

LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



Jim Zenner
Director

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Present:

Commissioners

Anthony Allman
Joe Leal
Patricia Jackson-Kelley
Jawana McFadden
Chi Szeto
John Gutierrez
Dennis Anderson

Absent:

Commissioners

Marcel Rodarte

County Department

Military and Veterans Affairs

Jim Zenner, Director
Stephanie Guerrero, Executive Secretary

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Allman called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Jawana McFadden, 2nd District.

Roll Call

There was a total of seven Commissioners at the meeting during roll call; quorum present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Jawana McFadden to accept the Minutes for September 14, 2022 and seconded by Commissioner Joe Leal; a roll call with seven yes votes, the motion passed.

Chairman's Report

The notice of the Commission meeting was sent out on October 6, 2022 at 3:40pm via Gov Delivery (28,096 subscribers). If anyone is interested to subscribe to the Gov Delivery mailing list, please email info@mva.lacounty.gov.

Each meeting recording can be found on MVA's YouTube channel by searching "LA County Military and Veterans Affairs." There are currently 44 subscribers.

In terms of the Annual Report, the previous one referenced and incorrect County Code (3.20 vs 3.60), which is for Emergency Responders who have a duty to report. On September 22nd, County Counsel advised that the Annual Report was not mandatory. However, the Commission Services Division reached out on September 30th, to advise that all Citizens Advisory Commissions are required to submit an annual Report per Board Motion on May16, 2017.

Public Comments

None.

Presentation of Draft Bylaws

Anthony Allman asked that the Commissioners take approximately one to two minutes for each page to review the draft Bylaws. He pointed out the following modifications:

- Rotating leadership according to Board of Supervisor (BOS) Chair – Commission will determine who wants to be Chair and Vice Chair
- Article 8 – road map to draft and submit a recommendation to BOS
- Suggested and encouraged the next Chair to submit a public comment to the Board to show that we are here and active
- Meeting day will change from the second Wednesday to the third Wednesday of each month

Commissioner Joe Leal stated that he supports voting and adopting the Bylaws. Commissioners Dennis Anderson, John Gutierrez, and Jawana McFadden concur with Joe Leal.

Motion made by Commissioner Patricia Jackson-Kelley to accept and approve the Bylaws on October 12, 2022 and seconded by Commissioner Dennis Anderson; a roll call with seven yes votes, the motion carried.

Chairman Allman suggested creating a VPAN subcommittee if there is going to be a standing VPAN briefing so that if there is not a representative from VPAN, then a Commissioner can give a brief report out.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report

Jim Zenner, Director, thanked the Board of Supervisors (BOS), Commissioners, and the MVA staff for their support. He provided the following updates:

- Actively engaged in suicide prevention efforts around homelessness
- Looking at policy to reopen Patriotic Hall while engaging other County departments and the community
- Hosting events and providing services to veterans and families through our 13 field offices
- 12 vacancies (9-Veterans Claims Assistant, 2-Intermediate Typist Clerk, 1-Administrative Services Manager II)
- Meet with CEO to discuss budget and share costs with two other County departments housed at Patriotic Hall
- Connecting with other County departments to include Parks and Recreation, Animal Care and Control, and Aging and Disability to learn about what we do as a County for veterans in each department
- County Veterans Service Officers (VSO) bring in \$90 per every dollar – MVA brings in a lot of revenue

- Connected with Legislative Affairs and California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) about cost savings
- Veteran Suicide Review Team (VSRT) helps to bring financial stability to our veterans and families in LA County to help save money on the utilization of emergency services with regard to homelessness
- Actively working on communications to improve the website and capture data while distributing on Gov Delivery
- Open to engaging with the Commission around ideas on improving the Department
- MVA PowerPoint slide deck with data to be presented on a monthly basis coming soon
- Host a Town Hall in each Supervisorial District specific to MVA and the PACT Act before the end of the year and would like assistance from Commissioners and Deputies in selecting a venue in their district to draw in as many veterans, family members, and caregivers as possible
- MVA will use the Veterans Service Representative (VSR) language in future communications

Guest Speaker(s)

Anh Tran, Program Manager, Veterans Peer Access Network (VPAN) expressed her gratitude for being able to join the Commission meeting. She shared an award that VPAN received earlier that day from the County at the Quality and Productivity Awards ceremony. It was such an honor and she thanked the Commission for their support to help grow the program. Anh provided a few updates to include the hiring of two new supervisors and in the process of interviewing more Community Health Workers, which are peer service providers. After meeting with VA leadership, VPAN is hoping to have VA staff at the Rally Points for each Supervisorial District.

There was a great Veteran Suicide Review Team (VSRT) kick off in September that has been formalized and been sent for review with DMH's County Counsel. Afterward, it will be shared with the rest of the departments. As you may know, anything legal is a bit complicated going through one lawyer after another and then on to counselors. Each department will be looking into those documents to ensure it is vetted so that it can be sent out to next of kin. That is the status of VSRT currently.

