



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #758
January 26, 2017



Charlene Taylor, Chair

Hugh Crooks, Jr., Vice-Chair
Caroline Morales, Member
Todd Trotter, Member

Carla Thornton, Member
Juan Gonzalez, Member
Tina Lassiter, Executive Officer

The California Veterans Board met at the California Veterans Home, Barstow at 100 East Veterans Parkway, Barstow, CA at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Charlene Taylor, Hugh Crooks Jr., Carla Thornton and Juan Gonzalez.

Absent: - Caroline Morales and Todd Trotter.

Chair Taylor presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Taylor welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. The Board introduced themselves.

MINUTES RECOMMENDATION

Approve minutes from the November 30, 2016 Board meeting with additional remarks provided by Member Thornton. Vice Chair Crooks moved to approve the minutes and Member Gonzalez seconded. Motion unanimously approved and carried.

INTRODUCTIONS

PRESENTATION – Mr. James Sullivan, Administrator, California Veterans Home – Barstow.

Mr. Sullivan presented a thorough overview of the wonderful things the California Veterans Home at Barstow is doing for Veterans. He spoke of his passion for making the Barstow home remarkable and does so with extensive outreach in the community to let people/veterans know who they are. Mr. Sullivan's focus is on Admissions for the Barstow home, and he shared two recent incidences that serve as examples:

1. A Veteran was discharged from the hospital to find that he had been evicted from his home. Mr. Sullivan and staff worked diligently to get him emergency housing, to expedite the admission process and days later he was admitted to the home.

2. Another Veteran who had an application pending was renting a trailer with no utilities where the owner sold the land, leaving him homeless. Again, the Home was able to expedite the process and the Veteran moved in within days.

Mr. Sullivan went on to share some of the statistics of the 191 residents of the home:

World War II = 34
Korean War = 41
Viet Nam = 59
Gulf War = 2
Peace Time Veterans = 36
Non Veteran spouses = 19.

The Administrator introduced Mr. Kevin McGuire, Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Administrator and reported that a Chief Physician/Surgeon, Nurse Practitioner, Supervising Recreational Therapist/Rehabilitation Therapist and Staff Services Manager II have recently joined their team resulting in favorable reports from residents.

Barstow will celebrate its 20th Anniversary this coming May and plans to renovate the beloved Koi fish pond (Nature's Chapel to Secretary Imbasciani) are underway.

Mr. Sullivan reported to the Board that Barstow was the second home to go live with "Talyst", the automated medication dispensing unit, and everything is going well.

The Administrator proudly reported that Barstow's CBOC, Community Based Outpatient Care, provides full dental and medical. It looks and feels like a familiar doctor's office.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - Linda Umberg, Local Interagency Network Coordinator (LINC) addressed the Board. Ms. Umberg stated that there are 8 LINC's up and down the state working to connect Veterans to their benefits and resources while bringing the agencies together that provide those benefits.

CHAIR'S UPDATE – Chair Taylor reported that the recent Board vacancy remains so at this time and she has sent two referrals thus far. Chair Taylor remains confident that the Governor's office is working tirelessly on filling this appointment. Ms. Taylor went on to share that February 18 is Member Morales's retirement celebration which she plans to attend.

DEPARTMENT FORUM: Department Update

The Secretary presented a brief update on the status of the Department. He thanked Mr. Sullivan and

reiterated his report on the successful Talyst system which is now functional in over half of the homes. The Secretary continues to work on bringing a new medical record system on board and is very pleased with the pace of the project.

Secretary Imbasciani reported that the state Legislature, with its rather large turnover this year, welcomes newly elected Senator Newman as the Senate Veterans Affairs committee chairman. The CalVet Deputies have delivered focus briefings to the new Legislators and the Department will also reach out to the oversight committees.

As the State budget tightens and Agencies/Departments are asked to reduce spending, the Secretary reported that Calvet will do its part but will do so without affecting crucial positions and programs. He maintained that taking care of the resident in the homes will always remain a high priority.

Chair Taylor asked if the new Electronic medical record system is budgeted for this year or next year? The Secretary responded that most of the cost will come from the savings that will no longer be spent maintaining the current system.

The Secretary was happy to report that The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Secretary was diligent in relieving CalVet of several obligations. Two of those were as follows:

1. The Department was released of its \$5 million obligation to the federal government.
2. West LA is no longer obligated to provide transitional housing allowing those 84 beds to transition into skilled nursing beds.

Secretary Imbasciani was also very happy to report that "Yountville" has made it to the Governor's 5 year plan. That is a difficult feat and it doesn't mean it's approved but placement on that list is an important step.

Chair Taylor followed up on the Allied Council chairs meeting to find that they will meet February 8 in Sacramento.

The Board received a letter from Mr. Ghigliotti which was forwarded to the Secretary and the Undersecretary.

In response to Member Thornton's CalTap (California Transition Assistance Program) inquiry, the Secretary stated that Deputy Secretary Boylan has made some hires to start building that program. CalTap will assist the approximate 23,000 veterans returning or coming to California with the benefits that they have earned.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan and Objectives

Action Items:

1. Hugh Crooks: Communication and Marketing

Vice-Chair Crooks reported that he has been told that the American Legion members are not receiving the Board meeting notices. He went on to announce the Commanders Council is coming up again and apologized for missing Allied Council meeting.

2. Carla Thornton: Services

Member Thornton said that she has spoken with Keith Boylan, Deputy Secretary (CalVet) – and reports that CSAAVE is doing a very well. She reported that current federal legislation, if passed, will reinstate months back to Veterans whose schools recently closed down, while the state is asking institutions for employment data. Member Thornton also reported that the third week of March is California Women’s History week. She spoke highly of the Webinars that CalVets Women Veterans division has been conducting. Member Thornton reported that the Federal Women’s History Museum in Washington D.C. is at risk of closure due to budget cuts. Chair Taylor questioned why the museum isn’t funded through State parks?

3. Todd Trotter: Administration

No report at this time.

4. Caroline Morales: Legislation

No report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Allied Council Meetings: There were no new updates.

NEW BUSINESS

Appeals: Chair Taylor reported on behalf of Member Trotter that the Board has received 14 appeals in 2016. The department was asked to notify veterans of their option to appeal to the Board should they feel they were wrongly denied a benefit, and it seems to have made an impact. Appeals coming before the Board are as follows:

Thomas Coumes, Tuition Fee Waiver denial, Review of Record, will be decided by the March meeting.

Jeremy Look, Tuition Fee Waiver denial, Withdrawn.

George Cousart, Admission denial, Out of the Boards jurisdiction. Not accepted.

Racquel Martinez, Tuition Fee Waiver denial, March meeting

Lori Cannon, Admission denial, formal, to be scheduled.

Orlino David, Tuition Fee Waiver denial, Informal, to be scheduled.

Richard King, Tuition Fee Waiver denial, Formal, to be scheduled.

Complaints:

Executive Officer Lassiter reported that there were no complaints other than the Mr. Ghigliotti issue.

BOARD COMMENTS: Board member Gonzalez reported that a couple large trailers had been placed on the Barstow homes property blocking the resident's view of the mountains. Mr. Gonzalez went on to comment on a mold issue that is being attended to at the home and the homes director (Administrator) position has become vacant. The Ventura administrator, Michelle Roulston, has been kind enough to step in as interim. Discussion followed regarding the difficulty of the Administrators job and the challenges of filling that position. Member Thornton requested that the Board revisit their policies and procedures. Chair Taylor asked the Members to look at the policies and offer any changes or additions to Member Trotter.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:30 AM