

SAN DIEGO MILITARY & VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Office of Military & Veterans Affairs

5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310, San Diego, CA 92123

Meeting held at County Operations Center (COC) 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

May 11, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Helen Horvath, Chair, Member at Large; Anthony “Tony” Stewart, District 1; Ted Kagan, Co-chair, District 2; Tony Teravainen, District 3; Jack Harkins, District 4; Nancy Owen, Member at Large; Karolyn Smith, Member at Large.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Wil Quintong, OMVA Director; Lance Luncker, CalVet – LINC; John Weaver, OMVA VSR; BillieKai Boughton, President of SD Women Veterans Network; Mr. Omar Passons, Director of Integrative Services; Jennie Reza, OMVA secretary.

1. Call to Order

The Veterans Advisory Council (VAC) meeting was called to Order by Helen Horvath, Chair at 9:30 am.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance** Led by guest Lance Luncker of CalVet.

3. **Introductions.** Members and guests provided introductions.

4. **Presentation of Proclamation to John Weaver.** Helen Horvath presented John Weaver with a Proclamation designating May 11, 2019 as John Weaver Day by the San Diego Board of Supervisors in thanks for the numerous years of service provided to the veteran's community. His work is greatly appreciated!

5. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes.** There was a motion by Ted Kagan to approve May's meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Tony Stewart and passed by all.

6. Chair's Report/Remarks Alzheimer's Care Project

- a. Helen Horvath attend Biocom Veteran's employment event May 10th. Supervisor Nathan Fletcher along with Board of Supervisor staff attended the event. The program is designed to assist veterans obtain employment in the Biotech field.

7. **Integrative Services Guest Speaker-** Mr. Omar Passons, Director of Integrative Services presented Supporting Collaborative Regional Solutions presentation. The goal of the County programs under the Integrative Services is to enable every San Diegan to live well.

- a. Omar Passons believes the single biggest issue will be how we address our seniors.
- b. Karolyn Smith stated that she worked for the Bio-tech industry and would like to collaborate with Mr. Omar Passons in this space.
- c. In June 2019 there will an internet-based application launched for Integrative Services through the County of San Diego.

8. Reports

a. Legislative

- (1) Tony Stewart is working on Legislative report. Provided Council members and attendees information relating to the VA Missions Act of 2018.

(2) Tony Stewart announces the Flag Disposal Project presented to him by Supervisor Cox has been approved. Eighty-one County Libraries will have flag disposal receptacle placed throughout the County. US4Warriors, along with the Boy Scouts and American Legion, will work out specific details for the delivery of disposal receptacles and pick-up. Mr. Quintong requested that the OMVA offices have a flag disposal receptacles.

(3) US4Warriors has opened their headquarters offices in Chula Vista in the Bay Front area.

(4) Tony Stewart has received a recognition and appreciation letter from the VA regarding the Food Program. It is a first of its kind pilot program in the nation and is in collaboration with the VA nutritionist. Data that can be captured from the program will be shared with other VA's across the country.

(5) Tony Stewart shared the Swing4Warriors golf tournament flyer on May 30th at Admiral Golf Course. 100% proceeds will go towards the food program.

b. One VA

- (1) Helen Horvath attended One VA meeting. The VA provided a slide presentation regarding the new claims application process. The VA relies upon non-profit organizations and County Veterans Offices to assist in the claims processing for veteran's disabilities. The VFW and other non-profits are losing Veteran Service Officers (VSO) to other groups who pay more and have a better managed workload. The VFW in San Diego has an approximate workload of 16,000 cases in initial stages of claims and also on appeal. There is only one VSO in the office to manage the cases.
- (2) Veterans who have legacy claims will be able to utilize the old method of processing by opting out of the new method of claims development and decisions. Claims must be in the system prior to February 2019.
- (3) The VA had a discussion relating to veterans' suicide in the country and will continue the discussion. The Chair will provide more information as provided by the VA and other organizations.

c. Chula Vista Veterans Home

- (1) Tony Stewart mentioned that US4Warriors started working on golf putting green and horseshoe pits. The State announces it will take over golf putting green project.
- (2) 19th year celebration of Veterans Home Founders Day will be held on May 18.
- (3) Golf Tournament raised \$25K in proceeds for the Foundation to provide quality of life items and services for the residents of the Chula Vista Veterans Home.

d. District 3 – Projects and Community Activities

- (1) Tony Teravainen stated he was unavailable in April to attend the MVAC meeting as he had a conflicting event at his home for the STEP Volunteer Appreciation Event.
- (2) District 3 will hold a military and veteran's Town Hall Meeting in June.
- (3) Tony Teravainen is working on a project with the City of San Diego Economic Development Department and Navy Region Southwest to create Military Day Cares in Military housing.
- (4) **San Diego Regional Chambers of Commerce Defense, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee** met on May 1st. The speaker was the XO of Naval Base San Diego. The XO shared an overview of upcoming changes with shifts and manpower in the next years.

