on possible physical changes to the brain on patients with PTSD rather than only mental symptoms. He spoke about a study "Compassion Meditation" helps veterans learning methods to cope with PTSD. There are several other studies on the brain and they are asking for veterans' participation.

Ray Flores noted that Saturday, June 18, at the Liberty Station conference center, Operation Engage America is hosting their annual PTS & TBI education and awareness event. There will be over 100 organizations coming in to the event help the veteran community aware of resources available nationally and within the community.

Nancy spoke about the passage of the "Assisted Suicide" law in California and how the Chula Vista Veterans Home will handle it. A letter was sent to all residents explaining that assisted suicide would not be allowed at the home, however, residents would be allowed to seek these services elsewhere. If the resident decides not to go through with the procedure, he or she would be allowed to return to the home.

Nancy reminded members about the Gary Sinise, Lt Dan Band's concert happening this coming weekend at the Hotel Del Coronado beach from 5pm to 7pm. Tickets are for sale on Hotel Del website. Proceeds will support the Gary Sinise Foundation which provides accessible homes for wounded warriors and other support for veterans and their families.

Unfinished Business

VAC Nomination of Officers 2016-2017

Michael Robledo was nominated for VAC Chair

Nancy Owen was nominated for Vice Chair

William Rodriguez was nominated for Secretary

Mary Beth opened the floor, no other nominations. Ben Dillingham motion to close, it was seconded by Michael Robledo.

Ben Dillingham moved for nominations passing, it was seconded and passed by all members.

7. New Business

No new business

8. Closing Remarks

Mary Beth thanked everyone for their support over her term and stated she will remain as the representative for District 1.

9. Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.