



**CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes #744**  
**September 18-19, 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 ChulaVista at the Veterans Home at 9:00 AM.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Charlene Taylor, Chair, John Farrell, Member, Caroline Morales, Member,  
Gena Truitt, Member, Hugh Crooks Jr, Member

Absent: Sean Sargeant, 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, 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, Deputy Secretary Communications Paul Sullivan, Staff Services Manager Angela Yamamoto, Staff Services Manager 1 Kevin Baena,

**MINUTES**

Executive Officer, Bonnie Kelly

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the minutes of the June 26, 2014 Board minutes.

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

Motion unanimously approved and carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**DEPARTMENT FORUM**

**Department Update**

**A. Women Veterans**

Deputy Secretary Sin announced that the Women's Veterans Conference on August 24-25 in Sacramento was a big success, and participants gave it an excellent rating. At the Conference, 6,000 articles of career clothing was donated, and available in one room for participants who were in need of clothing to pursue employment. September 9<sup>th</sup> the bi-annual survey results conducted with the California Research Bureau were released, which produced one thousand responses. Next year they will pursue other survey methods to reach more participants.

**B. Farm and Home**

Deputy Secretary Gunn reported that her Department has been tasked with the new Prop 41 passed in June, which created the new Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program, providing \$600 million in bond funds to allow Veterans to access and maintain housing stability utilizing a variety of affordable housing options.

The Home Loans Program saw a big increase finishing the year with 284 loans, which is an increase over the previous year of 81 loans. Since the Program is doing so well, it is in the process of selling \$110M in bonds to have more cash on hand for loans.

**C. Administration**

Deputy Secretary Harper explained that her division supports the Department with Human Resources, financial management, budgets, facilities, and accounting, information technology. She reported that they are partnering with CalHR and hosting monthly seminars on how to transition from military service to state service employment. She also noted that they are in the process of updating the Department's computers that are five years or older.

**D. Governor's California Interagency Council**

Administrative Officer Pamela Rasada explained that the Council was created by the Governor in August 2011 to coordinate activities between agencies to address the needs of California's Veterans. The work groups meet monthly. There are 18 appointed entities and over 450 individual volunteers.

**E. Veterans Services**

Angela Yamamoto reported that her division manages special programs including mental health grants for the counties through Prop 53, offer grants for stand down organizations to operate the stand downs throughout the State, do outreach to incarcerated Veterans, support the three district offices throughout the State, provide claims representation and review new claims before submission to the Regional office, operation of the strike teams reviewing the backlog of claims, partner with and provide training to the County Veterans Services Officers throughout the State, manage three of the Veterans cemeteries and provided consultation on the proposed Orange County cemetery, assist with

the Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise outreach, and approve schools for the G.I. Bill and college fee waiver program.

**D. Homes**

Deputy Secretary Vanderpot 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.

The Governor recently appointed two new Home Administrators, one in West Los Angeles, and the other in Chula Vista.

There is an issue regarding primary care that the USDVA has raised with all Veteran's homes in the nation that the Department is currently assessing the impact on the residents, and will keep the Board updated as this issue progresses.

**E. Communications**

Deputy Secretary Sullivan introduced himself and explained that his office will be handling the internal and external communications of the Department.

**F. 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.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Nelson Navas and John Hall Appeal**

The Board received appeals for Mr. Navas, for admittance to the Yountville Veterans Home, and Mr. Hall, for admittance to the Redding Veterans Home.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

Member Truitt reported that Member Sargeant, of the Veterans Services Committee, met with Veterans Services staff at the Department in August to gain more in-depth knowledge and to discuss how the Committee can become more involved.

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

## **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2014**

The Board re-convened at 9:00 AM

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION**

- Kevin Baena introduced himself and explained his role in the strategic planning session.
- Secretary Gravett discussed the relationship, communication, and roles of the Department and the Board.
- JP Tremblay reviewed the Military and Veterans Code and updated the Board on the revision of the Codes.
- Kevin Baena facilitated the Board in revising and updating their Mission and Vision Statement.
- Member Crooks moved to adopt the following revised Mission statement, and Member Farrell seconded:

The California Veterans Board serves as an advocate for California Veterans and their dependents by identifying, communicating and addressing their needs to ensure their rights and benefits.

- Member Truitt moved to approve the current Vision statement as written, and Member Morales seconded:

The California Veterans Board serves as an advocate for California Veterans and their dependents by identifying, communicating and addressing their needs to ensure their rights and benefits.

- The Board drafted the following Goals:
  - 1) Strengthen and demonstrate the Board's importance and relevancy to California Veterans.
    - a. Objective: Identify significant issues affecting California veterans.
    - b. Objective: Host bi annual informational sessions.
    - c. Objective: Improve communications and marketing of Board activities to increase Veterans attendance at Board functions.
    - d. Objective: identify best business practice for conducting Board activities.
      - i. Meeting Schedule (frequency, location, content/focus)
      - ii. Committee Duties

iii. Budget Current and Forecasted

- 2) Work in concert and partnership with the Secretary and Department of Veterans Affairs for the benefit of all California Veterans.
  - 3) Support and advocate approved California Department of Veterans Affairs legislative activities that benefit Veterans.
  - 4) Hear Veteran's appeals and render decisions in a timely manner.
- The goal of the next strategic planning session is to finalize goals and objectives and draft action items.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00.