

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

Saturday, November 10, 2012, 9:30 a.m.
San Diego County Veterans Service Office
5560 Overland Ave. Ste 310, San Diego, CA 92123

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Terry Jensen; Nancy Owen; Steve Arends; Ben Dillingham III; Laurie Martell; Tom Splitgerber; Will Rodriguez

MEMBERS ABSENT

Chip Dykes; John Weaver

OTHERS PRESENT

Sterling McHale, Representative for Office of Chairman Ron Roberts

1. Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Led by Terry Jensen
3. Introductions/Public Input (3 minutes)
Members and Public introduced themselves.
4. Approval of Minutes Previous Meeting
Approved
5. Chairman's Remarks
None
6. Committee Reports (Limited to 5 Minutes)
 - Legislative
Discussed Legislative report (Attachment A). Congress has been campaigning and making sure votes get counted this week. On the fiscal Cliff and Sequestration, the President indicated a deal will be worked between now and the end of December to slow or revert the massive budget cuts and tax hikes that are supposed to happen on New Year's Eve this year.

In San Diego County, a lot of the elected officials talked about the impact on civilian workforce that work for the defense department here in the county and number of defense contractors that may be force to lay employees off.

State Assembly and Senate are in recess. Composition on both has changed. It appears that one party now has majority in both Assembly and Senate, giving control to override a veto by the Governor. This is the first time in decades or ever that one party has complete control of both houses.

Assemblyman Nathan Fletcher's AB-1088 bill update. It appears we are going to be short of the \$250,000 needed to be raised this calendar year from the income tax refund donations. We are at \$203,850.

- One VA
Meeting for the month of November was cancelled. It was the day before Thanksgiving a lot of key people were going out of town. The next One VA meeting will be at the VA Regional Office at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday the 19th of December, 4th floor training room.

- Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)
Census still over the funded 305. The Chula Vista Veterans Home is still trying to fill vacancies for jobs available. Veterans looking for State employment should apply.

Steve thanked supporters of the 11th Annual Walk for Veterans fundraising hosted by VFW but benefits the Chula Vista Veterans Home support Foundation last Saturday. Steve also thanked the members of the Council who helped out.

Terry reminded today is the Marine Corps birthday.

Nothing new on the opening for Fresno or Redding Veterans Home. The foundation is still working diligently meeting again in December to try to create a Alzheimer's-Dementia unit in the Chula Vista Veterans Home.

Nancy asked for a moment of silence for Retired Navy Lieutenant Bobby Price and President of the Chula Vista Veterans Home Support Foundation.

- United Veterans Council (UVC)
Next UVC meeting November 17, 9:30 am at VMMC.
- Veterans Day Parade
Terry updated the parade is on.
- Miramar National Cemetery
Steve mentioned Pete Young is the new Director, Navy veteran. Has done a lot of great things around the country.
- Veterans Coalition (SDVC)
No update.
- County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)
Tom shared about his week at Washington DC and his meetings with VA. Not sure what Secretary Eric Shinseki s going to do. They really have enjoyed him as far as changing the culture in the VA. Huge changes are coming one of how claims are going to be submitted. They are to be done electronically. Basic format is great. Still some things to work out but San Diego are scheduled to start December 15. Is being done in other regional offices already. Tom thinks is a very positive thing down the road for the veterans. It will encourage all of the outside VA people to work together in a partnership.

- Community Reports

Laurie updated on her reappointment due January 7 and it will have to wait until January due to the fact that it is not know who is taking Slater- Price's place yet.

Steve updated Mary Beth Newton has talked to Supervisor Cox, no official interview yet, but he is very confident she will be his successor.

Ben wished all marines a happy birthday. Also expressed his appreciation for all other services' support and assistance over the years. Also shared last night at the LGBT center the Wall of Honor was inaugurated.

Will also addressed the LGBT community honored 12 Veterans yesterday. Members of the LGBT community going back to World War II, Vietnam, Iraq, a couple of Pearl Harbor survivors.

Nancy shared about the 23rd Military's Women's Luncheon honoring World War II Veterans. There were over 100 women there. The committee interviewed women ages ranging from 85 to 102. It was really well done, probably one of the best luncheons ever. Everyone had a great time.

