

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

San Diego County Veterans Service Office  
5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310, San Diego CA 92123  
May 13, 2017

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Nancy Owen, Vice Chair, Member-at-Large; Benjamin Dillingham III, Member-at-Large; Anthony Stewart, District 1; John Weaver, District 4; Ted Kagan, District 2; Helen Horvath, Member at Large;

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Michael Robledo (Chair), District 5; Laurie Martell (E), District 3; Don Foster, Member at Large;

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Wil Quintong, County of San Diego Office of Military & Veterans Affairs Officers; Ray Flores, San Diego Veterans Coalition, Executive Director; Peter Klein, Vietnam Veteran Retired Navy; Seth Senecal.

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order by Nancy Owen, Vice Chair

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Introductions/Public (3 minutes)**

**4. Approval of Minutes Previous Meeting**

There was motion to approve the minutes, motion passed by everyone.

**5. Chairman's Report**

No chairman report

New member Dr. Helen Horvath introduced herself. Organizational Development Consultant, Psychological Practitioner with expertise in organizational and behavioral change systems and programs. Currently owns a company that does career transition for military.

Wil Quintong added Ms. Horvath is an appointee by Supervisor Dianne Jacob's office for Member at Large position, Seat 8.

Mr. Peter Klein Navy Vietnam veteran. Organizer for the San Diego Edition of the Veterans March on America happening in about 15 communities across the country and here in San Diego Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup>, kicks off at 10 am marching from Harbor Drive pass the USS Midway up Broadway to the Federal Building 700 Front St. The march is to raise awareness on veterans' issues.

### **Legislative**

Ms. Helen Horvath spoke about Senate Bill 30, California-Mexico Border Wall; federally funded structure, it may affect veterans' small businesses in San Diego. Anyone that works on the President's Border Wall cannot work for the State of California.

Wil Quintong added the county routed about 4 to 5 bills to the Office of Military & Veterans Affairs for analysis that may affect California veterans. Wil will route these to the VAC for analysis and recommendations to HHSA.

### **One VA**

Nancy Owen One VA April minutes just came out and she will forward them to Susie Dusso to send to the VAC members. The next One VA meeting will be May 17, third Wednesday of the month at the La Jolla Hospital 9:30am.

She also added, the regional office was able to get overtime to work in their backlog and the federal hiring freeze has not affected the VA Hospital. John added it also applies to the Regional Office.

Ben Dillingham said VAC function is to listen so he asked Peter Klein what the concerns are with the VA healthcare. Mr. Klein said the primary issues is the high suicide rates for active duty and veterans, PTSD, Substance Abuse and the long wait times to get help.

Discussion started among VAC members in regards to VA healthcare; Helen Horvath spoke and explained about the Choice Program and stated more clarification is needed for veterans. Ray Flores asked Mr. Klein about these concerns and wanted more specific information. He will be attending the One VA meeting on May 17 and can address these issues.

Ben Dillingham expressed there is a problem when the system is too complicated for the average person to comprehend especially if there are mental health issues. Ray Flores asked if there would be an advantage to have a service assist veterans in this instance.

Ray advised there is an action group at the San Diego Veterans Coalition, a Health Mentoring Guidance Advocacy Program trying to assess the needs for this service. John Weaver added yes, the need is there. Ray will follow up with John Weaver regarding defining the need. Seth Senecal, nonmember attendee, also affirmed about systems are overwhelmed and confusing to the average person and agreed a mentoring type approach and personal contact would help. Helen Horvath added people need to learn how to advocate for themselves. A patient advocate is not just problems but also for good things. Wil Quintong added if you need to state any comments in regards to the VA healthcare system is the UVC and the One VA platforms. UVC is open to the public but the One VA is only by representation or invitation.

### **Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)**

Nancy Owen updates:

- The Annual Golf tournament held last week Thursday had 88 golfers. Probably 15000 to 18000 was probably raised and that will be used toward buying things the state can't or won't buy, quality of life items.
- 17<sup>th</sup> year Founders day is next Saturday, he extended an invite to all
- CVVH has 305 Residents
- The next Board meeting will be in June.

### **United Veterans Council (UVC)**

No update

### **Office of Military & Veterans Affairs (OMVA)**

Wil Quintong gave the OMVA updates:

- The National Association of County Veterans Service Officers conference that San Diego is hosting will kick off with the President's Reception on board USS Midway on Sunday June 11. VAC will receive an invitation to that event. The Training Conference will be held at the Town & Country. Training conference for accreditation for Veteran Service Representatives throughout the nation.
- In October 13 the Women's Veterans Forum is coming up and it is in partnership with San Diego State being held at San Diego State.
- New Vet Connect Kiosk opened in the new library in Imperial Beach and getting ready to open another at the Valley Center Library.

