

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

San Diego County Veterans Service Office
5560 Overland Ave. Suite 310, San Diego, CA 92123
November 8, 2014

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mary Beth Newton, Chair District 1; Ben Dillingham III, Member-at-Large; Ted Kagan, District 2; John Weaver, District 4; Terry Jensen Member-at-Large; Nancy Owen, Member-at-Large; William Rodriguez, Member-at-Large; Wil Quintong, Interim VSO

MEMBERS ABSENT

Laurie Martell, District 3 (E); Michael Robledo, Vice-Chair District 5 (E); Jose Luis Betancourt, Jr., CMDR Naval Base SD (U)

OTHERS PRESENT

Rob Winkler, Chula Vista Veterans Home; Lisa Marie Sanchez, Pre-planning Advisor for Dignity Memorial at El Camino Memorial Park.

1. Call to Order

Mary Beth Newton, called the VAC meeting to order at 9:30 am

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Introductions/Public Input (3 minutes)

4. Approval of Minutes Previous Meeting

Motion was made and seconded to approve prior meeting minutes

5. Chairman's Report

Mary Beth Newton attended the San Diego County Veteran of the Year Award Luncheon. She was nominated and she is honored to have been the runner up. Congratulations to Bill York who is the 2014 San Diego County Veteran of the Year, he is the Chief Operating Officer of San Diego 211. Also, Will Hays received the first Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award and the award is named after him from now on.

Mary Beth also spoke about board vacancies and noted both Terry Jensen's and John Weaver's terms expire in January 2015 Terry will not extend his term and John advised he does want to extend his term. Mary Beth asked for them to notify the Clerk of the Board in writing, email would be sufficient and also their respective Supervisor's office. This way the County clerk can advertise the one vacancy to the public.

Mary Beth informed the members that HHS Advisory Board is requesting photographs of VAC Members. They will be posted on the Advisory Board website. It is voluntary and they may abstain. Photographs need to be emailed to hilda.dusso@sdcounty.ca.gov, to be forwarded to HHS before the next VAC meeting on December.13, 2014.

Legislative

No reports

One VA

Steve Arends sent a note reminding the One VA meetings are the third Wednesday of every month at 9:30 am alternating between the VA hospital and the VA regional office in Mission Valley. The next meeting is Wednesday November 19, at 9:30 am at the VA Hospital.

Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)

Rob Winkler thanked the Chula Vista Veterans Walk Committee for doing a great job. Terry added there were over 100 walkers and over 100 volunteers that participated. Donations are still being accepted. The final report will be completed later in the month. Rob Winkler added the CVVH Holiday party will be on December 11, 2014.

Mary Beth spoke on a District 1 report. Supervisor Cox is going to ask the Board to support the effort to bring a Memory Care unit to the Chula Vista Veterans Home at the December 2nd, meeting of the Board of Supervisors; there is a letter drafted and it is on the agenda. The issue is that CVVH does not have a secure unit for residents suffering with memory loss, dementia or Alzheimer's. The California Department of Veterans Affairs, (CalVet), operates 8 veterans' homes through the state and 4 of them have Memory Care programs. If this recommendation is approved, it will direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter to CalVet urging creating of a Memory Care unit at the Chula Vista Veterans Home and also add to the County's Legislative Program support for legislation or administrative action and funding for a Memory Care unit at the veterans home in Chula Vista.

Wil spoke about the initiative of the County on Alzheimer's. A look was taken and was noted that San Diego has the largest concentration of veterans in our area and there is no Memory Care unit.

Ben Dillingham made a motion for VAC to support Supervisor Cox's effort to support a Memory Care unit for the Chula Vista Veterans home. Motion was passed.

United Veterans Council (UVC)

No report

County Veteran Service Office (CVSO)

Wil Quintong introduced himself as the interim VSO until a new replacement for Tom Splitgerber is hired. Tom retired on October 20, 2014. Wil is currently the Deputy Director for HHSA/AIS. He handles contracts for AIS. Also handles budget for the department, program support and IT. He is a 28 year Navy veteran and graduated from the Naval Academy in 1979. He is working with Nick Macchione on a recruitment posting that will be put out once the language is finalized. It will be a Veteran Service Officer/Director of the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs. This position will report directly to the director of HHSA, Nick Macchione but will be supported by AIS.

Wil spoke about the Intel & Recon for Military & Veterans meeting at AIS held at the County on November 4, 2014. This was to explore how County departments that support veterans, military and their families can work together to provide integrated services. There were 57 members of the County including directors of different departments. There is a report coming out on how to fill the gaps in veterans support.

Wil spoke about the Veteran Resource Center in Escondido and how the plan and layout has been approved. It includes 16 nonprofit organizations like Reboot, Interfaith and others. A one stop shop is being envisioned for veterans to get the support they need.

Wil spoke about the Vet Connect program involving the San Diego County libraries, starting with the rural ones first where veterans can be in front of a computer, via WebEx or a virtual network, and be able to speak face to face with one of the Veteran Representatives in the County Office for help with filling out forms or for questions regarding benefits.

Wil said he is available for any questions the VAC may have now and even after a replacement for Tom is hired.

6. Community Reports:

Lisa Marie Sanchez introduced herself. She is a licensed funeral director with the State of California. She passed out a brochure with services offered.

Nancy mentioned the 25th Military's Woman's Veteran Luncheon that was held last Saturday. There were over 100 women and men in attendance. Lindsey Sin was the guest speaker.

Ted Kagan invited everyone to the El Cajon Veterans Day ceremony. It will be on Wednesday November 12 at 11 am at the El Cajon City Hall.

Ben Dillingham made note that Monday November 10 is the 239th celebration of the Marine Corps birthday. A proud day for all that served.

Also Ben attended the LGBT Veterans Wall honor ceremony honoring those who have served during the "don't ask don't tell" period or prior under difficult circumstances. The ceremony included music and flags. There were over 200 people that participated and it was a beautiful ceremony.

John Weaver spoke about an email he received on a report on the veteran community in Los Angeles County. It is very well documented and over 60 pages. An email with the report will be forwarded to members.

7. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business

8. New Business

Mary Beth spoke about Mike Robledo's idea from the last meeting on bringing ideas to the forum to discuss or make policy recommendations to the Chief Administrative Officer and the Board of Supervisors regarding Veterans issues and services. Those issues should be brought forward and discussed at the meetings. The issues that are decided to go forward will be presented in writing and follow the communications process to be presented to the Board of Supervisors to see if they want VAC to pursue.

Ben feels there is no interaction between the VAC and the County to keep information on what the County is doing in respect to veterans. Maybe it would be just simply adding to the CVSO report and attending meetings regarding veteran services the County is hosting.

Mary Beth added each representative of each district individually seek out information through their respective point of contact on the respective Supervisor's staff to find out what that office is doing or proposing with regard to veterans issues.

Wil added a well-informed advisory council is best and this way better recommendations can be made. Wil Quintong will follow up with Nick Macchione as to what he envisions from this Council.

Ted Kagan mentioned the importance of getting to know the supervisor staff person and meet with them a few times a year.

9. Closing Remarks

No remarks

10. Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 am