



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #757
November 30, 2016



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 Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) office at 1227 "O" Street, Sacramento, CA at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Charlene Taylor, Hugh Crooks Jr., Carla Thornton, Caroline Morales and Todd Trotter. Juan Gonzalez attended via VTC.

Absent: -

Chair Taylor presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

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

MINUTES RECOMMENDATION

Approved minutes from September 12, 2016 Board meeting. Member Trotter moved to approve the minutes and Vice Chair Crooks seconded. Motion unanimously approved and carried. (Attachment)

INTRODUCTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Ed Warren, Yountville Allied Council, expressed the desire to have a meeting with all the Allied Councils. He reached out to the Secretary and the Board to assist in making that happen. The Secretary agreed that a meeting with representatives from all the Allied Councils would be a benefit to the upcoming transition, as the MWR legislation has been passed and the implementation of such legislation will be underway soon.

CHAIR'S UPDATE – Chair Taylor gave a brief update to the board. She has met with the Secretary a couple of times since the last meeting. The chair announced that Board member Truitt has very regrettably resigned and the Governor's office is already working to fill that vacancy.

DEPARTMENT FORUM: Department Update

The Secretary announced that all positions at headquarters are now filled, with the exception of the Communications Division, and he is confident that the Governor's Appointments staff is diligently working to fill that position.

Farm and Home: Dr. Imbasciani reported that the Farm and Home division is on schedule for another good year and they are starting to look for how to continue financing the 95 year old program. This program is self-sufficient and funded by Government bonds that are paid off as the Veterans make their payments. It has been on the ballot 27 times and passed every time. The Secretary would like to see it expanded and noted that this program has the lowest foreclosure rate in the nation.

Services: The Secretary stated that part of the Services division of the department, CSAAVE (The California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education) is the approving authority for qualified California schools that will accept veterans coming in with their G.I bill money. He stressed how important this is in protecting veterans education. It makes sure they are really teaching them and making sure these veterans are getting jobs when they graduate. He gave an example of one college with 6 campuses in California that closed its doors abruptly. This particular college was forced to do a "Teach out" to finish educating the veterans that were enrolled in that program.

The Secretary briefed the Board on the new California Transition Assistance Program (CalTap) that will provide help in identifying state benefits for Veterans returning to California. It is the first program of its kind in the nation and is attracting attention already.

Homes: Secretary Imbasciani gave a report that the homes continue to do well, passing all inspections and maintaining 4 and 5 star ratings with the exception of Barstow and Yountville. Barstow will most likely reach 5 stars at their upcoming survey after the first of the year. Yountville will continue to struggle for the time being. He reported that he met with the Little Hoover Commission at the Yountville campus. They toured the campus together while laying out his plan for Yountville's revival. The plan is to build a new home on the campus and closing the Eisenhower, Roosevelt and Holderman buildings so they can be renovated. In order to do this the Department will look into partnering with another entity or entities and he has received a significant amount of interest in doing that. He reiterated that he is cognizant of making sure the Veterans benefit from these partners. His focus is to reduce expenditures and increase income on the campus.

He went on to report on the Military and Veterans Code relating to the homes and the fact that it is antiquated and needs updating. Using the "Study on Homes" report that the Board supplied to the Secretary, he was able to come up with ideas to offset the uncompensated care. One idea, via an active gentle program, is to mandate that all residents have insurance upon entering the home and keep it current while a resident of the home. But, that needs to be law not just policy.

Secretary Imbasciani was asked about SB 543 relating to the MWR funds. The question asked if the language that gave the Board a role as an appeal option was still in the body of the bill. That language had been taken out.

PRESENTATION – Thomas Bucci, Director of Long Term care (CalVet) reported on the Veterans and how they

receive their specialty care. Some of the homes, built specifically as Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE) or Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) affording varying levels of care by Licensed nurses (RCFE; some care by licensed nurses and SNF; 24 hour care by licensed nurses). This means residents needing medical care will need to travel via busses to the nearest VA. At times this can mean up to an 8 hour wait when the travel time is factored in with the other patient appointments. Mr. Bucci said one idea to remedy the situation would be to place CBOC's (Community Based Outpatient Clinic) closer to the homes.

Chair Taylor expressed an interest in a quality indicator scorecard template that could be shared with the Board. Comparisons of quality measures among all the homes is done manually at this point, and it was discussed that it would be much easier for a program to create a comparison chart among all the homes.

