



**CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes #749**  
**July 15, 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 Veterans Hall in San Luis Obispo, CA at 9:00 AM.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Charlene Taylor (Chair), Hugh Crooks Jr. (Vice-Chair), Sean Sargeant (Member), Gena Truitt (Member), Todd Trotter (Member)  
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 May 20, 2015 Board meeting. Member Crooks moved to approve the minutes and member Truitt seconded. Motion unanimously approved and carried.

**PRESENTATION BY GEORGE DIXON AND CHRIS LOPEZ: County Veterans Service Office, (CVSO), Monterey County** – George Dixon gave a thorough speech outlining the extensive work the CVSO's do for the Veterans in San Luis Obispo County and Chris Lopez updated on how they are working with incarcerated Veterans. Both Mr. Dixon and Mr. Lopez concur that they have found that it's a challenge to identify Veterans out in the community. Many do not want to identify themselves, and some do not consider themselves veterans since they didn't deploy or are still in the service. Mr. Lopez spoke of the therapeutic "dogs" that are brought into the Prisons and how helpful they have been with the incarcerated PTSD Veterans. They stressed that they have a "no closed door approach" and will continue their work with California Veterans.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**CHAIR'S UPDATE** – Chair Taylor reported that she was not able to meet with Secretary Endsley this month but they were able to conduct a phone meeting. She reported that Acting Secretary Endsley has announced her resignation and her last day will be July 31, 2015. Todd Irby will be Acting Secretary in transition. The project that Acting Secretary Endsley asked the Board to help with has not moved forward as planned. Chair Taylor said she received a call from James Munson, Treasurer for the Yountville Allied council. He was not happy due

to the fact that the MWR budget has not been approved by the department and their cable t.v. has been turned off, no computer access, no newspaper or magazine deliveries either. Chair Taylor asked Mirtha Villareal-Younger to take that information back to the Department. Taylor suggested to Mr. Munson that they change their renew dates so that they do not conflict with budget time. He also informed her that SB 543 has become a two-year bill which they believe to be a good thing. Chair Taylor went on to announce that she will miss the September meeting as she will be out of the country in Russia. She asked Member Crooks to cover that meeting and he agreed. They will look at doing the fall strategic planning retreat around the November 18, 2015 Board meeting which is tentatively planned to be held in Fresno, CA.

## **DEPARTMENT FORUM: Department Update**

Mirtha Villareal-Younger, Deputy Secretary Minority Veterans Affairs updated the Board on the Department. The Department continues with outreach efforts. Deputy Secretary Villareal-Younger talked about Billy York's 2-1-1 program down south, and that it is basically a virtual resource center. She reported on the work she has been doing all over the state most noteworthy from tribal land. Native American's comprise the highest per capita among minority Veterans. California has the highest number of Native Americans with 102-103 federally recognized tribes. She also outlined the protocol for working with tribal leaders and explained the need to write to them first. Mirtha noted that there is talk about the need to expand the Native American reimbursement policy to include non-native American veterans. There was also talk about the need for CalVet to pay more attention to rural areas in terms of helping the homeless.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Strategic Plan and Objectives**

#### **Action Items:**

- 1. Hugh Crooks:** Nothing to report at this time.
- 2. Gena Truitt:** Member Truitt briefed the board on her efforts in influencing the Mayors in her area to take the Mayors challenge. She continues to educate about incentives, (i.e. tax breaks) to house and hire veterans. She is hoping to streamline the process for admission into the Homes. Member Truitt continues educating social workers on what is needed to help Vets so they don't fall through the cracks. She is working tirelessly to help the Homes take some of the homeless veterans. And she will look into the Mr. Leon Long complaint in the next couple of weeks.
- 3. Sean Sargeant:** Member Sargeant met with the County VSO and went to their recent local meeting. Met with the LINC Eddie Falcon and has recently referred four people for services.
- 4. Todd Trotter:** Member Trotter presented the appeal from Mr. Haun and suggested that this particular appeal not be accepted since it does not fall in the Boards jurisdiction. Executive Officer (EO) Lassiter will draft a letter and send to Member Trotter for his review. He will return with any necessary changes for final preparation and mailing.
- 5. Chair Taylor:** Chair Taylor presented the California Veterans Board Administrative Book and the Policy Book. Additions, Deletions and revisions were discussed and unanimously taken up as motioned by Member Crooks and seconded by Member Sargeant with the exception of the "Appeals to the Board" and the "Report on Pending Litigation and Legislation" policies which will be taken up at the next meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Town Hall:** Member Truitt discussed the next Town Hall and suggested that it be held down south in the Inland Empire area and focus on Employment and what Employers need to hire Veterans. She reported that she believes the San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Auditorium would be a great Venue for this event. There was discussion and eventually there was agreement with member Truitt.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Appeals/Complaints** – There were no new appeals or complaints to report. Executive Officer Lassiter reported that the two people that requested information about filing an appeal have not officially filed anything at this time.

## **BOARD COMMENTS:**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 NOON**