



VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

222 W. Hospitality Ln., 3rd Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0470

Minutes of the Meeting

January 27, 2020, 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE – Members present: Frank Guevara (Board Liaison), Chair Jeff Allen, James Willingham, Danny Marquez, and Kelly Maxwell. Also present: recording secretary Sally Gibson and guest Martin Contreras. Members excused: Jim Frost and Joseph Mena. Members absent: Terry Porter and Matt Knox.

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Jeff Allen called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – After a review of the minutes of the meeting held September 30, 2019, a motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE – Frank Guevara gave an overview of recent County VA activities:

- A new VSO has been hired who will start in late February and work at the Rancho office in the newly-constructed client interview room.
- County VA attended Representative Aguilar's Veterans Resource Fair at the ACC last November. There were a lot of veterans on hand, most of whom were not familiar with County VA.
- County VA is working on a Welcome Home booklet as a resource for newly-discharged veterans. Each section will have a QR code for quick access to a Welcome Home website. Venues where there are a large number of new veterans, such as Cal-TAP in 29 Palms and community colleges, could be supplied with the booklets. The County's IT department is currently putting the site together, which could launch as soon as March.
- County VA is investigating the possibility of teleconferencing with clients and is looking into a pilot project for our Rancho Cucamonga site. This would involve remote, face-to-face visits with a VSO, who could operate a scanner at the client's location, if the need for scanning arises. If successful, this technology has the ability to double the amount of time we are currently seeing clients in Yucca Valley and 29 Palms from one day a week twice a month to two days per week, with one being virtual visits. After the pilot project has completed, targeted sites for remote locations could include Chino Hills and Barstow.
- Department visits are up, with a high of 105 visitors on January 5 when the longest wait time was 32 minutes.
- CalVet Veterans Representative Training Academy will be held at the San Bernardino County VA office from February 10 to 14, 2020. All VSOs attend the CalVet training prior to accreditation and it will be quite handy for our new VSO to attend their training here, as opposed to the previous location in Orange County.
- The department has applied for a 2-year grant to continue funding the popular veterans legal clinic that County VA has hosted monthly since last August.
- County VA will sponsor 5 women veterans for a Woodworking Workshop at the Maloof Foundation March 7-8. Interested female veterans should contact County VA for more information.

FROM THE MEMBERS

Jeff Allen – Jeff asked if veterans can come to County VA to apply for a CalVet home loan. County VA does not initiate CalVet home loans, but can refer clients to the CalVet representative who does. Jeff also mentioned that neither RTA or Omnitrans currently stop in Grand Terrace, making it difficult for area veterans to get to Loma Linda VA Medical Center.

Danny Marquez – Danny reported on a number of projects he's working on with his organization, Veterans Partnering With Communities:

- Norma Torres will be among those attending the Veterans Health and Wellness Fair at the Fontana Senior Center April 18, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- VITA tax preparation help will be available at the Lewis Library by appointment starting Saturday, February 7.
- A 9/11 Day of Service is planned for the Saturday before 9/11, Saturday September 5, at the Fontana Senior Center where volunteers will help make care packages for service members.
- A 5K fundraising run is planned for November 5, 2020, at the Jessie Turner Center. Proceeds will help pay for homes and pay off mortgages for Gold Star families.

Kelly Maxwell – Orenda Foundation has hired an IT person to help implement “Planted Recovery,” an online treatment modality geared toward helping those in sparsely-populated areas get online virtual treatment to help combat the opioid crisis. Kelly also mentioned that Victorville School District donates collected can goods to Orenda each Valentine’s Day, with the most recent donation including a nearly-full semi truckload of canned goods.

FROM THE FLOOR

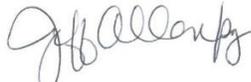
Martin Contreras – Marty introduced himself as the veteran liaison for the Maloof Foundation, and he is also a client of the Vet Center. He mentioned various ideas for the Vet Center including a wellness garden, referrals from the Maloof Foundation and a veteran + family gathering. Marty mentioned that the Veteran Exploration Garden in Highland seems to be closed all the time, and that the Maloof organization is considering including a veterans’ station in their gardens. Martin also informed those present about the Maloof Foundation Annual Opening Day celebration, to be held this year on February 1st from 12 noon to 2 p.m., the public is welcome.

DATE/TIME/LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next VAC meeting is scheduled for Monday 3/30/2020 at 3:00 p.m. in the County VA conference room.

ADJOURNMENT - Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Allen
Chairman

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