

**LAURA KOERNER**  
US Navy Veteran  
Chairwoman

**KIMBERLEE SHANEYFELT**  
Colonel, US Air Force (Retired)  
Vice-Chair

**MARY LOPEZ DALE**  
US Army Veteran  
Secretary



**MIKE P. HERNANDEZ**  
Corporal, US Marine Corps (Retired)  
Member

**KEVIN BARBER**  
US Army Veteran  
Member

**THOMAS P. PALLADINO**  
Colonel, US Army (Retired)  
Executive Director

## TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

### Veteran Services Advisory Committee

#### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023

10:00 a.m.

George W. H. Bush Building

1801 Congress Ave., Suite 14.100, Austin, TX 78701

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6878807953523125772>

#### I. Call to order.

- Earl Newsome, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03AM.

#### II. Roll call of Committee members.

- Jim Cunningham - GoToWebinar
- Jim Brennan - Joined the meeting via GoToWebinar after roll call
- Kathryn "Kitty" Meyers- GoToWebinar
- Earl Newsome - In Person
- Lee Rivas – Did not attend the meeting
- Larry Wallace – Joined the meeting via GoToWebinar after roll call
- Greg Gomel – GoToWebinar
- Shelly Mencacci – GoToWebinar
- Sara Henly – GoToWebinar

#### III. Public comment.

- There were no comments from the public.

#### IV. Approve the minutes of the VSAC meeting held November 2, 2022.

- Changes made to document title and Earl Newsome was in person for the meeting.
- **Motion:** Jim Cunningham moved to approve the minutes with two administrative changes noted above and Kitty Meyers seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## V. Election of Chair and Vice Chair.

### Chair Nominations

- Kitty Meyers began the discussion to see if Earl Newsome could serve as chair for another term. Cory Scanlon, TVC General Counsel, checked the rules and the chair is not barred from serving another term.
- Shelly Mencacci stated that Earl led the Committee during post-covid challenges and proves to be an excellent choice because of his performance as chair.
- **MOTION:** Jim Cunningham nominated Earl Newsome and Shelly Mencacci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **POINT OF ORDER:** General Counsel raised a point of order. Earl Newsome recognized Cory. He informed the committee that the previous nomination was not proper, stating that a member can only serve one two-year term as chair per term.
- Larry Wallace noted for the record he would like to make a recommendation to amend that rule so that a successful chair can lead the committee for longer than one term. Earl said he will speak on this at the commission meeting tomorrow.
- **MOTION:** Earl Newsome nominated Kitty Meyers for chair and Jim Cunningham seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### Vice Chair Nominations

- Earl Newsome nominated Shelly Mencacci. Shelly declined the nomination because she is pursuing her PhD at this time.
- **MOTION:** Jim Cunningham nominated Earl Newsome for vice chair and Shelly Mencacci seconded the nomination.
- Before a vote could be taken, Charlie Catoe, Program Division Director, asked General Counsel to review the rules for this nomination.
- **RECESS:** Earl Newsome moved to recess for five minutes at 10:22am.
- The motion passed unanimously.

## VI. Review TVC's response to the Employment recommendations.

- Anna Baker, Veterans Employment Director, provided a detailed response to the Employment recommendations the Committee presented to the Commission at the November 3, 2022, meeting.

- **Recommendation 1:**

Greg Gomel stated that each state agency must state how many veterans apply for positions. He asked if this information was available on the TVC website. Anna responded that this information is not listed on the website but is able to locate the data if requested. Also, she mentioned the agency is planning to launch a state agency veteran hiring campaign for state agencies to meet the veteran preference guidelines.

Larry Wallace questioned where Vocation Rehabilitation is located on the website and Anna stated this information needs to be added back to the

Employment section online.

- **Recommendation 2:**

There were no questions or discussion for recommendation #2.

**VII. Review TVC’s response to the Education recommendations.**

- Melanie Moynahan, Manager of Veterans Education, provided a detailed response to the Education recommendations that were presented to the Commission at the November 3, 2022, meeting.

- **Recommendation 1:**

Earl Newsome questioned if Exceptional Items (EIs) are reviewed by the Commission before the items are submitted to the legislature. Charlie Catoe, Program Division Director, stated EIs are listed in the Legislative Appropriations Request that was reviewed and approved by the Commission in August 2022.

Shelly Mencacci asked if the agency has begun its planning for the new education database and if stakeholders would be able to provide feedback on the design. Mr. Catoe replied that the agency is currently working on the proposal right now so as to be ready for when and if it passes the legislature. Charles Bryant, Operations Manager of Veterans Education, stated that stakeholders will be part of the process and testing will be done with institutions.

Jim Cunningham asked if there is a database administrator who will be assisting with the Request for Proposal process. Mr. Bryant replied that the database administrator developed the foundation of the proposal in order to submit this as an exceptional item. Charlie Catoe stated that the proposed database will be a completely new database versus trying to update the old system.

- **Recommendation 2**

There were no questions or discussion for recommendation #2.

- **Recommendation 3**

Greg Gomel and Kitty Meyers both mentioned to name the resources page located on the website to “Print and Video Resources.”

- **Recommendation 4**

Larry Wallace inquired how a veteran sends protected information to a school. Charles Bryant stated a school has upload processes and portals to do this. If the school does not do this, they may be subject to lawsuits. Melanie Moynahan added that the education department analyzes this through a risk assessment survey.

- **Recommendation 5**

Shelly Mencacci noted her excitement to hear about fillable PDF applications and the department’s relationship with the VA.

- **Final Comments:** Earl stated that the TVC’s response to these recommendations allows for transparency and action for the public to see.

**VIII. Discussion on 2023 Executive Director topics to enhance TVC services to**

**veterans, their families, and surviving spouses.**

Shawn Deabay, Deputy Executive Director, thanked the committee for all their work and previous recommendations. He recommends the committee take more time on future topics versus completing recommendations for a department in one quarter.

Larry Wallace stated that most of the current members served on previous committees and their experience and prior knowledge of TVC allowed this committee to have discussions that led to recommendations quickly.

Incoming Chairwoman, Kitty Meyers, will begin drafting a timeline for topics and schedule meetings for the committee to fully understand the Veteran Entrepreneur Program.

**IX. Discussion on agenda items, date/time, and location for the next Veteran Services Advisory Committee or Appropriate Subcommittee meeting.**

- The Committee will meet again on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 10AM to begin the Veteran Entrepreneur Program.
- Final Comments: Earl thanked the committee for all their support and the dedicated work done over the last two years. The Committee provided 21 recommendations for the Texas Veterans Commission during his tenure.

**X. Adjournment.**

Greg Gomel motioned to adjourn, and Larry Wallace seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:59am.

  
Signed Chair Kathryn "Kitty" Meyers

  
Date