Sterling wished a happy birthday to all marines. Sterling update on the Mid Coast project for the trolley line to be extended from old town up along the coast to the UTC area and go straight past to the VA. Also mentioned this month is a fundraising campaign for Men's health. He is participating by growing his facial hair to raise money.

Tom shared on his way back from DC he got to be in an Honor Flight. 15 World War II veterans coming back from the World War II Memorial, 1 female and 14 men. He enjoyed talking to all these people. He spoke to a Pearl Harbor survivor an original member of chapter 3.

Nancy mentioned Stuart Hedley, one of the Pearl Harbor survivors, and Robert Cardenas received lifetime achievement awards at the San Diego County Veteran of the Year Ceremony.

Co-Veterans of the Year for San Diego County 2012-2013 were Ron Stark and Tony Stewart

- Updates

Justin Singer volunteered to handle the legislative reports for VAC meetings in next year.

7. Unfinished Business

None

8. New Business

Agenda item - California Department of Veterans Affairs Revenue Agreement.

The Veterans Advisory Council reviewed this item on November 10, 2012 and recommended approval.

9. Closing Remarks

10. Adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Steve Arends' Legislative Report For San Diego County VAC Meeting 11/10/12

Federal Legislation

- **“Fiscal Cliff” & Sequestration.** During the presidential debate on 10/22/12 President Obama said that “sequestration won’t happen,” but by law, sequestration must begin on January 2, 2013. It’s now up to the lame duck 112th Congress that reconvenes on Tuesday, 11/13/12, to tackle the planned \$487 billion cut over the next 10 years of the DoD budget. \$1.2 trillion must be cut over 10 years, as part of the sequestration act, with DoD absorbing half of the cuts in discretionary spending. Some in Congress are even suggesting that DoD absorb over 50% of the mandatory cuts. For now, it appears that VA funding for essential programs will not be affected by the sequestration budget cuts. Trying to balance our nation’s debt, and budget woes on veterans, those now serving in our Armed Forces in wartime, their families, and military retirees is not the solution Americans want to see. It’s up to our elected officials in Congress, and the President, to address this sequestration issue. On 11/8/12 Military Times reported that some sort of “consensus forming for lame duck deal to delay sequester cuts.” It’s reported that the DoD has begun planning for “billions of dollars in spending cuts slated to take effect January 2, 2013.” Impact on employment in San Diego County is yet to be determined.
- VFW changed its web site (blog) to track veterans’ legislative efforts. It is no longer: <http://www.vfwonthehill.org/> Last month the blog changed to <http://theVFW.blogspot.com>.
- To track both U.S. House and U.S. Senate bills, go to: <http://Thomas.loc.gov>. At the center top of the web page, got to the “Legislation In Current Congress” box and simply type in the bill number or key word.

State Bills

- Both the state Assembly & Senate are in recess, and will convene their regular 2013-14 session on 12/3/12. Although the final vote totals from the 11/6/12 general election aren’t official yet, it appears that one party now has two-thirds majority in both the Assembly and Senate, thereby giving them complete control over taxes and expenditures. If the one party decides to vote together, they can now even override a veto by the Governor, who is from that same political party. Prop 30 was approved by California voters this week, so income taxes and sales tax are also going up. The income tax hike for higher income taxpayers is retroactive to 1/1/12, and the sales tax hike goes into effect 1/1/13, per Prop 30.
- Assemblyman Nathan Fletcher’s (I, 75th, San Diego) AB-1088 from 2010 established the “**California Veterans Home Fund.**” In 2011, **19,001** California taxpayers donated **\$211,089** from their state income tax refunds to this new Fund to help the residents at our six California Veterans Homes. Taxpayers already donated **\$203,850 in Jan-Oct 2012**. We must hit a threshold of **\$250K** for the new tax year by the end of December 2012 in order for this Fund to remain on next year’s state income tax forms. For those who might be late-filers this year, please remember this Fund on your state Form 540 tax return. If the \$250K threshold isn’t reached by 12/31/12, this Fund will be replaced on the 2012 California Income Tax Form 540 that all taxpayers must file in 2013.
- To obtain updates on all California legislation, go to: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html>.