

Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

**Second Quarterly Meeting (FY 2017)
February 8, 2017**

I. Call to order.

Chairman Eliseo Cantu called to order the 2nd Quarterly Commission Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 9:00 a.m. on February 8, 2017 At the Stephen F. Austin Building, Room 170, 1700 N. Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701.

The following Commissioners, constituting a quorum were present:

Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr. Chairman
Jake Ellzey, Secretary
Richard A. McLeon, IV, Commissioner
Dan Moran, Commissioner

Also present was Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director.

MOTION: To excuse Vice Chairman James Scott from the Second Quarterly Meeting (FY 2017)

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Secretary Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

Excused: Vice Chairman James Scott

Also present: See attached list.

Commissioner Richard McLeon led the opening prayer. Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag was led by Commissioner Dan Moran and Secretary Jake Ellzey led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag.

II. Public Comment.

Duncan McGhee, Former Director of the Veteran Entrepreneur Program, made public comment regarding a message about leadership, providing examples from the book, "Band of Brothers".

III. Approve the Minutes of the 1st Quarterly Commission Meeting held November 1, 2016.

The minutes for the 1st Quarterly Meeting held on November 1st, 2016, were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the 1st Quarterly Meeting held on November 1st, 2016 as presented.

MADE BY: Secretary Jake Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Richard McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee.

Jim Cunningham, Chairman of the Communication Advisory Committee, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The committee held their meeting on January 24, 2017 and introduced three new members. Jim Cunningham was reappointed as chairman at the meeting and the committee appointed Buster Horlan as Vice Chairman. Media Award recommendations took place. There were a small number of nominations. The committee discussed ways in which to promote the awards throughout Texas to receive more nominations. Regarding the submissions received, two were selected, one in television and one in print category.

V. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee.

Jerry Icenhower, Chairman of Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The committee reviewed general legislation updates, discussed the upcoming annual summit and USERRA laws. Texas has developed laws to protect our National Guard members however, other states (particularly those who border Texas) need to pass similar laws. The committee discussed ways to assist those states with initiating and enforcing the USERRA laws.

VI. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee.

David Escamilla, Manager of Funds for Veterans' Assistance, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Fund for Veterans' Assistance

Advisory Committee held on January 30 and January 31, 2017. Carrie Reyna was elected Chair at that meeting and Chuck Wright was elected Vice Chairman. There were 165 applications for grants totaling over \$36 million. Committee heard 108 presentations regarding grant applications. The committee will be ready to present the recommendations to the commission at the 3rd Quarterly Meeting in May.

VII. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee.

Victor Polanco, Director of Claims Representation and Counseling, provided a summary of the recent committee meeting conducted by the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee. Mr. Polanco informed the commission that Lara Spain was re-elected chairman of the committee and Paul Patches was elected as the vice chairman. The topics discussed at the meeting included the reorganization of Claims Representation and Counseling and how the VCSOs are adjusting to the new structure.

VIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Advisory Committee membership.

Cruz Montemayor, Deputy Executive Director provided the report regarding Advisory Committee Membership. The following are the recommendations for Commission approval with term beginning February 8, 2017:

Fund for Veterans Assistance Advisory Committee

Richard Hatfield-Reappointment

Veteran County Service Officer Advisory Committee

Zach Migura-New Appointment

Salvador Castillo-New Appointment

Keeyawnia Hawkins-New appointment

MOTION: To appoint/reappoint the recommended applicants to serve a two-year term effective February 8, 2017.

MADE BY: Commissioner, Richard McLeon, IV

SECONDED BY: Commissioner, Dan Moran

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Report, presentation and/or action regarding the Texas Veterans Commission Employee Engagement Survey.

Glenn Tramel, Director of Human Resources, provided the report regarding the Texas Veterans Commission Employee Engagement Survey. Mr. Tramel provided a brief background of the survey, provided an outline of employees surveyed through focus groups. Mr. Tramel will produce an Executive Report and provide to Executive Director with findings and recommendations. Chairman Cantu requested a copy of the final report when completed.

X. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Appropriation Year 2017 1st Quarter Operating Statement.

Michelle Nall, Chief Financial Officer, provided the Agency Summary regarding Appropriation Year 2017, 1st Quarter Operating Statement. There were no issues and budget is on target at this time.

XI. Report, presentation and/or action regarding acceptance of gifts.

Chip Osborne, Director of Resource Management, provided an oral report regarding the acceptance of gifts. A donation was provided, however did not specify where the funds should be applied. Mr. Osborne recommended the commission accept and decide where the funds will be applied. Chairman Cantu requested a thank you letter be provided to the donor.

MOTION: Approve the Acceptance of Gifts as presented and place funds in Women Veterans Program.

MADE BY: Secretary, Jake Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Commissioner, Richard McLeon, IV

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Executive Director Report.

Thomas Palladino, Executive Director, provided a report on the agency's priorities and activities over the last quarter. Mr. Palladino noted all his meetings and events he will be attending this upcoming quarter to include the upcoming Legislative session. Mr. Palladino and TVC staff will be testifying in House Appropriations, VABS, and the Defense and Veteran Affairs committee.

XII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Agency Programs and Division.

The Commissioners reviewed the Quarterly Program Reports that were previously provided. Directors were provided the opportunity to brief the Commission on any new items or highlight significant items that occurred within their program or division.

