



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #761
July 19, 2017



Todd Trotter, Chair
Hugh Crooks, Jr., Vice-Chair
Charlene Taylor, Member
Elizabeth Perez, Member

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

The California Veterans Board met at the California Department of Veterans Affairs in the Medal of Honor Hall located at 1227 "O" Street, First Floor, Sacramento, CA at 9:30 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Todd Trotter, Hugh Crooks Jr., Charlene Taylor, Carla Thornton and Elizabeth Perez.

Absent: - John Busterud and Juan Gonzalez

Chair Trotter presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Trotter welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. The Board and Executive Officer introduced themselves and Chair Trotter welcomed the two newly appointed board members, Liz Perez and John Busterud.

MINUTES RECOMMENDATION

Approve minutes from the May 17, 2017 Board meeting. Vice Chair Crooks moved to approve the minutes and Member Taylor seconded. Motion unanimously approved and carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

CHAIR'S UPDATE – Chair Trotter gave an encouraging update of his first couple months as chair. He reported that he attended the Little Hoover Commission hearing on June 22, 2017 and found it to be very informative and exciting with lots of energy and good ideas. Mr. Trotter also reported that he had a very positive and productive meeting with the Secretary last week. Their discussion included a plan to organize an extended orientation with the Deputy Secretaries and the newly full board and the types of presentations to the Board for future meetings that could broaden their approach and enhance engagement with the Department.

DEPARTMENT FORUM: Department Update, Secretary Imbasciani.

Secretary Imbasciani began by expressing his gratitude to the Governor's office regarding the two new Appointments to the Board and stated that both the Board and the Department have been rejuvenated.

The Secretary briefed the Board on the following:

1. The California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education, (CSAAVE): CSAAVE accredits California educational institutions and continues to make sure our Veterans get their money's worth from their GI bill. To be accredited through CSAAVE, the institution must demonstrate their ability to not only educate Veterans through a diploma/degree but they must be insuring that these same veterans are becoming employed as a result. Recently, suspicious activity within some of our educational institutions has come to the department's attention requiring CSAAVE to investigate and put a stop to any fraud associated with the physical location of a school/institution and that which is being declared.
2. Veteran Resource Centers: The Secretary met recently with the Chancellor of the Community Colleges to encourage Veteran Resource Centers on all the community college campuses.
3. Cemeteries: Igo and Yountville are running smoothly. Monterey, which opened recently, became the final resting place for 300 Veterans within 3 months of opening. The conflict at the future Orange County site has been remedied by a swapping out of nearby land.
4. Farm and Home Loans: The general obligation bond will go before the voters soon and the Secretary is very confident that it will go through that process with ease as it has 27 times already.
5. Homes: Chula Vista was just awarded 5 stars and Barstow is up from 2 to 3 stars now. The Yountville rejuvenation remains at the forefront as the proposed Skilled Nursing facility project has made its way to the Governor's capitol master plan for the state. There is tremendous support for the project but actual funding for the project is still to be determined. The federal VA is very interested in creating a Master Plan to work together on this project.
6. The Electronic Health Record project has arrived at the end of phase 1 as the Department has heard from the 6th and last vendor. This moves them into phase 2, the request for proposals (RFP).
7. CalTAPP: California Transition Assistance Program is up and running.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan and Objectives

Action Items:

1. Hugh Crooks: Communication and Marketing

Member Crooks expressed that he still finds Veterans that are unaware of the Boards existence and he mentioned that he may put together a quarterly newsletter to continue to get the word out.

2. Carla Thornton: Services

Member Thornton reported that more women are serving their country now and that will most likely increase every year. She acknowledged the highly regarded work of Deputy Secretary Lindsey Sin and that there is a state conference coming up in October that she will attend to represent the Board.

Ms. Thornton commended the CSAAVE program as she was able to witness 8 Veterans who were accepted to a fire fighter academy utilizing their GI bill benefits.

She went on to reiterate the Secretary's sentiment in regards to the Veteran Courts, commenting that it is a great program to get vets back on their feet.

3. Todd Trotter: Administration

Mr. Trotter welcomed the new Board members and asked that Legislation and Homes be added back into the Agenda under Strategic Plan/Committee Updates.

OLD BUSINESS

Allied Council Meetings: Will be placed on the next agenda under New Business

1. Still want to do it?
2. What is the Scope?
3. How to allocate assignments?
4. What is the level of engagement?

EO Lassiter will verify and update contact information.

NEW BUSINESS

Policies & Procedure review:

California Veterans Board Procedures:

- Policy A-1, General Policy Statement, Board Policy Development and Authority: Change the order making current #1 becomes #3. #2 becomes #1, #3 becomes #2; approved.
- Policy A-2, Budgetary Matters: EO Lassiter will meet with the CalVet Budget Officer and the Board's Legal representation and refine this Policy. The changes and suggestions will be brought to the next meeting for modification and/or acceptance.
- Policy A-4, Appeals to the Board:
 - #2 Second paragraph, change 2005 to 2017; 05-01 to 17-1, 05-02 to 17-02, 05-03 to 17-03, and so on).
 - #4 Second paragraph, where it begins 'A Formal Hearing shall.....' make that a new paragraph.
 - #8, The first sentence, "If the holding of a hearing is delegated, the hearing officer will give notice..." change to 'If the holding of a hearing is delegated, the hearing officer will give notice, via the Executive Officer,
 - #10, middle paragraph. Reads: "...the Board may assign the writing of the decision, with or without explanations or reasons, to the Executive Officer" change to read, "the Board may assign the writing of the decision, with explanations or reasons, to the Executive Officer".
(EO Lassiter will confirm with legal and bring back for approval at next meeting.)
- Policy A-4.1, Production of Record by Divisions on Appeals: No Changes

Certificate of Record from the policy will be sent to Department heads for use in future appeals.

- Policy A-5, Reporting of Pending Litigation and Legislation: Will undergo revisions, consultation with Legal and will be brought back for further discussion at the next meeting.

Appeals:

Accepted: Mr. Donenfeld: Accepted, Admission denial.

Scheduled: Richard King fee waiver appeal, July 26th in Newport Beach. Briefs have been distributed.

Withdrawn: None.

Question: Does the Board have the power to subpoena? Consult with legal and bring back to next meeting.

Complaints: EO Lassiter reported that there was a request for help regarding CSAAVE and the application process. The Veteran had requested an application and was given the incorrect one and was not able to reach anyone to request the correct application. The issue was resolved with receipt of the correct application.

BOARD COMMENTS: Member Thornton expressed concerns that the Board is not reaching the varying segments of the Veteran population and suggested the Board hold meetings at other locations. EO Lassiter will send out the "Schedule of meetings" policy and any revisions to be considered will be brought to the next meeting. Mr. Crooks added that a meeting in the evening might bring more attendance. An Amory was suggested by Secretary Imbasciani.

Charlene updated the Board on the Federal Commission on Care. She received an invite to attend a briefing on August 3 in Washington C.D which she unfortunately will not be able to make. She reported that there is agreement with 15 of the 18 suggestions.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:45 AM