

Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

Third Quarterly Meeting (FY 2017)

May 3, 2017

I. Call to order.

Chairman Eliseo Cantu called to order the 3rd Quarterly Commission Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 9:00 a.m. on May 3, 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
James Scott, Vice Chairman
Jake Ellzey, Secretary
Richard A. McLeon, IV, Commissioner
Dan Moran, Commissioner

Also present was Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director.

Also present: See attached list.

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

II. Public Comment.

Timothy Gasaway and Bruce Bower spoke on behalf of Texas Legal Services. Made a public comment regarding a grant application that was not awarded by the advisory committee on March 30, 2017 due to financial points and have now corrected those matters and request that the application be awarded.

Kris Shelstad spoke on behalf of the Texas National Guard made a public comment regarding grants for National Guard and their families. FVA advisory committee recommended reducing the General Assistance grant from \$500,000 to \$100,000 which will severely jeopardize their ability to assist 100,000 guardsmen and retired guardsmen and family members.

III. Approve the Minutes of the 1st Quarterly Commission Meeting held February 8, 2017.

The minutes for the 1st Quarterly Meeting held on February 8, 2017, were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the 1st Quarterly Meeting held on February 8, 2017 as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner Richard McLeon
SECONDED BY: Secretary Jake Ellzey
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

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

Chip Osborne, Division Director filling in for Jim Cunningham, Chairman of the Communication Advisory Committee indisposed due to congressional hearings. Chip, 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 February 21, 2017 and their next meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2017 discussed IHEART radio broadcast and partnership with Texas Rodeos due to the number of veterans that attend them and ways in which to promote outreach to veterans.

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 discussed identifying employment needs for Veterans. During the 1st Quarter Mr. Icenhower was re-elected to Chairman and Steve Burke to Vice Chairman. Also discussed was the Hazlewood program and how the changes might affect veterans and their families, recommended modification to forms for Employer Awards program, making them more user friendly. During the 19th annual TVC Summit the committee discussed critical issues facing veterans, and Tim Shatto from TVC discussed the State Government hiring freeze. Next scheduled meeting June 13, 2017.

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

Kerry Reyna, Chair of Funds for Veterans' Assistance, provided a summary of activities conducted. Early January 2017 grant applications were release to the Advisory Committee members for review. January 30-31, 2017 FVA advisory committee met to elect new officers and heard 107 application presentations for 2017-2018. Kerry Reyna was elected Chair at that meeting and Chuck Wright was elected Vice Chairman. March 30, 2017 FVA held public meeting in Austin TX to prepare funding recommendation to the TVC for all 2017-2018 programs.

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

Paul Bastaich, Vice Chairman of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee. Advisory board met February 6, 2017 and Laura Spain was re-elected chairman of the committee and Paul Bastaich was elected as the vice chairman. The topics discussed at the meeting included Texas State hiring freeze and how it affected

the VCSO. VCSOAT hosted NACVSO training in January and the training was well received by all that attended, due to enthusiasm and positive attitude of the instructors. Discussed and would like to see more County Veteran Service Officer become accredited instructors for TVC. Spring training which implemented virtual training and virtual testing was also well received. Committee will meet again in June 7, 2017.

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 terms beginning May 3, 2017:

Employment Training Advisory Committee

Dwain James

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 Internal Audit of the Fund for Veterans Assistance Grants Administration.

Russell Gregorczyk, Internal Auditor, provided the report on Fiscal Year 2017 Internal Audits Annual Reports. The reports included the recommendation for non-disclosure statement, grantee names and award amounts be included in minutes of Commissioner meeting, expand procedures for the reconciliation process and budget amendments/notifications should be directed to a central receiving point in FVA rather than individual grant officer.

MOTION: Concurrence with the findings of the Internal Audit.
MADE BY: Vice Chairman, James Scott
SECONDED BY: Commissioner, Jake Ellzey
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

X. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Appropriation Year 2017 2nd Quarter Operating Statement.

Michelle Nall, Chief Financial Officer, provided the Agency Summary regarding Appropriation Year 2017, 2nd Quarter Operating Statement. There were no issues and budget is on target at this time.

XI. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Internal Auditor contract services.

Cruz Montemayor, Deputy Executive Director, provided an oral report regarding the current Internal Auditor contract is on the final extension and will have to do an RFP process for bids to score. The findings will be presented at the next commissioner meeting. Minimum timeframe for bid process is 45 days from time bid is put out until it closes.