Nancy Pelayo, Program Manager, VPAN primarily oversees the support line. She reported that they have new staff coming on board so that permanent staff will be able to respond to the 1,000 calls a month coming through the line. I think we did share a slide where you see that we are at about 1000 calls a month now. That is a significant uptick in terms of the amount of people being connected to services. VPAN is working on providing solid training and support to both internal and contracting staff, especially when it comes to housing. VPAN is working hard to make veterans and family members aware of the housing options available to them. Training is being developed and will be offered to their contractors to better support veterans and families. The primary focus would be to bring on staff, particularly family members that will help reach more veterans. In looking at services and events for family members, VPAN is partnering with MVA to host Toy Drive over the holiday season. Nancy was honored to have received this award and stated that it would not have been possible without Jim's leadership and everyone on the call and she is excited to share it with the team. She wants to continue to receive feedback that is necessary to improve services and reach a larger amount of veterans and their families.

Chairman Anthony Allman stated that a potential volunteer was referred to VPAN had a question about the registration form regarding the amount of volunteer hours each week.

Anh responded that VPAN's leadership team will discuss and possibly revise the volunteer form. Initially, the form was created for the support line volunteers with the shifts and hours as a consideration.

Agenda Items that are Deferred to Next Month's Meeting

- LA County Department of Human Resources (DHR); Veteran Hiring Preference – Anthony Allman
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) – Dennis Anderson
- LA Metro – Patricia Jackson-Kelley
- Veterans Peer Access Network (VPAN) – Joe Leal
- West LA Tiny Homes – Joe Leal
- Commission Services; Commission structure, process upon entrance, and multiple Commissions working together to make a formal recommendation – Chi Szeto

- Department of Labor (DOL), Women's Bureau – John Gutierrez
- Animal Care and Control; discounted registration fee for disabled veterans – Anthony Allman
- Pathway to Citizenship – Joe Leal

To accommodate Commissioner Leal's request about the status on the Tiny Homes, Chairman Allman is deferring VPAN's monthly briefing to bring in Greater LA for an update on what happened with the Tiny Homes.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Joe Leal stated that events at colleges are bringing in many cases due to the holidays. In December, CALVET and VPAN are planning for 1600 to 1800 troops to dine at Los Angeles Trade Tech College (LATTTC). This two-part resource fair with workshops will be held for veterans and families to learn about home loans and the pathway to citizenship. With the upcoming holidays, MVA and DMH will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and promote their work as well as other agencies, to include the Commission.

Commissioner Patricia Jackson-Kelley attended one of the American Legion Posts located in South Central over the weekend, to celebrate their 100th Anniversary. She is excited to be attending the 25th Anniversary for the Women's Memorial celebration in Washington DC; the Secretary of the VA will acknowledge Commissioner Jackson-Kelley in his remarks at the memorial since she was one of the Charter members. On October 30th, the Jackie Robinson's Post will be having a veteran's resource fair for those who are interested in home buying. In November, the Veterans Advocacy Group of America (VAGA) will be feeding the veterans at Patriotic Hall, so she encourages everyone to invite veterans and make sure to sign up for that.

Commissioner Jawana McFadden stated that she had nothing to report.

Chairman Anthony Allman apologized to Commissioner Leal for not reaching out to Greater LA to request a briefing on that CTRS issue, as he was focused on the Bylaws; but will get it calendared. He had a discussion with Director Zenner regarding events happening in LA County and the Department and the Commission having representation, similar to showing up to the Board meetings to get the Supervisor's attention and letting them know that we both exist. He congratulated the Commission on ratifying the Bylaws because he believes it is crucial for advocating for veterans and active duty members. This is a platform to voice our concerns as there are a variety of issues that need to be resolved. He hopes that the Commission uses the instrument of the recommendation process as needed.

Commissioner Chi Szeto stated that he met with the VPAN team in the 4th District to discuss ways to partner with them.

Commissioner Gutierrez stated that the Veterans Forum at the National Guard Armory will be held on Saturday, October 29th from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. Also, there is a Class A Truck Driver's training taking place in the Antelope Valley. The informational flyer was sent to Stephanie so that she can distribute it. Last, VPAN is hosting an Appreciation Day event for military members and families on November 8th at Pasadena City College.

Commissioner Anderson stated that the Edwards Air Force Base will be putting on the Aerospace Valley 2022 Air Show this weekend starting at 8:30 am with approximately 50,000 people in attendance. It is the first one since 2009 and the Thunderbirds will be in performance. On November 9-13th over Veteran's Day holiday weekend, the mobile veteran Vietnam Wall will be on display at the Palmdale Amphitheater. It will have all 58,285 names of the Americans lives lost during the Vietnam War. It cost well over \$100,000 to build it and has been viewed all over Southern California by veterans and their families.

Chairman Allman adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Stephanie Guerrero
Executive Secretary
October 12, 2022