- (a) The Committee Chairperson created 3 working groups.
- (b) Retiree Pay as Tax Exempt
- (c) Transition Assistance for Military
- (d) Improve process for transferring Military Spouse credentials

(5) **SB663** discussed. Brian Jones representative discussed the effort to exempt taxation on property that is exclusively for charitable purposes, such as American Legion and VFW.

(6) **San Diego Military Family and Collaborative** met on April 21st. 85 attendees discussed the topic on “Military Families.”

(7) **Coast Guard Update.** On April 30 there was a Commissioning Reception for the Commissioning of the new CG Fast Response Cutter Benjamin Bottoms, which occurred on May 1, that will patrol the coasts off Coast Guard Sectors San Diego, Long Beach and Los Angeles. The SD Coast Guard City ESG met on May 7 to discuss their activities. Captain Buzzella will be transferring to Alameda as District 11 Chief of Staff. Change of Command will take place on June 26.

(8) **San Diego Veterans Coalition (SDVC)** met and VVSD requested support for Stand Down.

(9) **America Legion Baseball** is trying to revitalize organization throughout San Diego.

(10) **Memorial Day** celebration at The Midway for the Freedom Concert.

(11) **Military Spouse Employment Project** was discussed. Tony Teravainen will report on the status.

e. Office of Military & Veterans Affairs (OMVA)

- (1) Wil Quintong discussed the By-Laws updates. He is pushing for docket date in July for approval. Official changes to the Board Letters occurred back in 1988 and 1994.
- (2) Board Event: Vets Moving Forward Project in May. It will be co-sponsored by Supervisor Desmond and Supervisor Gaspar. It will discuss services for incarcerated veterans.
- (3) Veteran’s Forum will take place November 2019 in NILWC. In 2020, the forum will be in District 4, Supervisor Fletcher’s District.
- (4) June 1st - Celebration of the Battle of Midway at The Midway.
- (5) Lance Lunker announced the CalVet Resource Books are available for distribution. Each Council member was provided a copy.

f. Veterans Museum

- (1) Jack Harkins announces the Veterans Museum at Balboa Park had the unveiling of Freedom Bell. The Bell has been traveling around the Country since 2013 and now the Veterans Museum will be the bell’s home.
- (2) The Gold Star Reception will be held at the Veterans Museum.
- (3) Armed Forces Day will be celebrated the 3rd Saturday in May at the Veterans Museum.

g. Bio-Tech

- (1) Karolyn Smith stated that she worked for the Bio-Tech industry. She stated that she will be traveling to Europe to meet with Tech Companies. Her purpose is to bring back tech products as a representative of the industry in order to meet and collaborate with the VA relating to the products for the veteran community.
- (2) Karolyn Smith announced Park Ride Fly USA for Memorial Day that offered a free day of airport parking when purchasing 3 days of paid parking.
- (3) Karolyn Smith is a civilian mariner who announced that Sail San Diego has free sailing for Memorial Day.

(4) Karolyn Smith operates a Facebook forum entitled the San Diego Veterans Forum where she places announcements.

h. **Aging and Independent Services (AIS)**

Ted Kagan's proposal, California Senior Legislation dealing with Veterans Affordable Housing-Section 8 has been picked up by Senator Rubio from Santa Cruz. It has passed the VA committee and now moving on to the Full Senate for a vote. If Legislation passes it will give Veterans Priority for Section 8. Ted Kagan's next proposal is on a Statewide Public Transportation Bus Pass. If a senior purchased a Bus Pass in San Diego it will be active in every County in the State.

9. New Business

- a. The Military and Veterans Advisory Council distribution list has reached more than 100 Community Partners.
- b. Helen Horvath would like to plan the Council's next 6-8 months with Community topics. She requested that all members provide input to an annual schedule of invited guests for networking and for each to review calendars for off-site meeting.
- c. Helen Horvath stated the Council will have 6 meetings a year and additional meetings to collaborate with the community as needed.
- d. Jack Harkins recommended that each Council member involve their Supervisor's input before taking task of going out to the community.

10. With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:36 am