



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #751
December 3, 2015



Charlene Taylor, Chair

Hugh Crooks, Jr., Vice-Chair
Juan Gonzalez, Board Member
Todd Trotter, Board Member

Caroline Morales, Member
Sean Sargeant, Board Member
Gena Truitt, Board Member

The California Veterans Board met at the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) building, Medal of Honor Hall at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Charlene Taylor (Chair), Hugh Crooks Jr. (Vice-Chair), Caroline Morales (Member), Gena Truitt (Member) via teleconference

Absent: Todd Trotter (Member), Sean Sargeant (Member), Juan Gonzalez (Member) – work/schedule conflicts.

Chair Taylor presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

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

MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

Approved minutes from September 16, 2015 Board meeting. Chair Taylor moved to approve the minutes with the correction of a spelling error and member Morales seconded. Motion unanimously approved and carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Michael Beggs, Program Coordinator for Project Uniform, a branch of the California Youth Advocacy Network program, addressed the Board and explained that his program reaches out to veterans to help them create or improve their tobacco cessation programs.

CHAIR'S UPDATE – Chair Taylor reported that she and Secretary Imbasciani met in November and will continue to meet monthly to look into more ways the Board can help with the mission of the Department. Chair Taylor announced she was recently appointed by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi to sit on the “Commission on Care” which is a 15 member commission that meets every month in Washington D.C. for three days. Its purpose is to examine veterans’ access to VA health care, to examine strategically how best to organize the VHA, locate health resources, and deliver health care to veterans over the next 20 years. Chair Taylor also recently spoke to new CalVet employees at its new employee orientation where she reiterated the background, functions and role of the Board. She extended her appreciation to Vice Chair Crooks for chairing the last meeting and to all those that attended the Town Hall Forum.

DEPARTMENT FORUM: Department Update

Secretary Imbasciani greeted the Board and introduced himself. He gave a rundown on his expertise and how it will help him drive the Department forward. His direction with the Homes will include updating and modernizing the pharmaceutical system and refining admissions that would create a system-wide model that would streamline and organize the homes into a more congruent system. He plans to utilize the Board's expertise to look at other states to locate the best practices in terms of efficiency and uniformity. The Secretary plans to focus on the Yountville home and bring it to Federal standards in the most financially responsible manner. He explained that this would include, in part, the enlisting of help from other community partners, organizations and not for profits. Secretary Imbasciani reported that the idea to encourage the VA to create a campus on the grounds is a possibility.

Secretary Imbasciani reported on the successes of both the Farm and Home division and the recent program to add the "Veteran" status on the California Drivers Licenses. He further reported that the Department has already started updating the very out of date Military and Veterans Code.

Secretary Imbasciani went on to report that all the homes have Administrators now, the only vacancy remaining at the Department is Minority Veterans, and he believes he has found an Under-secretary. Morale is great, there is transparency and team work.

The Secretary spoke of the "Death with Dignity Act" and the upcoming big meeting that will form a statewide Bioethics committee to create policies and procedures to become better prepared to deal with end of life protocol.

OLD BUSINESS

Town Hall: Member Truitt gave a recap of the Town Hall meetings and suggested that we utilize our Board meetings to gather information. The Board meetings would have specific themes and speakers focused on a certain topic. The Town Halls were very successful but they require a significant amount of time in planning.

NEW BUSINESS

Appeals:

The Board heard and acted on the following appeals:

Mr Taylor, formal, accepted

Mr. Vaughan, informal, accepted

Mr. Cirotto, formal, accepted

Mr. Duncan, informal, accepted

Complaints:

Executive Officer Lassiter went over complaints that had been submitted since the last meeting of September 16, 2015.

Chair Taylor expanded on the complaint submitted by Scott Barnes.

Budget:

Executive Officer Lassiter reported that the Board is on track with their Budget with the exception of the payroll and benefits increase that went into effect.

Calendar: There were no objections to the tentative calendar.

