

Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes
Special Commission Meeting (FY 2021)
March 5, 2021

- I. Chairwoman Laura Koerner called to order a Special Commission Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 9:00 a.m. on March 5, 2021, via live gotowebinar. The following Commissioners, constituting a quorum, were present:

Laura Koerner, Chairwoman
Kevin Barber, Vice Chairman
Kimberlee Shaneyfelt, Secretary
Mike Hernandez, Commissioner
Mary Dale, Commissioner

Also present was Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director.

Commissioner Mike Hernandez led the pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag, and Secretary Kevin Barber led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag.

- II. Public Comment.

Members of the public were encouraged to register for the webinar at the following link:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2998964557502904334>

No public comment was received.

- III. **Report, Presentation, and/or action regarding the emergency Fund for Veterans' Assistance grant funding and services.**

Jim Bracken, Director of Funds for Veteran Assistance, provided the report to Commissioners. The full impact of the Winter Storm 2021 on TVC's 2020-2021 grantee operations has yet to be measured. Last week and this week, we have spoken with over a dozen grantees about how the storm has impacted their operations. Some grantees are already receiving requests from veterans for financial assistance and food pantry items. We anticipate that in the weeks ahead after veterans have leveraged their homeowner's and renter's insurance policies for repairs and/or applied for financial assistance from FEMA – MORE veterans and their families may be seeking grant-funded services to help mitigate their financial distress. We have asked all current grantees to communicate their anticipated need for additional (emergency) funding by next Friday, March 12th. But grantees will most likely continue to receive requests for help for the next few months.

The TVC grant amendment process and approval authorities are outlined in FVA's Application and Award Policies and the 2020-2021 Request for Applications. The Commission delegated approval authority to the agency's Executive Director for three types of grant amendments: changes in project scope, project budget, and period of performance.

The Commission has not delegated the approval authority for grant amendments seeking an increase in funding. Therefore, the Commission must meet and approve requests for additional funding as those requests are received.

Looking at the Emergency Funding Request form, 25% of the current grant award is reflected because there is roughly one quarter left in the grant year. This is the same threshold used last year when emergency funding was approved for grantees during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It worked fine. As an illustration, two grantees requested and received 25% of their grant award, and when that 25% of additional funds were expended, they requested an additional 25% and were both approved. This request form, along with a job aid, is ready to distribute to select grantees pending the outcome of today's meeting.

FVA recommends the Commission approves the activation of FVA's emergency funding process effective today, with a proposed ending date of May 7, 2021 – a 9-week window for grantees experiencing an increase in demand for services to seek additional funding if required.

FVA recommends that all organizations and units of local government with 2020-2021 grants in General Assistance, Veteran County Service Officer, and Housing for TX Heroes programs be invited to apply. These three grant programs address CRITICAL SERVICES to veterans as we have described previously.

FVA requests the Commission consider delegation of approval authority to the TVC Executive Director for emergency funding to allow expeditious processing of the requests (as quickly as the same business day).

***Question** - Chairwoman Laura Koerner: So, this only applies to currently approved grantees for the 2020 year? It is not going to be giving new grants to new organizations that we have not vetted yet, is that correct?*

***Answer** - Jim Bracken: That's correct, ma'am. It only applies to our current grantees.*

***Discussion** – Chairwoman Laura Koerner: This is the second year we are going to implement this emergency process that we thought we were only going to have to do once. So, I was thinking if this time around it becomes successful, I'll work with Tom Palladino to get it on the agenda at a later meeting, where we may make this a permanent process. So that we don't have to approve the process every single time and either add it to our rules or procedures wherever appropriate so that this standard emergency process will be there. An if we have done it twice in a row and it worked well, I think that would be a good approach.*

***Discussion** – Executive Director Tom Palladino: I think the guidance for the rule for this procedure is excellent, and we'll have that prepared for the August meeting for the Commissioners to review. This procedure worked very well last March, April, May of 2020. So, I anticipate that this procedure will work again very well this time around.*

MOTION: Approve the emergency funding process as presented effective today, March 5th through May 7th, 2021, for the 2020 to 2021 grantees in the General Assistance, Veteran County Service Officer, and Housing for Texas Heroes programs.

MADE BY: Vice-Chair Kevin Barber

SECONDED BY: Secretary Kimberlee Shaneyfelt

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

IV. **Adjournment.**

Chairwoman Koerner asked each Commissioner for any closing remarks.

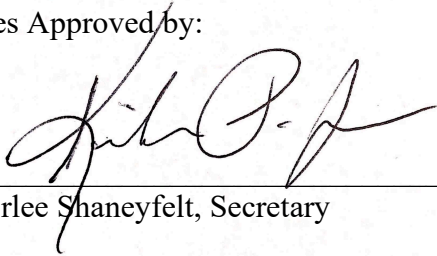
Each Commissioner extended their gratitude to Texas Veterans Commission staff for all their support and hard work in serving Texas Veterans.

Chairwoman Koerner provided closing remarks as well.

MOTION: Adjourn Special Meeting
MADE BY: Commissioner Mike Hernandez
SECONDED BY: Vice-Chair Kevin Barber
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

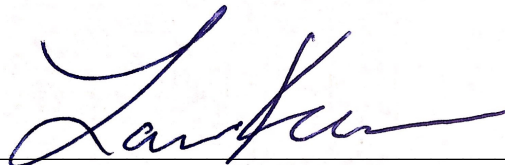
Chairwoman Koerner adjourned the meeting at 09:24 a.m.

Minutes Approved by:



5/13/2021

Kimberlee Shaneyfelt, Secretary



5/13/2021

Laura Koerner, Chairwoman