

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



Ruth A. Wong  
Director

## MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, August 11, 2021

### Present:

#### Commissioners

Tom Lasser  
Joe Leal  
Brittanie Moore  
Patricia Jackson-Kelley  
Jawana McFadden  
Anthony Allman  
Jennifer Campbell

### Absent:

#### Commissioners

### County Department

**Military and Veterans Affairs**  
Ruth Wong, Director  
Stephanie Guerrero, Secretary

### Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Acting Chair Tom Lasser called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Anthony Allman, 3<sup>rd</sup> District.

### Roll Call

There was a total of 5 Commissioners at the time of roll call; no quorum present. Shortly after, Commissioners Jawana McFadden and Jennifer Campbell joined the meeting; QUORUM PRESENT.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Motion made by Commissioner Jennifer Campbell to accept the Minutes for July 14, 2021 and seconded by Commissioner Anthony Allman. With no objections, motion passed.

Commissioner Anthony Allman addressed last month's LACDA presentation that covered the project-based voucher program. He stated that he wasn't sure if it was recorded in last month's minutes but there was a mistake. The LACDA presentation noted that McArthur field A and B were assigned to Thomas Safran and Associates. That was incorrect. Commissioner Allman followed up with the presenter and confirmed those two developments belong to Core Affordable Housing.

## **Chairman's Report**

Acting Chair Tom Lasser stated that the retreat was postponed due to COVID restrictions and looks forward to meeting all Commissioners, especially those who are new in-person at the retreat on October 13<sup>th</sup>. He reminded the Commission to report their list of activities of FY July 2020 through June 2021 to add to the Annual Report to the BOS. He encouraged the Commission to support their Supervisor and attend their events and keep a record.

Commissioner Brittanie Moore nominated Anthony Allman to be elected as the Chair of the Veterans Advisory Commission. Due to recent turnovers, she thanked Anthony for stepping up and taking charge. She thanked her fellow Commissioners for their service to veterans and is excited to meet everyone in October at the retreat.

Acting Chair Tom Lasser stated that the Commission will vote to elect the Chair next month and that the nomination for Vice Chair may be submitted at that time.

## **Public Comments**

Beatriz Camarena, TELACU Property Management Inc., Casa De Rosa attended this meeting in an effort to gather referrals for Veterans Housing, which have been appropriated for homeless and chronic homeless veterans in Los Angeles. From April 30 until now, only two units have been filled. Beatriz stated that TELACU Property Management will continue to reach out to agencies/organizations, the VA, and out-of-state, to get referrals in hopes to fill the remaining 10 units with veterans in need. Section 8 offers Tenant-based (TB) Vouchers that cover 20-30 percent, in which the property will accept. Ms. Camarena appreciates the support, contacts, and referrals.

## **Guest Speaker(s)**

Cajun Comeau, Veterans Experience Action Center was introduced by Commissioner Anthony Allman. Mr. Comeau did not attend the meeting.

However, Anthony Rodriguez, CALVET stated that he can provide a little background in explaining the program. He read an email from the Chief of the Veterans and Community Engagement Department at CALVET that was sent to George Dixon, Veterans Services Supervisor. The email read, Veterans Experience Office is running several pilot programs across the country aimed at increasing the efficiency of how veterans and their families connect with the VHA and VBA services. The pilot being proposed consist of accredited representatives with VBM access receiving, addressing, and triaging veterans through a telephone system specifically designed over a 2-3 day virtual event to be held in September. The event has committed to support with training provided by VEO and CalTap programs coming out to join the VA. They have asked LA County for individuals who file and submit service-connected disability claims. Mr. Rodriguez will forward the 8 page presentation to MVA. Direct contact is Eric Faulkner, Field Consultant for the Veterans Experience Office, GLAVAHS. He can be reached at [eric.faulkner2@va.gov](mailto:eric.faulkner2@va.gov) or (619) 246-4606.

Tom Lasser asked, "Is this program ran by the VA?" Anthony answered, "Yes it's a VA run program that has requested assistance from the state/CALVET, which works together hand in hand with MVA."