Mr. Bucci announced that The Federal Register published a whole new set of regulations that CalVet must now operate under in order to maintain their Medicare program. There are 3 Phases and Phase 1 is underway.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan and Objectives

Action Items:

1. Hugh Crooks: Communication and Marketing

Vice Chair Crooks reported that the Legionnaires are quite anxious to attend one of the Board meetings. He is also actively recruiting VSO's and other groups to come and participate. Mr. Crooks also conveyed the recent parade that was held in L.A.

2. Carla Thornton: Services

Member Thornton said that she has spoken with Keith Boylan, Deputy Secretary (CalVet) – Services division and reports that the Services division is doing a good job in providing outreach and education to help protect Veterans and their benefits. The Driver's license program is still running strong and has increased the number of Veterans applying for benefits as well. She plans to talk with Keith in more depth in the future about the new CalTAPP program.

3. Todd Trotter: Administration

No report at this time.

4. Caroline Morales: Legislation

Member Morales reported that she will have a report out to the Board regarding legislation in the near future.

OLD BUSINESS

Allied Council Meetings:



NEW BUSINESS

2017 Budget Allocations: Patti Ingram, Budget Officer (CalVet), gave a very thorough explanation of the Boards' Budget and reported that the Board is right on track with the exception of a couple areas where the money had not been used. (Attachment)

2017 Calendar (Attachment)

Appeals:

Mr. Thomas Coumes – Tuition Fee Waiver, Review of Record, accepted.

Mr. George Cousart – Eviction; out of the Board's jurisdiction, denied.

Mr. Racquel Martinez – Tuition Fee Waiver, Review of Record, accepted.

Mr. Jeremy Look – Tuition Fee Waiver; Informal Hearing, accepted, scheduled for February 22, 2017 in Sacramento, CA.

Complaints:

Executive Officer Lassiter reported that there were four complaints. (Attachment)

Board Elections:

Member Morales nominated Member Trotter, this was seconded by Vice-Chair Crooks and passed (5-1).

Vote count: Chair Taylor, Aye
Vice-Chair Crooks, Aye
Member Trotter, Aye
Member Morales, Aye
Member Thornton, Nay
Member Gonzalez, Aye

Member Trotter will become chair at a later date to be determined (likely June or July).

CLOSED SESSION –

Human Resource Issue

Appeal Process

(Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Crooks, Member Morales, Member Trotter, Member Gonzalez and Member Thornton were in attendance and no votes were taken)

BOARD COMMENTS: On behalf of the Board, Member Thornton has been designated as the subject matter expert for Women Veterans.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:30 PM



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #756
September 12, 2016

Charlene Taylor, Chair

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

Carla Thornton, Member
Juan Gonzalez, Member
Gena Truitt, Member

The California Veterans Board met at the California Veterans Home in West Los Angeles, CA at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Charlene Taylor, Hugh Crooks Jr., Juan Gonzalez and Todd Trotter.

Absent: - Gena Truitt, Carla Thornton and Caroline Morales.

Chair Taylor presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Taylor welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. The Board and Executive Officer (EO) introduced themselves.

MINUTES RECOMMENDATION

Approved minutes from July 12, 2016 Board meeting. Vice Chair Crooks moved to approve the minutes and Member Trotter seconded. Motion unanimously approved and carried.

INTRODUCTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The new “right to die” law that went into effect June 9, 2016 was discussed. Secretary Imbasciani gave a description of the law and how it affects the residents living in the homes. It is a State, not Federal, law. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), who partially funds the homes, said that under no circumstances will California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) offer this medication to its residents or their funding for all eight (8) homes would be pulled. The Department was granted an emergency regulation regarding the end of life option but will expire in December of this year. CalVet has filed the necessary paperwork with the Office of Administrative Law to make the regulation permanent. The “right to die” option remains, however, the resident would have to be discharged from the home. If no family or friends are available to care for the Veteran, CalVet has made arrangements with a network of hospices up and down the state for that purpose.

PRESENTATION – Chris Walter, Deputy Administrator, California Veterans Home – West Los Angeles gave a presentation to the Board about the home. The West LA Veterans home was built in 2010 and remains a work in progress. The home houses 304 residents with a staff of close to 400. Mr. Walter reported that the next step is a unit that will open downstairs in the next 45 days and after that will be a 30 bed memory care unit. The home just hosted an art show that was well attended by the public. He gave thanks to the West LA Foundation and concluded with expressing the pride the staff feels for the work that they do.

