



# CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD

Meeting Minutes #743

June 26, 2014



**Charlene Taylor, Acting Chair**  
**John Farrell, Board Member**  
**Sean Sargeant**

**Hugh Crooks, Jr., Board Member**  
**Caroline Morales, Member**  
**Gena Truitt**

The California Veterans Board met in Sacramento at the Department of Veterans Affairs at 9:00 AM.

## **ROLL CALL**

Present: Charlene Taylor, Chair, John Farrell, Member, Caroline Morales, Member, Sean Sargeant, Member, Gena Truitt, Member  
Acting Chair Taylor presided.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Taylor welcomed the group in attendance and thanked them for attending the meeting.

Department staff, Secretary, Peter Gravett, Undersecretary Michael Wells, Chief Counsel Todd Irby, Undersecretary Homes Diane Vanderpot, Deputy Secretary Communications JP Tremblay, Deputy Secretary Farm and Homes Theresa Gunn, Deputy Secretary Deborah Harper, Deputy Secretary Lindsey Sin, Assistant Deputy Secretary Rita Almanza, Assistant Deputy Secretary Dave Gerard

## **MINUTES**

Executive Officer, Bonnie Kelly

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the minutes of the December 19, 2013 Board minutes.

Member Farrell moved to approve the minutes. Member Truitt seconded.

Motion unanimously approved and carried.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

George Cousart, Barstow Allied Counsel

## **OLD BUSINESS**

## **DEPARTMENT FORUM**

### **Department Update**

#### **A. Legislation/Communications**

Deputy Secretary Tremblay summarized pending bills that affect Veterans.

Mr. Tremblay explained the Department's bill analysis process, and taking a position on bills.

#### **B. Veterans Services**

Undersecretary Wells updated the Board on the strike teams which have been established to work at the VA regional offices on the backlog of claims. To date they have reviewed 20,000 of California's estimated 86,000 claims in the first nine months of the program and, as a result, \$29M has been funded back to California Veterans.

Mr. Wells advised that the Department's California for profit colleges program has suspended Heald, Wyotech, and Everest from doing business with Veterans until they have resolved issues that have been outlined by the Department.

Mr. Wells explained the My CalVet web program which was introduced last month, and is a web based access point where a Veteran can go in and create a personalized account.

The Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) program is continuing to grow, and has met their objectives for a five percent goal.

The State Controller's Office contacted the Department and requested help with their State Unclaimed Property program to identify Veterans. They gave us a list of five million names and we determined that 95,000 of them were Veterans which was \$3.6M worth of property that belonged to Veterans. The Department is sending out notices to these Veterans to encourage them to contact the Controller's Office to find out if they might have money belonging to them.

The Department is setting up a program for incarcerated Veterans to educate them on what benefits are available to them upon their release.

Dave Gerard reported advised that the Department was in the process of pursuing a grant from the USDVA for the construction of a cemetery at Fort Ord in Monterey.

#### **C. Women Veterans**

Deputy Secretary Lindsey Sin reported that her mission is to provide information, advocacy, and outreach support to our women Veterans in the areas of education, employment, and health care access. This is being done by

holding outreach events, a Women's Conference, publishing a monthly newsletter and brochures, developing a website and in the process of developing an outreach tool kit for Veterans Service Organizations and women's organizations. She is also currently working with legislators, JP's team, various non-profits, and conducting surveys. There is a women's roster where they are invited to send their contact information so that the Department can stay in regular contact with them.

This year's Women's Conference will be in Sacramento on August 24-25. The theme this year is empowering women in their personal and professional lives.

This year, there was a March reception in honor of Women's Military History Week held at the State Library.

**D. Homes**

Assistant Deputy Secretary Dave Gerard reported that the licensing survey was successful at Redding and Fresno, which will allow the Department to move forward with offering skilled nursing at those Homes and enable them to be filled to capacity.

In West Los Angeles, the Home will have a full service kitchen completed by early next year.

**E. Farm and Home**

Assistant Deputy Secretary Rita Almanza gave an overview of the loan program.

**F. Minority Veterans**

Secretary Gravett reported that several forums and conferences have been held this year including a Black Veterans Summit, Hispanic Conference, and Asian American Veterans Conference. An LGBT conference is being explored and, An All Veterans conference is being planned to bring together all of the groups next year.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Packard Appeal**

The Board received Mr. Packard's appeal, which if not resolved by the Department beforehand, will be heard at the next Board meeting.

**B. Dept. Presentation to Modifications of the Military and Veterans Code**

Burt McChesney gave an update on the Department's progress of reviewing and drafting revisions to the Military and Veterans Code, with the goal of having legislation introduced during the 2015 session. The Board requested the opportunity to provide input.

**C. Chair and Vice Chair Elections**

The Board voted for Charlene Taylor to continue as acting Chair until January 2015. They also voted to leave the Vice Chair vacant until January 2015.

**D. Committee Assignments**

The Board discussed committee assignments and agreed that Chair Taylor would make the appointments.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 NOON.**