



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD

Meeting Minutes #742

December 19, 2013



Alexander Tsao, Chair
John Farrell, Board Member

Donna L. Dacier, Board Member
Charlene Taylor, Member

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Alexander Tsao, Chair, Donna Dacier, Member, John Farrell, Member,

Absent: Charlene Taylor, Member

Chairman Tsao presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INVOCATION

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Tsao welcomed the group in attendance and thanked them for attending the meeting.

Department staff, 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

MINUTES

Executive Officer, Bonnie Kelly

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Motion unanimously approved and carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

George Cousart, Barstow Allied Counsel

Ed Olson, Yountville Allied Counsel

Ed Warren, Yountville Allied Counsel

OLD BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT FORUM

Department Update

A. Minority Veterans Affairs

Mirtha Villareal-Younger, Deputy Secretary for Minority Veterans updated the Board on upcoming events planned for minority veterans.

B. Legislation/Communications

Deputy Secretary Tremblay distributed and reviewed copies of a legislative summary on bills that were tracked, passed and signed for 2013.

On the Communications side, Mr. Tremblay reported that the Department's website is being re-designed from an organizational structured by division website to a more customer centric site.

C. Veterans Services

Undersecretary Wells updated the Board on efforts to build a Veterans cemetery in Monterey at Fort Ord.

The Department is currently reviewing the Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) program with the intent of expanding beyond the current five percent goal.

Strike teams have now been established in all three VA regional offices to work on the claims backlog. Although they are not yet fully staffed, they have done over 1,400 claim reviews.

D. Homes

Undersecretary Vanderpot announced that the Redding and Fresno Homes are now open. There is currently thirteen veterans residing in Fresno, and eight in Redding.

A new Hospital Administrator has been appointed in Ventura, and the Hospital Administrator in Yountville has retired.

The West Los Angeles Home is in the process of converting 84 of its skilled nursing beds to domiciliary beds for a new transitional housing program. The new program is designed to house veterans who have gone through the USDVA transitional program until they are able to find employment and housing. Services will be provided by state employees and through sharing agreements with the USDVA. Currently we have thirteen Veterans from the program residing at the Home, and have had one Veteran who has successfully graduated.

The Department is still in the process of switching over to electronic medical records. All of the Homes in the south have been successfully converted, with training now being focused on the remaining northern Homes.

The BSA audit and Yountville investigation was completed in September, and one other audit is still in progress. The audits are expected to be ongoing over the next two years.

Home announcements: Chula Vista had the first gay marriage on the campus. West Los Angeles celebrated the 104th birthday of the oldest Tuskegee Airman.

The Homes are being evaluated to determine the possibility of creating additional private rooms, taking into consideration the impact on staffing and funding this would cause.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Peischl Appeal

Member Dacier moved to receive the appeal from Gregory Peischl on his denial of admittance to the Chula Vista Veterans Home. Member Farrell seconded the motion.

Motion unanimously approved and carried.

B. Board Suggestions to Modifications of the Military and Veterans Code

The Department is in the process of beginning a review of the Military and Veterans Code for an update, and will be receiving recommendations from all of the stakeholders, including the Board. This process will take place over the next two years, with the goal of having an initial proposal of the major points drafted by September 2014.

C. Development of Communications Between Stakeholders

Chair Tsao requested the Board members to consider methods to facilitate ways of better communications between the Department and stakeholders.

D. 2014 Board Meeting Schedule

A tentative draft of meeting dates for 2014 Board meetings was distributed for review by the members contingent upon the Governor's appointment of new members.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 NOON.