XII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding recommendations for Fund for Veterans Assistance Grants.

Charles Catoe, Director of Funds for Veterans' Assistance and Kerry Reyna, Chair of Funds for Veterans Assistance, Advisory Committee presented the FVA Advisory Committee's recommendations for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grants.

- General Assistance 16-B, 47 grants recommended. \$9,120,000 available.

Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG)	\$300,000
American GI Forum National Veterans Outreach Program, Inc.	\$300,000
Bring Everyone In The Zone	\$75,000
Caritas of Waco	\$200,000
Catholic Charities Fort Worth	\$75,000
Catholic Charities of Central Texas (CCCTX)	\$300,000
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston	\$300,000
Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc.	\$300,000
Center Point	\$250,000
Citizens Development Center	\$150,000
City of Fort Worth	\$300,000
CLC, Inc.	\$300,000
Communities in Schools of Greater Central Texas, Inc.	\$300,000
County of Burnet	\$50,000
Defenders of Freedom	\$150,000
Department of Texas, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Foundation, Inc.	\$500,000
Family Eldercare	\$150,000
Family Service Center of Greater Houston	\$300,000
Fort Bend County	\$150,000
Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels and Much, Much More!	\$200,000
Goodwill Industries of Central Texas	\$75,000
Goodwill Industries of South Texas, Inc.	\$200,000
Grace After Fire	\$100,000
Hale County Meals on Wheels, Inc.	\$50,000
Harris County	\$300,000
Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program, Inc.	\$250,000
Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston	\$100,000
Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas	\$150,000
Lone Star Legal Aid	\$250,000
Lubbock Regional MHMR Center dba StarCare Specialty Health System	\$300,000
Metroplex Military Charitable Trust	\$100,000

Nueces County	\$150,000
Operation Comfort	\$200,000
Project MEND	\$250,000
Recovery Resource Council	\$300,000
Sabine Valley Regional MHMR (Community Healthcore)	\$200,000
Salvation Army Amarillo	\$100,000
Salvation Army San Antonio, TX	\$300,000
Salvation Army, a Georgia Corporation, Houston	\$200,000
Salvation Army, Grayson County Corps	\$50,000
San Antonio Metropolitan Ministry, Inc.	\$300,000
Southwest Area Regional Transit District	\$200,000
SPAN	\$20,000
Texas National Guard Family Support Foundation	\$100,000
United way of Tarrant County	\$75,000
Wesley Community Center	\$75,000
YWCA El Paso del Norte Region	\$75,000

MOTION: Approve the recommended General Assistance, Series 16-B Grant.
MADE BY: Secretary Ellzey
SECONDED BY: Commissioner Moran
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

- Housing for Texas Heroes, 20 grants recommended. \$4,550,000 available.

Caritas of Austin	\$50,000
<i>Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston</i>	\$500,000
<i>Central Texas Opportunities, Incorporated</i>	\$300,000
<i>CLC, Inc.</i>	\$500,000
Front Steps, Inc	\$100,000
Salvation Army - Waco	\$200,000
Community Partnership for the Homeless, Inc. dba Green Doors	\$150,000
Giving Hope	\$75,000
Habitat for Humanity - Longview	\$100,000
Habitat for Humanity of Smith County	\$150,000
Operation Finally Home	\$75,000
<i>Presbyterian Night Shelter</i>	\$150,000
Rebuilding Together Houston	\$400,000
<i>Salavation Army - Amarillo</i>	\$200,000
<i>Salvation Army - Grayson County</i>	\$100,000
Families in Crisis	\$300,000
Salvation Army, a Georgia Corporation-Corpus Christi, TX	\$250,000
Salvation Army, a Georgia Corporation-El Paso, TX	\$200,000
San Antonio Metropolitan Ministry, Inc. dba SAM Ministries	\$500,000

MOTION: Approve the recommended Housing for Texas Heroes grant.
MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott
SECONDED BY: Commissioner Moran
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

