

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



Ruth A. Wong  
Director

## MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, March 14, 2018

### Present:

#### Commissioners

Thomas O'Shaughnessy  
Patricia Jackson-Kelley  
Marcel Rodarte  
Tom Lasser  
Hector Elizalde  
Joe Leal

### Absent:

#### Commissioners

Col. Julian Bond  
Fred Flores

### County Department

#### **Military and Veterans Affairs**

Ruth Wong, Director  
Tatiana Rosas, Executive Secretary

### Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Approval of Minutes

Chair Thomas O'Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 1:34p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Captain Charlene Downey. Chair O'Shaughnessy stated that due to a lack of quorum the Minutes of February 14, 2018 is postponed.

### Roll Call

As noted above.

### Chairman's Report

Chair O'Shaughnessy stated that he has stepped down from being the Committee Chair for "Goal I: Objective 2 – Make recommendations for tenants in Bob Hope, Patriotic Hall". He would like another Commissioner to volunteer for this Objective. Goal II: Promote health and wellbeing with a special concentration on suicide prevention and underserved populations for all Veterans and their families – Commissioner Jose Leal has volunteered to be Committee Chair and Goal III: Educate and make recommendations on legislative issues concerning veterans in CA, LA County and local communities – Commissioner Hector Elizalde has volunteered to be Committee Chair of this Goal.

With a quorum, there was a motion to approve Minutes by Commissioner Bond and was seconded by Commissioner Rodarte. The Minutes were approved unanimously by those present.

Chair O'Shaughnessy went over the flyers in the Commissioners packet.

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**Coast Guard at Terminal Island**

Captain Charlene Downey, assumed her duties as Sector Commander for U.S. Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles – Long Beach in June 2016. From command offices on Terminal Island in San Pedro, the Sector coordinates operations in an area of responsibility stretching more than 350 miles along the California coast, from north of Morro Bay and south to San Clemente, out to 200 miles offshore, and includes the nation's largest port complex. The Sector oversees four patrol boats, three multi-mission small boat stations, a marine safety detachment, a vessel traffic system and an aids-to-navigation team.

The Coast Guard has seven statutory missions, she wears five hats: Officer in charge of Marine Inspections, the Federal Maritime Inspections, the Federal Maritime Security Coordinator, the Federal Unseen Coordinator (pollution and hazardous materials) and the Search and Rescue Coordinator.

Captain Downey stated that they would be receiving four new Coast Guard Cutters for FY 2018-19. They will be 154ft in length and the CGC Forrest Rednour will be commissioned in November, 2018. She will be sending invitations to the Commission.

Commissioner Lasser motioned to have the Coast Guard honored on their birthday, August 4<sup>th</sup> at a Board of Supervisors meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Rodarte and all were in favor. Motion passed.

Chair O'Shaughnessy stated that he would like to hold a Commission meeting at the base and Captain Downey stated the Coast Guard would be honored to host the Veterans Advisory Commission.

**Community Veteran Justice Project**

Jodi Galvin, Chair, Legal & ReEntry Committee, LA Veteran Collaborative stated, "the project evolved from a stakeholders meeting in LA County back in Oct 2015 to learn from them what was the best thing we could do for our justice involved veterans and collectively they came up with the idea of 'community veteran justice workers' which has evolved into the Community Veteran Justice (CVJ) Project which now staffs CVJ workers out of the WLA VA Welcome Center Monday-Friday with CVJ workers that takes walk ins, as well as takes referrals from attorneys and veterans all over LA County.

The Los Angeles county jail system has approximately 500 incarcerated veterans and many out of custody justice involved veterans. Currently there is no tracking mechanism for incarcerated veterans to follow what happens once a veteran enters the criminal justice system. The project would create a tracking system for all incarcerated vets, a screening mechanism for the veteran criminal statutes, and a screening mechanism for services and resources to help ensure that all incarcerated veterans are connected to the services they need such as VA benefits, discharge upgrades, housing, employment, health care and more.

Ms. Galvin explained the Community Veteran Justice Outreach Worker Project (CVJO). This Outreach Project assists the 500 incarcerated veterans in LA County Jails on any given day. Work to identify and assist the many (thousands) veterans out of custody with misdemeanor cases and assist the 2 LA Veteran Treatment Courts rooms which handles 100 felony (only) cases at any given time. Allow veterans to fully use the veteran statutes in all the criminal courts in the 26 criminal court houses in LA County; and connect justice involved veterans with all the services and resources they need, provide an exit plan with wrap around services for all incarcerated vet in LA county jail.