- The college fee waivers season is here. It is OMVA's busiest season where we get a lot of walk-ins veterans and dependents to apply for the waiver. Last year we processed over 8000. We are the number 1 in the State for waivers processed.
- Wil Quintong went to Sacramento to receive the "Veteran Employer of the Year Award" from the California Employment Advocacy State Council on behalf of the County of San Diego County.
- Last Friday May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Mayor's office presented the county with a Proclamation that recognizes the county for that achievement. Mayor Faulkner was unable to attend but it was received by Supervisor Greg Cox at the County Operations Center SDVC meeting.
- New Veterans Services hires went to Santa Ana to received training and accreditation from CDVA, two of them got their accreditations.
- OMVA received 3 NACo Awards: Vet Connect, MVRC's and one for the VSR outreach program.
- OMVA is getting ready to do a new publication about the services we provide.
- 2018 a new MVRC is Oceanside will open up in a HHS Live Well Center, like the ones in Escondido and National City. In the MVRC's we have Veterans Services Representatives to assist veterans, also non-profit organizations that offer services from employment, housing and legal. Also, County offices if they need social services. All of these nonprofits are members of the San Diego Veterans Coalition.
- CACVSO Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors. The link will be sent to VAC members to read over regarding CVSO's performances.

## 6. Community Reports

Nancy Owen wished a Happy Birthday to the Navy Nurse Corps.

Ted Kagan said next week El Cajon at 1 pm America on Main Street to honor veterans in East County. Also, on Memorial Day there is an Annual Flag Ceremony in front of City Hall sponsored by the America Legion 303 at 3pm.

Anthony Stewart spoke about another US 4 Warriors Food Drive on Friday May 19, in Chula Vista. The usual turn out is 100 to 200 people and a lot of them are active duty dependents. The next one is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June in Linda Vista, both are at the American Legion Post. Active duty, active duty dependents, veterans or immediate family can sign up at [www.food4warriors.org](http://www.food4warriors.org) or show up.

Ben Dillingham thanked Wil Quintong, OMVA Director, he appreciates the OMVA for a good job and setting the bar higher and pushing forward and working said he was very

impressed. Also, thanked Peter Klein for his attendance and wished all mothers a Happy Mother's day.

John Weaver added on the Vet Connect Kiosks that a veterans can do a complete claim, fax it to the representative, sign it and if they are well prepared, the representative can submit it. No need to come back.

Nancy Owen, Vice-Chair, made a couple of announcements VVSD getting a new CEO Kimberly Mitchell will be taking over in July. Stand down is in July 21-23, and they are looking for volunteers. Go online many opportunities. Navy Nurses had their annual meeting at Embassy Suites by Hilton downtown. Thanks to Wil Quintong and OMVA office for providing Vietnam Era pins and certificates which were distributed to San Diego chapter members. Wil added if any organizations need the Vietnam Era pins and certificates to let him know.

Ray Flores spoke about the California Veterans Conference in Sacramento. The County of San Diego sent 8 representatives. As Wil stated, County of San Diego is considered the model to replicate and other counties are asking how they can do the same and how do they get started. The Women's Veterans Forum will be held on October 13 in partnership with the County of San Diego, San Diego State and the San Diego Veterans Coalition with significant support from Supervisors Bill Horn's office. Looking at 500 or greater attendees at Montezuma Hall for a full day session morning, keynote speakers, breakout panels and an evening reception. Also, working facilitating daycare. The theme and agenda are being developed and as soon there is more information they will be distributed to the community. The University of Southern Cal in September hosting the Annual State of the California Veterans Conference. Ray attended last year and found it very informative. Ray can provide information for last year's report plus the report for the State of the San Francisco veteran. The County of San Diego Live Well Program is having their 5K Event starting downtown coming up in July. Groundbreaking ceremony May 10, hosted by the Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton for the Intrepid Spirit Center at Camp Pendleton. It will be located next to the Pacific Views Center. The Center will focus on TBI injuries.

Anthony Stewart will come up with items VAC would like to add to the demographics report the county provides.

**7. Unfinished Business**

HHS Advisory Board Annual Review AB-1 Annual Review Form FY2016-17 and Ab2 By Laws. VAC will review policies and submit date of completion so we can submit the report by May 26.

**8. New Business**

None

**9. Closing Remarks**

No closing statements

**10. Adjourned**

11:30 AM