- **Veteran Mental Health, 11 grants recommended. \$2,075,000 available.**

<i>Center Point, Inc.</i>	\$100,000
<i>Sabine Valley Regional MHMR (Community Healthcore)</i>	\$100,000
Family Support Services of Amarillo, Inc.	\$200,000
Marriage Management Consultants	\$100,000
<i>Presbyterian Night Shelter</i>	\$200,000
<i>Catholic Charities Fort Worth, Inc.</i>	\$75,000
<i>Catholic Charities of Central Texas</i>	\$400,000
Charlie's Place Recovery Center	\$100,000
<i>Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Department</i>	\$150,000
Samaritan Center for Counseling and Pastoral Care	\$500,000
<i>Project Amistad</i>	\$150,000

MOTION: Approve the recommended Veteran Mental Health grants.
MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon
SECONDED BY: Secretary Ellzey
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

- **Veteran Treatment Court, 13 grants recommended. \$1,675,000 available.**

Bexar County	\$200,000
Collin County	\$150,000
Comal County	\$75,000
Dallas County Community Supervision and Correction Department	\$250,000
El Paso County	\$200,000
Galveston County	\$150,000
Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD)	\$20,000
Hays County	\$100,000
Montgomery County	\$100,000
Nueces County Community Supervision and Corrections Department	\$50,000
Travis County	\$50,000
Webb County 406th District Court Veterans Court Program	\$300,000
Williamson County	\$30,000

MOTION: Approve the recommended Veteran Treatment Court grants.

MADE BY: Secretary Ellzey
SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Scott
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

XIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding recommendations for Fund for Veterans' Assistance General Assistance 16-B grantee appeal to Notice of Deobligation.

Charlie Catoe, Director of Funds for Veterans' Assistance and Madeleine Connor, General Counsel, provided the report regarding Notice of De-obligation of HK Express Transit. Due to IRS revoking HK Express 501(c)3 on May 15, 2016, TVC suspended their grant payments. Executive Director issued a Corrective Action letter with a 30 day response timeline to HK Express Transit, who in turn was not able to satisfactorily complete the corrective action. TVC issue Notice of De-obligation on March 16, 2017. FVA received an appeal package from HK Express on March 28, 2017.

MOTION: Approve the recommendation to deny the appeal.
MADE BY: Commissioner Moran
SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

XIV. 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 has attended to include relationships with the Veterans Administration. Discussed Texas as a pilot state for Decision Ready Claims, new way to expedite claims. Rural communities tour with Women's' Veterans/VetsEd to make Veterans aware of programs. Internal TVC procedures/updates and the Annual TVC Fall Conference.

XV. 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. **Cruz Montemayor**, Deputy Executive Director, requested Government Relations and Mental Health programs to provide their individual reports.

Justin Coleman, Manager, Government Relations, discussed series of meetings scheduled for TVC, budget was passed with no significant funding decreases, presented 30 bills that have an impact to program operations within the agency, concerns were addressed.

Tim Keesling, Director, Veterans Mental Health Program, highlighted areas of direct support to substance abuse and mental health services agency and suicide prevention plan. Launched Veterans Mental Health platform for peers and providers on TVC website. Peer to peer support outcomes. Outstanding support staff working behind the scenes. Seeking waiver to hire program manager. Legislative Action, waiting on pending bill that will affect the program.

- B. **Shawn Deabay**, Director of Program Operations, requested each of the program managers to provide their individual reports. Briefed on manual updates, rewarding staff, communication and best practices. Working with National Institute of corrections to take care of incarcerated veterans.

Victor Polanco, Director of Claims Representation and Counseling, brief about the District Managers have conducted over 150 VCSO site visits, and identifying if there is computers and connectivity for VCSOs to do their jobs. Due to hiring freeze, the Districts are coming together and supporting each other. Conducted first ever virtual Spring Training for VCSOs, with great feedback. Want to establish an online testing to get accreditation, to allow for time train during conferences, and establish different times of the year to get accredited.

Jose Silva, Health Care Advocacy Program Manager, reported that we are conducting all focus training through the go to meeting, allowing advocates time spent with veterans. Secured office space in Amarillo, VA medical center at no cost. Visit U.S. Congressman Beto O'Rourke staff in El Paso to help veterans in that location. Attended 192 Events, Outreach, VA meetings, Top 3 issues, general medical needs, eligibility and enrollment issues, and appointment access issues.

Stan Kurtz, Director of Veterans Employment Services (VES) discussed his trip to El Paso and attended the Prudential employer event with 30 employers in attendance. Spoke about the services TVC has for veterans. Brian Vair invited to present materials and info to Texas Tech graduates and conducted a "Veterans in Government" open house in El Paso. VES is meeting or exceeding all established performance targets.