January 27, 2016	Board Meeting	Yountville, CA
January 28, 2016	Vaughan Appeal	Redding, CA
February 3, 2016	Taylor Appeal	Fresno, CA
February 24, 2016	Duncan	Chula Vista, CA
March 30, 2016	Board Meeting	Southern CA/TBD
May 25, 2016	Board Meeting	Northern CA/TBD
July 27, 2016	Board Meeting	Southern CA/TBD
September 28, 2016	Board Meeting	Northern CA/TBD
November 30, 2016	Board Meeting	Southern CA/TBD

Additional dates:

Cirotto Appeal? (San Francisco)

BOARD COMMENTS: Member Crooks reported that he attended the State Commanders Conference held at the new American Legion headquarters in Sanger, CA. He urged other members of the Board to attend future meetings as it was evident that the presence of the Board was greatly appreciated. Member Crooks reported that he has a contact for anyone who is a WWII veteran that served in France. The French Government brings these Veterans into the Legion of Honor. He went on to give a brief outline of the coming visit of the American Legion National Commander and his meeting with the Secretary this month. The Board thanked everyone for coming and commended the audience for their participation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan and Objectives

Action Items:

- 1. Hugh Crooks:** No update at this time.
- 2. Gena Truitt:** Member Truitt reported that the California Veterans home in Barstow has been working with the VA to improve admissions and they currently have openings in different levels of care.
- 3. Caroline Morales:** Member Morales gave a report of the bills of interest to the Department. Three to note are SB 543, SB 2, AB 1383 and AB 442.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

The Board went over their Strategic Plan and Objectives for 2016 making some minor changes. Suggestions include:

STRATEGIC GOALS:

Add Goal

- An additional goal was added to the Strategic Goals as Goal #3:
Seek opportunities to proactively advise the Governor's office and the Department on Legislation that affects Veterans.

1. Strengthen and demonstrate the Boards' importance and relevancy to California Veterans

- a. Objective:** Identify and advise the Department of Veterans Affairs as to significant issues affecting California Veterans.

Add action items

- Members speak, at least annually, at a public forum regarding Board Activities.
- Members will attend at least one Veteran Service Organization meeting quarterly and report findings to the Board

Note: Chair Taylor will put together a powerpoint outlining guidelines for public speaking.

- b. Objective:** Improve communications and marketing of Board activities to increase Veterans attendance at Board functions.

Delete Objective

This objective has been accomplished and will be deleted. Objective c (with its changes below) will be made Objective b.

- c. Objective:** Identify best business practice for conducting Board activities.

Add action items

- Change Board meeting time and locations. Possibly meet in the evenings. Meet at the Homes, VFW and/or Universities.
- Members will seek out and inquire what information Veterans are interested in hearing about at Board meetings. Send out surveys, talk with Commanders and VSO's.
- Meetings will include special interest speakers.
- Change the "Department Update" to include Homes, Services and Farm & Home department heads when meetings are held in Sacramento.

Add Objective

Objective: Partner with the Homes to increase visibility and gain knowledge of the Homes' operations and receive input from staff and residents.

Add action items

- Homes will be categorized by geographical area and assigned to members (1 or 2 members to each area) in order to increase the boards' presence at the homes.
- Each board member will attend their identified homes' Allied Council Meeting quarterly or twice a year.
- Each member will bring feedback to the Board.
- Homes were divided among members:
 - Hugh: West LA
 - Hugh /Juan: Lancaster
 - Gena/Caroline: Barstow
 - Todd: Yountville
 - Charlene: Redding, Fresno
 - Sean: Ventura
 - Gena: Chula Vista
- Discussed presenters: Allied Council.

2. Work in partnership with the Secretary and Department of Veterans Affairs for the benefit of all California Veterans.

- a. Objective:** Establish regular and open line of communication

Delete action item

- Deletion of action item iii. Attending California Interagency Council Meeting action.

- b. Objective:** Receive regular briefing information from Department of Veterans Affairs

Add action items

- Committee Members will seek out and establish involvement with their respective Department Heads. Members will meet with their department heads at least every other month.

*****Members are to submit their revisions/new goals/action to the Chair as soon as possible**

Members discussed the Survey of other States' programs that was asked of them by the Secretary. Areas that will be looked at include:

- Bed size?
- Wait list to get in? Average time to get in?
- Levels of care (there are four), which of those four do they provide?
- Eligibility requirements (minimum disability i.e. 10% or ?, require health insurance?, require honorable discharge?)
- Is there a co-pay for the various levels of care?
- What services are included in the monthly bill (equipment, medications, diagnostics, specialty services i.e. Cardiology, HepC)? Extra fees?
- Do they admit non veteran spouses? Is there a copay for them?

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:30 PM