When asked about the challenges they face with recruitment, Mr. Walter responded that while it is a challenge, retention remains the biggest challenge. West LA is a very expensive area and pay is typically not enough to afford to live close to the home leaving many to travel up to two hours to get to work. Many times they can get better pay elsewhere and not have to travel so far. The Deputy Administrator said that they recognize this and are working to find remedies. They realize that staffing is a key component to filling more beds and familiar faces are important to the residents. In addition, the home loses money when residents need to be sent outside for various therapies. The administration has asked the State (CalHr) to give geographical or occupational specific supplements to their compensation.

CHAIR’S UPDATE –

Chair Taylor reported that she met with Secretary Imbasciani on Thursday, September 8, 2016. She also said that she received an email from a resident from Yountville and then a telephone call from another resident at Fresno about a meeting for the Chairs of the Allied Councils.

DEPARTMENT FORUM: Department Update

Secretary Imbasciani announced that Chris Walter will soon become Lieutenant Colonel as he will take formal command of the 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry of the 40th Infantry Division in the California Army National Guard.

Homes: Secretary Imbasciani reported that all Homes continue to pass inspections with exceptional marks. He was happy to report that the Department has finally satisfied the State Audit report by testifying in front of the Assembly Oversight Committee in which CalVet was questioned on their acquisition of the electronic medical records computers. CalVet is in phase 2 of acquiring a replacement called CEHR (California Electronic Health Record). In addition, “Talyst”, the new mechanized manner of distributing medications, which had been sitting in boxes for the last 5 years, has been up and running in all wards at Chula Vista and Barstow. It will be unveiling in the rest of the homes soon.

Services: The Secretary stated that El Soldado, the Latino/Mexican American monument will be rededicated on Veterans Day. The 2nd phase of that monument will build a memory wall around the statue. An update on the Cemeteries: Igo is up and running. Monterey is moving forward and hiring for the positions there. The planning phase for the 3rd cemetery in Orange County will begin soon. Dr. Imbasciani reported that the Federal Government has already anticipated the need for a 4th Cemetery that

will be located somewhere between San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara. The California State Approving Authority for Veteran Education (CSAAVE), continues to approve and monitor education institutions. CalTAPP is now hiring to fill positions for this new program within CalVet. This program will make for a smoother transition for the 25,000+/- veterans returning from service by assisting with accessing their benefits.

Farm and Home: The Secretary reported that the second neighborhood of residential enriched homes has been completed in Santa Clarita . Twenty-Seven homes were built with help from Habitat for Humanity, Home Depot, PG&E and Citibank to name a few, and Walt Disney built a park across from the homes.

The Secretary concluded with an update on the status of Yountville's Masterplan. Some of the ideas in the masterplan include building a new home on the campus and closing the Eisenhower, Roosevelt and Holderman buildings so they can be renovated. In order to do this the Department will look into partnering with another entity or entities. Four options, at this point, are as follows:

1. Federal partner: San Francisco VA is very interested in opening a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in the McKinley building. And possibly a mental health facility.
2. State partner: Civilian Conservation Corp is interested in the Truman hall next to the baseball field.
3. Community Not-for-profits such as Pathway Home.
4. Community for profits: Turn the chapel into a wedding chapel? Turn Holderman into a 5-star hotel?

Chair Taylor gave credit to the Secretary for all he has done since he has taken the position of Secretary.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan and Objectives

Action Items:

1. Hugh Crooks: Communication and Marketing

Vice Chair Crooks reported on events for Veterans Day coming up and the State Commanders Council meeting coming up October 1 that he will attend and represent the Board.

2. Carla Thornton: Services

Absent

3. Todd Trotter: Administration

No report at this time.

4. Gena Truitt: Homes

Absent

5. Caroline Morales: Legislation

Member Morales submitted a report in her absence. (Attachment 2)

OLD BUSINESS

Allied Council Meetings:

Vice Chair Crooks reported that he attended the West LA and Ventura Allied Council meetings recently. A reference to property behind the Ventura home prompted an acknowledgement that ten (10) of those twenty (20) acres have been given back to the City of Ventura. Pending approval by the Public Works Board, the City agreed to use Prop. 41 funds to build supportive veterans housing on that land.

Member Trotter reported that he plans to attend Yountville’s Allied Council coming up within the week.

NEW BUSINESS

Appeals:

Mr. Raul Vallejo – Eviction; out of the Board’s jurisdiction, denied.