Tammy Micallef, Director of Veterans Education, highlighted the new program specialist Rose Moreno and Tony Williams and Tina Marberry as Program Operations Manager. Conducted 163 program approval actions in this quarter, 151 various types of visits performed across the state. Hazelwood Manager Charles Bryant has been attending congressional hearings to testify as a resource witness on pending legislation. Attending training and conducted training with over 150 certifying officials from across the state of Texas. Education Coordinators are putting together a VetsEd symposium in Austin TX.

Anna Baker, Manager, Woman Veterans Program, discussed the College and Rural Community Tour conducted by Carrie Sconza and the collaboration of VetsEd Pedro Saldana helping make those community connections. Dress for success event, transporting women transitioning from Killeen by supplying transportation to Austin, to receive professional suiting, makeup and training. Upcoming events include,

Women Veteran Healthcare Conference and Recognition Program for women in the Texas State Veterans Homes.

Robyn Provost, Veteran Entrepreneur Program Manager, provided information on Michael Haas spearheading the Business Education skills training, building curriculum and collateral for online business education and skill training portal. Seminar series conducted by Christina Mortel. SB1049 processed over 370 verification letters, surpassed program metrics by 28%, being 88% on target, provided over 405 initial services.

- C. **Chip Osborne**, Director of Resource Management, briefed the commission on the success' of Resource Management. Mr. Osborne spoke about moving forward with automation and changing how we do our processes. Despite the hiring freeze we have been successful in continuing our progress, we have submitted waivers for approval on the federal side, we have been very strategic in planning so we don't lose to critical positions. Moving FVA and Mental Health departments out of the Moody building in November to a secure building off 183 high-way in Austin, TX. Grant software, automation software for Claims and CAPPS software is going to happen.

Dianne Coy, HR, Senior Benefits Coordinator, briefed major activities and accomplishments to include employee quarterly turnover is at 4.5% but year to date total 10.58% which we are under 17% for the year. Completed and submitted the report on Employee Focus Groups results. Published 1st Edition of the TVC HR Update Newsletter on March 8, 2017. Administered a Fitness Challenge and Incentive Plan to all TVC employees. Processed 500 Administrative processes, which included 253 personnel actions, benefit changes, new employees and PPR evaluations.

Chip Osborne addressed the commission for **Greg Shigemasa**, Communication and Outreach. E-Vets edition is on track and going out successfully. Julia Connor has produced and sent out 8 episodes of iHeart TVC Radio with an estimated coverage about 4.5 million individuals. There is a legislation bill that if passed will allow the Outreach Campaign authority to expand to Facebook and TV commercials. The Outreach program is working closely with other programs and is doing a tremendous job.

Sue Jevning, Training and Event Planning Manager, provided her report. Ms. Jevning highlighted the program has begun the online training enrollment for Veterans County Service Officers (VCSO). This training will help to provide accreditation to VCSOs. Training started in April will conclude in this week in May. Developed and distributed 8 surveys across various programs, finalized reports for 5 of those surveys. Proctored 14 VCSO accreditation/certification exams and enrolled 41 Claims staff and VCSOs into Medical Terminology web based courses. Enrolled 40 TVC staff in various management courses offered by the Governors Center for Management Development. Planning for the 2017 Fall conference in Galveston, TX in September and planning for the 2018 Summit.

Peter Donton, Information Resource Manager, provided his report and informed the commissioner that the Executive Director has designated him as the Information Security Officer. Engaged NTT Data to conduct an information security assessment with the final report given March 28, 2017. Requested and granted a hiring freeze waiver for a posting of a Systems Support Specialist.

XIV. Executive Session.

Executive Session was held from 09:21 a.m. to 10:05 a.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 4rd Quarterly Commission Meeting of FY17 be held on Wednesday, August 2, 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.

Vice Chairman Scott addressed his retirement and appreciation of the Commissioners and TVC Staff.

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: Vice Chairman, James Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Cantu adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Minutes Approved by:



Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., Chairman

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

3rd Quarterly Commission Meeting
FY 2017 – May 3, 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

Kerry Reyna

Chair of Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee

Paul Bastaich

Vice Chairman of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee

Russell Gregorczyk

Auditor

Timothy Gasaway

Texas Legal Services

Bruce Bower

Texas Legal Services

Chris Shelton

Texas National Guard