Dimitri DeSilva, Military and Veterans Affairs was introduced by Director Ruth Wong to provide a briefing related to the veterans identifier within the court system. Dimitri last briefed the Commission in February 2021 and is back to provide and update on what he has learned.

Mr. DeSilva stated that there was a great response with the MIL-100 form within the court system on the criminal side that is acting as a diversion tool to help veterans get resources as well as divert criminal charges. The civil proceedings in court do not have the same robust response and it has been challenging to obtain hard numbers in terms of filings on the civil side of the MIL-100 form. Mr. DeSilva stated, in looking beyond our jurisdiction, we have seen some great success stories of partnerships with non-profits and the courts to facilitate a civil side and a more robust program for veterans after filing the MIL-100 form. For example, he has reached out and advocated on behalf of the development on a similar program on a local level. He was grateful to Deputy Roberto Alvarez for providing the following contacts relating to legal advocacy for veterans:

1. Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) – is a free legal clinic for veterans in need of help clearing outstanding tickets, warrants, and criminal records.
2. VA – the veterans justice program provides local non-profit and pro-bono organizations in Los Angeles County.
3. OC New Leaf Program – helps individuals navigate the civil and criminal side to reduce charges and redact some of their records.

Mr. DeSilva is hoping to hear back soon from one of these potential partners that may have the bandwidth to develop a stand up program to help navigate things on the civil side for veterans. The next step would be for them to have the funding, staffing, and the capacity to take this on. In the meantime, he will connect with the female veteran to provide the resources that are available. The long-term goal would be to set up a program. To access the MIL-100 form, please visit <https://www.courts.ca.gov/37705.htm>.

### **Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report**

Ruth Wong, Director, provided the following updates:

- Top Ten Award partnered with U.S.VETS – will present to the Quality and Productivity Commission in the next two weeks. Kudos to CALVET for gifting the two-year grant.
- Memo from Executive Board Office – option to meet virtually, however, must provide address on the agenda where meeting will be viewed. Will be adhering to Public Health protocols.
- Budget Summary – MVA's FY 2021-22 of monies allocated for appropriations, revenue, total net county costs, and the departmental program summary.

### **Agenda Items that are Deferred to Next Month's Meeting**

- New Chair Election and Upcoming Retreat – Tom Lasser
- Health and Wellness – Jennifer Campbell
- ETS Program briefing – Anthony Allman
- VPAN Summary – Joe Leal

### **Good of the Order**

Commissioner Joe Leal thanked the County Board of Supervisors, Director Ruth Wong, and Anthony Rodriguez for reaching 500 veteran cases within the 1<sup>st</sup> District that range from suicide prevention, mental health, education

benefits, and disability claims. All districts were awarded with VPAN funding and all the cases coming in are being referred to MVA. Mr. Leal stated that veterans are now receiving call backs more quickly and claims are being developed as a result. He was honored to participate in the Showers for Hope program and always happy doing outreach.

Commissioner Brittanie Moore stated that she had nothing to add at this time.

Commissioner Jawana McFadden stated that the Mayor of Los Angeles made his presentation earlier today announcing the first Veterans and IT Training Program that is in partnership with Microsoft, TikTok and other companies. The training program will take place later this month at the USS Battleship Iowa in San Pedro. She will share the flyer with others who may know veterans that are interested in signing up.

Commissioner Jennifer Campbell stated that she had nothing to add at this time.

Commissioner Anthony Allman apologized to the 5<sup>th</sup> District, as he was reminded that LA County has rural areas.

Commissioner Patricia Jackson-Kelley stated that both she and Commissioner McFadden met with Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell to discuss their goals for the Commission. She attended several events; the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Navy in Norwalk, the USC meeting, and a women's veteran group to discuss some of the new initiatives. Ms. Jackson-Kelley is working with Alexis Lunningham to create a program at the VA where they will escort and assist women veterans to their appointments.

Acting Chair Tom Lasser reminded the Commission to send in their list of activities for the annual report.

### **Adjournment**

In memory of Saginaw Grant, U.S. Marine Corps veteran and Jerry Yamamoto, U.S. Army veteran.

A total of 24 participants were in attendance. Meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Stephanie Guerrero  
Secretary  
August 11, 2021