Ms. Galvin asked that the Commission assist with a letter of recommendation for funding, for volunteers, etc. Commission Elizalde asked that prior to a letter of recommendation that Ms. Galvin financial officer present to the Commission. Motion by Commission Hector Elizalde to have the CVJO financial officer due a presentation at the meeting in Lennox. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Julian Bond and all were in favor.

**Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report**

Ruth Wong, Director, stated the following Department updates:

- Benefit Claims went up 10% and it is expected to exceed 10,000 claims.
- Military Leave Program – is a program for the active reservists in the County.
- The Veterans Culinary Program will start a spring session in March, 2018.

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- The Department will be migrating to Windows 10.
- Introduced new staff JeNai Davis, who will be working on Business Analytics.
- Attending the CACVSO conference in Sacramento
  - Bill: SB 1043 (increase in subvention funding)

### **Tenant Report: Transportation Foundation**

Tamiko Hirano, President/CEO, Transportation Foundation of L.A. and U.S. Veterans Foundation, stated that they have been doing a lot of outreach since last year when they were moved to using a cubicle one-day a week. She is on the Executive Board for the Los Angeles National Cemetery and is currently working on a resource fair at the cemetery. The Foundation has hired veterans through paid internships. She has participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the columbarium, also with Wreaths Across America, Pink Lady events, and also participated in the Women's Summit. Currently, planning on doing intake services and job trainings for solar installations.

### **Tenant Report: Vietnam Veterans of America**

Not present.

### **Tenant Report: Tuskegee Airmen Foundation**

Edward Grice, Executive Director, Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation (TASF) stated that TASF is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1978. The mission of the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation is to honor the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen by providing motivation, access and scholarships to assist financially and academically deserving students in the pursuit of their college education. The Tuskegee Airmen Experience began with the first aviation class of 13 cadets on July 19, 1941. From 1941 to 1946, approximately 1,000 pilots graduated. The Tuskegee Airmen served the Army Air Corps earning them 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 31 Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars and a well-deserved place in U.S. history. Mr. Grice stated that they continue their legacy by giving scholarships in engineering and aerospace. They currently provide a Math Assessment Program (MAP) in collaboration with U.S. Vets. Last month for Black history month the LA County Annual Black History Month Celebration for 2018, TASF collaborated along with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and The LAC African American Employees Association held the annual event on Thursday, February 22, 2018 in the BOS Hearing Room at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. There was a special tribute to Retired Tuskegee Airmen Jerry Hodges and Ted Lumpkin.

### **Public Comments: Comments from Audience on Items Not on Agenda (three minutes each):**

John Motter, local community organizer that works with Ground Game LA. Stated he pledges to assist against deportation of veterans that have not been given citizenship.

Kyle Orlemann, Hawthorne Veterans Affairs Commission, inviting the Commission to have a table on April 28, "Veterans Benefits Day" at the Hawthorne Memorial Center. On February 27, 2018 the City of Hawthorne passed resolution that encourage City of Hawthorne property owners to enter into rental agreements with the Los Angeles Air Force Base to provide residential rental units to military personnel at an attainable rental rate.

### **Item's for Next Month's Agenda**

Commissioner Lasser recommended a formal invitation to Secretary Vito Imbasciani to the joint Commission meeting.

### **Follow-Up on Veteran Issues**

None.

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**Good of the Order**

Commissioner Joe Leal stated that he invited Command Sergeant Major Ana Vega to the Women's Summit and she gave great reviews and thanked MVA staff for the great welcome she received.

Commissioner Julian Bond stated he attended the Homes for Heroes Builders Ball.

Commissioner Marcel Rodarte stated he had nothing for the good of the order.

Commissioner Tom Lasser stated that he added the Governor's Military Council meeting and was seated next to Secretary Vito Imbasciani.

Commissioner Hector Elizalde invited everyone to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Forum in Azusa on June 30<sup>th</sup>. He stated the goal should be to have a veteran forum in every district.

Chair Thomas O'Shaughnessy stated that the VCEB is not meeting this month. Motion to adjourn meeting by Commissioner Lasser and seconded by Commissioner Elizalde. Meeting adjourned at 3:30p.m.

Tatiana Rosas  
Executive Secretary  
March 14, 2018

Note: The meeting is a joint meeting between Los Angeles Veterans Advisory and the Orange County Veterans Council at 5pm at VA Long Beach on April 11, 2018.