Mr. Sheldon Ciment – Eviction; out of the Board’s jurisdiction, denied.

Mr. Andrew Blackman – Tuition Fee Waiver; Withdrawn by Veteran.

Complaints:

Executive Officer Lassiter reported that there were no new complaints.

BOARD COMMENTS:

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:30 PM

TENTATIVE CALENDAR 2017

January 26, 2017	Board Meeting	Barstow/TBD
March 15, 2017	Board Meeting	Northern CA/TBD
May 17, 2017	Board Meeting	Southern CA/TBD
July 19, 2017	Board Meeting	Northern CA/TBD
September 27, 2017	Board Meeting	Southern CA/TBD
November 15, 2017	Board Meeting	Northern CA/TBD

Additional dates:

Appeals:

**Department of Veterans Affairs
General Administration
Cal Vet Board, Index Code 1250, Unit 125
2016-17 Fiscal Year Expenditures
As of October 31, 2016**

	Prior Year Actuals 2015-16	Budget Allocation	Current Expenditures (October)	Encumbrances	Available Balance (Oct. 31, 2016)
PERSONAL SERVICES					
Salaries and Wages	80,226	70,188	23,396	0	46,792
Temporary Help	9,200	15,000	3,000	0	12,000
Overtime	0	0	0	0	0
Staff Benefits	32,241	39,834	14,462	0	25,372
TOTAL, PERSONAL SERVICES	121,667	125,022	40,858	0	84,164
OPERATING EXPENSES & EQUIPMENT					
General Expense	571	6,000	0	18	5,982
Printing	55	0	0	0	0
Communications	0	0	0	0	0
Postage	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance	0	0	0	0	0
Travel: In-State	18,670	19,000	4,039	0	14,961
Travel: Out-of-State	0	0	0	0	0
Training	0	500	0	0	500
Facilities Operations	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0
Cons\Prof Serv Interdepartmental	12	0	0	0	0
Cons\Prof Serv External	0	0	0	0	0
Departmental Service	0	0	0	0	0
Consolidated Data Center	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	0	0	0	0	0
Central Administrative Services	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Other Items of Expense	0	0	0	0	0
Unallocated OE & E	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, OPERATING EXPENSES & EQUIPMENT	19,308	25,500	4,039	18	21,443
TOTAL, INDEX CODE	140,975	150,522	44,897	18	105,607

Date Prepared: 11/30/16

**2016 Appeals Received by the
California Veterans Board**

Name	City	Issue	Type	Action By Board/ExO	Resolution	Date Closed
Thomas Coumes - 16-008	Coronado	Tuition Waiver denial	Review of Record	Notice of Receipt sent, 9/19/16		
Jeremy Look - 16-009	Applegate	Tuition Waiver denial	Informal Hearing	Notice of Receipt sent, 9/28/16		
George Cousart - 16-010	San Francisco	Eviction from the Barstow Veterans home	Informal Hearing	Phone call with receipt information, 11/23/16		
Racquel Martinez - 16-011	Davis	Tuition Waiver denial	Review of Record	email		

F: Farm Homes
H: Homes
S: Veteran Services

Complaints Received by the California Veterans Board 2016

Date Received	Name	Issue	Action By Board/ExO	Resolution	Date Closed	Notes
9/21/2016	Lyle J. Myles	Losing house; mortgage in arrears; Asked for help Mr. Schickel didn't help.	Referred to Farm & Home.	Mr. Myles says they are helping him. But hope it's not too late.		Will follow up first of November. Followed up 11/16/16; 11/28/15; Anthony Rodriguez (LINC) will get back to me.
9/29/2016	Barbara Beck	Has concerns about her mothers care at the Redding home.	Referred her to Homes.	Thomas Martin, met with her and resolved some issues. Ms. Beck was happy.	11/16/2016	Followed up 11/16/16 and all is well. She is very happy with the outcome.
10/17/2016	Natalie Claghorn	VA Reimbursement Claim	Referred to Services	Services put her in touch with her local CVSO.	10/17/2016	
10/27/2016	James Gutierrez	Home Loan	Responded to his email for more information	Have not heard from him.		Followed up 11/16/16
10/24/2016	Racquel Martinez	College fee waiver declined	Referred to Services	Nancy Noriega got in touch with her.	11/29/16; filed an appeal with the Board	Followed up 11/16/16; 11/28/16