- A. Shawn Deabay, Director of Program Operations, requested each of the program managers to provide their individual reports. Mr. Deabay called first on Stan Kurtz, Director of Veteran Employment Services to provide his report. Mr. Kurtz discussed the success of the program. Mr. Kurtz also explained that VES is now the approving authority of Hilton Honors Program points for those in transition for job related travel. The Veterans are awarded 100,000 points through the Hilton Honors Program.

Pam Maercklein, Women Veterans Healthcare Liaison, provided the report on Women Veterans Program. Ms. Maercklein discussed the activities of the program, specifically spoke on the Texas Colleges and Rural Area Community Tour throughout Texas to reach our Veterans in the rural areas.

Victor Polanco, Director of Claims Representation and Counseling, provided his report. He explained that the agency has made over 86 site visits to Veteran County Service Officers (VCSO) throughout the state to create better communication and relationships. Mr. Polanco also stated the TVC Accreditation program has accredited 87 VCSO to date. He expects the number will reach 105 when pending issues are resolved.

Jose Silva, Health Care Advocacy Program Manager, provided his report. Mr. Silva provided the success's the program is experiencing with classification development and SOP development. He further informed the commission that in the current quarter, his team has made over 1,120 encounters with Veterans and attended 117 Outreach events.

Robyn Provost, Manager Veteran Entrepreneur Program, provided her report. Ms. Provost provided information regarding activities of VEP along with the success of the Houston VEP Academy where nine veterans were graduates.

Tammy Micallef, Director of Veterans Education, provided her report. Ms. Micallef explained that the MOU with the Higher Education Coordinating Board has been finalized. This MOU will allow more data sharing regarding Hazlewood which will improve analysis of the program. She further explained that VA has shifted the Program Approval Requirement back to the State Approving Agencies. Previously the law stated that Public Institutions of Higher Learning were deemed approved and re-evaluations of the

program were not required. Due to some inconsistencies in reporting, VA shifted the responsibility back to SAA and all programs will be reviewed annually. TVC will approve approximately 1,470 schools this year due to this change.

- B. Chip Osborne, Director of Resource Management, briefed the commission on the success' of Resource Management. Mr. Osborne spoke about the mirroring of process between the two Directorates of TVC to ensure consistency throughout the agency. Mr. Osborne further discussed the success of the Employee Survey Focus Group and the changes occurring due to the results of the findings. He spoke briefly on the State Hiring Freeze and how that will impact TVC. Lastly, he informed the commission that FVA has received and reviewed 186 grant applications. Over a two day period, FVA listened to presentations from the applicants. They are reviewing information and will make recommendations for approval. Mr. Osborne then introduced Greg Shigemasa, Manager of Communications and Outreach to provide his report.

Greg Shigemasa addressed the commission and requested his special guest, Rebecca Manley, Coordinator for the Texas State Library and Archive Commission to join him at the podium. Mr. Shigemasa and his team are collaborating with Ms. Manley for the "Read Across Texas Project- The Veteran Experience". Ms. Manley informed the commission that the launch of the project will be in March. On February 23, the Texas State Library will be hosting a panel with author, Ben Fountain, regarding his book "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk". The panel will use the book to begin the communication that will hopefully bridge the gap in understanding a veteran's experience.

Sue Jevning, Training and Event Planning Manager, provided her report. Ms. Jevning highlighted the program has begun the online training enrollment for Veteran County Service Officers. This training will help to provide accreditation to VCSOs. Training will begin in April. Ms. Jevning also explained that VMHP is also beginning online training for Peer Service Coordinators.

- C. Justin Coleman, Manager of Government Relations, provided a report on the major activities and accomplishments of the program, significantly the budget for TVC. The House and Senate have released their initial budget recommendations for FY2018-2019. The budgets from both chambers have identical projections for TVC. In summary, the initial budgets sustain current funding levels for the agency across the board and do not recommend any cuts to the agency programs.
- D. Tim Keesling, Manager of Veteran Mental Health Program Interim Director,

provided his report. Mr. Keesling informed the commission that VMHP has been assisting with the coordination and delivery of De-escalation of Trauma Affected Veterans Training with Local Law Enforcement Officers. As of today, the program has assisted in over 200 Officers being trained. Mr. Keesling also stated VMHP has identified and added 31 Licensed Mental Health Professionals to VMHP registry of military trauma-informed providers.

XIV. Executive Session.

Executive Session was held from 10:45 a.m. to 11:20a.m.

XVI. Discussion and take possible action on the items considered in Executive Session.

There were no items to take action on.

XVII. Discussion to set date, time, and location of next Commission Meeting.

The Commission agreed for the 3rd Quarterly Commission Meeting of FY17 be held on Wednesday, May 3, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Stephen F. Austin Building, room 170.

XVIII. Adjournment.

Chairman Cantu 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 our Texas Veterans. Chairman Cantu provided closing remarks as well.

MOTION: Adjourn

MADE BY: Commissioner, Richard McLeon

SECONDED BY: Commissioner, Dan Moran

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Cantu adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Minutes Approved by:



Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., Chairman

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

2nd Quarterly Commission Meeting
FY 2017 – February 8, 2017
9:00 a.m. – Stephen F. Austin Bldg. Rm 170
Speakers and Visitors

James Cunningham
Communication Advisory Committee

Jerry Icenhower
Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee

Paul Theobald
DVA

Mike Kirkland
Texas Workforce Commission

Lisa Howard
TDCJ

Jeremiah Kurtz
TxDMV

Rebecca Manly
Texas State Library and Archive Commission

Chuck Wright
Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee