



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #747
March 18, 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 in Redding, CA at the California Veterans Home - Redding at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Charlene Taylor (Chair), Hugh Crooks Jr. (Vice-Chair), Caroline Morales (Member), Sean Sargeant (Member), Gena Truitt (Member), Juan Gonzales (Member)
Chair Taylor presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Taylor welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. She gave a synopsis of the Board's upcoming schedule.

The Board and Executive Officer introduced themselves.

Chair Taylor reported that our new member Todd Trotter had a previous commitment and was out of State, she briefly reviewed his resume.

MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

Approved two sets of minutes: One from January 21, 2015 Board meeting in Los Angeles, CA and the other from the February 13, 2015 Appeal's Hearing. Member Truitt moved to approve the minutes and member Sargeant seconded. Motion unanimously approved and carried.

PRESENTATION BY REDDING HOME ADMINISTRATOR – Mr. Tim Bouseman, Home Administrator for the California Veterans Home – Redding addressed the Board about the activities, both short term and long term, going on in the Home. He invited everyone to join him on a tour of the home at the conclusion of the meeting.

PRESENTATION BY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER OF SHASTA COUNTY – Mr. Duke Maderas, Veteran Service Officer, gave a very heartwarming and entertaining talk about the work that he and his team do on behalf of Veterans.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

James Mussen

OLD BUSINESS

Town Hall Forum: a brief discussion was held and a plan for regular conference calls to plan the event was agreed upon.

DEPARTMENT FORUM: Department Update

Deputy Secretary Coby Petersen addressed the Board to give an update from the Department.

A. Veterans Services - Strike Teams have reviewed about 48,000 claims to date. They continue to bring millions of dollars in revenue back to Veterans. Services will partner with CDCR to provide better transition for Veterans when they are released.

B. Women Veterans - The Womens Military History Reception was taking place in Sacramento the same evening. It was reported that they will focus on Advocacy and Policy research. Also, the Women's Toolkit is on the website!

C. Homes – Mr. Petersen addressed questions about expansion. He encouraged everyone to visit the homes. He also reported on the Surveys being completed at the various sites. Mr. Petersen continued that CalVet Homes is a team of 1 as opposed to 8 separate teams/Homes. West LA Kitchen should start construction in April with completion by October. It was also reported that West LA opened up it's Skilled nursing facility.

D. Farm and Home – Mr. Petersen said that Farm and Home reported that they are well above their production goal (120 million). So far they have closed 272 Loans, totaling 74 million dollars. Additionally, delinquency has stayed below that of the National average.

E. Communications – Communications continues to stay on top of relaying information to Agencies and the Public as it pertains to the various activities that are taking place in the Department.

F. Minority – Ground breaking ceremony for the "El Sodago" monument will take place in September with estimated completion of early May.

G. Legislation – The list of bills is getting larger and larger now that the legislation is back in session. Discussed AB 171, permanent funding of VSOs and SB 543, MWR funds.

All in all, the Department is doing very well at accomplishing our goal of serving Veterans!

BOARD COMMENTS:

Chair Taylor asked if there is a team from the Department/other Homes that go out to support a facility undergoing a survey. Mr. Petersen: Yes, we put our best foot forward as a team.

Mr. Crooks commented that communication with the Department is a challenge. Either phone calls are not returned or he was given the run around. He was concerned that if he was given this treatment how are the Veterans treated? He also expressed concern that the Board is not being included in Communications.

Member Truitt reiterated the concern about the Homes and how they do not return calls. Also, she is finding that getting into homes is very challenging. She felt that the Homeless are screened out and assumed to have substance abuse issues. It was reiterated that it is a constant struggle with the homeless population. Emergency and transitional housing is needed. There is a need to clarify what the definition of a Veteran is, as it pertains to housing. Theresa Gunn will be asked to provide the definition used by her division.

Mr. Peterson committed to taking these concerns back to his leadership team.

NEW BUSINESS

Appeals – Whaley Appeal requesting a Review of Record was accepted.

Complaints – The Board requested a regular summary of Complaints, follow-up and resolution.

Committee Assignments – A proposal to revise committee assignments was proposed by Chair Taylor due to the change in Board membership; proposed changes were accepted (Attached). [..\Committee AssignmentsMarch 2015.doc](#)

2015 Calendar – Accepted and will be updated on Webpage (Attached). [..\tentativecalendar.docx](#)

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Charlene Taylor: Charlene reported that she has met with the Secretary twice and will continue to do so monthly. The Secretary supports the Town Hall Forum. They covered communication, transparency and the direction of the Department. The Secretary relayed that she plans to tap into the Board and elicit help from the Board members in their respective areas of expertise. Rewrite of the Military and Veterans Code will be put on the back burner for a year. They will not do the Fall “All Veterans Conference” this year. Chair Taylor reported that the Board was asked to present at the New Employee Orientation and that she was pleased with the inclusion. John Farrell will be recognized at the Town Hall Forum. Chair Taylor also reported that the meeting among the California State Commanders and Veterans Council, the Secretary and the Board might land on a day that she will be out of the country and asked if another member would be able to represent. She also announced that The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee meeting with the Secretary will be May 12, 2015 at 1:30- 3:30, Room 2040. Chair Taylor requested Member Morales to continue to monitor AB 171.

A. Strategic Plan and Objectives:

Action Items:

- 1. Chair Taylor:** Reviewed where we were with scheduling the Town Hall Meetings: The Board felt it important to work around Speaker Atkins schedule to have her at the Town Hall Forum. Request for a conference call among the Board Members, JP Tremblay and Paul Sullivan was made to discuss the Town Hall meetings.
- 2. Hugh Crooks:** Communication still needs to be improved. Need flyers and information earlier than 10 days to get the word out. Hugh hears information from other sources that the Board is not privy to. Facebook page can be a good instrument for communication.
- 3. Caroline Morales:** Caroline reported that she is still participating in a Teleconference every other Friday with J.P. regarding Legislation. The Department is monitoring over 70 bills; AB 171 would extend funding for CVSO’s and SB 543 would define a Home and an Administrator.
- 4. Gena Truitt:** Gena reported that she has updated the first 5 policies of the Board’s Policy Book has and asked for the whole Book . She will finalize for the next Board meeting in May 2015.
- 5. Sean Sargent:** Sean continues on the TR Support at Camp Pendleton/ Miramar; reported on putting together a “stand down” for Orange County in hopes to identify the needs in the community.

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS –

Member Morales expressed concern about the impact of not having the Fall All Veterans Conference. Chair Taylor expressed the need for a Formal Hearing Officer in regards to Formal Hearings in the future. Location for the Town Hall Forum and some Board meetings was discussed.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 NOON