

Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

Second Quarterly Meeting (FY 2011)
January 25, 2011

I. Call to Order

Chairman O'Mahoney called to order the Second Quarterly Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission at 10:00 a.m. on January 25, 2011 in the Robertson Room at the DoubleTree Hotel, 6505 North IH 35, Austin, Texas 78752.

The following Commissioners were present:

T.P. O'Mahoney, Chairman
Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Vice Chairman
Richard A. McLeon, IV, Member
James H. Scott, Member

Also present was Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director.

Also present: See the attached list.

Vice Chairman Cantu gave the opening prayer. Commissioner McLeon led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag.

Chairman O'Mahoney opened the meeting with welcome and introduction of visitors. Bill Wilson, Director of Veterans Employment Services, introduced the 5 Regional Veterans Employment Representatives (RVERs).

II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Commission Meetings

The minutes were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the First Quarterly Meeting held on November 15, 2010, as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Special Commission Meeting held on November 16, 2010, as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Special Commission Meeting held on December 2, 2010, as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

III. Advisory Committee Reports

Veterans Communications Advisory Committee - Morgan Little, Member

Morgan Little provided an overview of committee meetings held on November 15, 2010, and January 10, 2011. Mr. Little reported on the status of current projects including the social media campaign, and the radio/television public service announcements. The committee is continuing to work with the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) regarding grants and lottery ticket sales. The next committee meetings are scheduled for February 7, 2011, and March 14, 2011.

Fund for Veterans' Assistance - General Thomas Smith, Chair

General Thomas Smith provided an overview of the committee meeting held on December 14, 2010. Committee members reviewed 15 grant applications, 9 of which were recommended for funding, and will be presented at this meeting to the Commissioners for approval. General Smith reported that the new camouflage lottery ticket is now available in stores. He continued by noting the recent streamlining of procedures and paperwork in the grant application review process. General Smith closed by expressing his appreciation to the Commission, and the Communication Advisory Committee for their support.

Veterans Employment and Training: Marianne Rogers, Chair

There was no report because there had been no advisory committee meeting since the last regular Commission meeting. Ms. Rogers noted the advisory committee was meeting on January 26, 2011, so there would be a report next time.

IV. Advisory Committees - New Business including possible addition/removal of members and acceptance of gifts

Tina Carnes, General Counsel, presented the recommendation to move Sergeant Major Gene Overstreet from the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee to become a member of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee.

MOTION: To accept the nomination of Sergeant Major Overstreet as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Carnes presented the recommendation to move Lt. General Leroy Sisco from the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee to become a member of the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee.

MOTION: To accept the nomination of General Sisco as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Carnes presented for consideration an anonymous donation in the amount of \$1,000 to be used for wireless microphones for training.

MOTION: To accept the gift as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

V. **Executive Director Report**

Thomas Palladino opened his report by recognizing James Richman for serving as the agency's Interim Executive Director, then Interim Deputy Executive Director, and presented him with a gift. Mr. Palladino continued by providing a review of his recent meetings with TVC program staff around the state. He then gave a brief overview of events he attended, meetings with various legislators, general information items, accolades, and on-going projects of the agency. Mr. Palladino closed with noting the Texas & U.S. Casualty Report that was previously provided to the Commissioners.

VI. Financial Reports

Irma Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer, presented the final Appropriation Year (AY) 2010 Budget, Revenues & Expenditures report, and AY 2011 First Quarter Budget, Revenues & Expenditures report. The Commissioners accepted the reports with no questions for Ms. Rodriguez.

VII. Report, presentation, and or action on S. 3447 Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010

Connie Jacksits, Director of Veterans Education, gave an overview of Senate Bill 3447 that was enacted on January 4, 2011, highlighting its impact on the fundamental role and duties of State Approving Agencies and the Veterans Education program. Ms. Jacksits requested the assistance of the Commissioners in expressing the staff's concern regarding these changes. Chairman O'Mahoney offered his support to speak at any hearings, and asked to be kept updated regarding the status of the preliminary rules scheduled to be published next month.

VIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Commission Programs

The Commissioners reviewed each of the program reports that were previously provided. The Commissioners asked minor clarification questions of the directors, and allowed directors the opportunity to add any new items or highlight significant items.

Thomas Palladino announced recent organizational changes to expand the Fund for Veterans' Assistance program to be effective on February 1, 2011: Bill Wilson will become the new Director; David Nobles will remain with the program as Grant Coordinator; and 2 new Grant Monitor positions were added.

IX. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Veterans Courts

Tina Carnes, General Counsel, presented an overview of Veterans Courts and TVC's involvement in Veterans Courts.

Chairman O'Mahoney called for a 10-minute recess at 11:00 a.m.

Chairman O'Mahoney reconvened the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

X. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) Grants

David Nobles, Director of Fund for Veterans' Assistance, presented the following recommendations of the Advisory Committee that were previously provided to Commissioners totaling approximately \$2.3 million.

Santa Maria Hostel in Houston, Texas.

MOTION: Approve for funding as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Hill Country MHMR. Mr. Nobles noted a revision to the recommended funding amount. The correct amount requested for funding is \$164,013.

MOTION: Approve for funding with correction to funding amount.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Texas Legal Services Center.

MOTION: Approve for funding as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Scott & White Healthcare. Discussion was held regarding Budget Narrative notes provided by staff.

MOTION: Approve for funding pending acceptable clarification of Budget Narrative.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Grace After Fire. Discussion was held regarding the lack of required financial statements submitted by the applicant. Commissioners agreed the necessary information should have been submitted with the grant application. Commissioners directed staff to work with the applicant to obtain the necessary information and bring the recommendation

back to the Commission at their next meeting. The Commissioners determined that all future grant recommendations presented to the Commissioners for approval must be complete, without exception.

MOTION: Application as presented is not approved.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Lubbock Regional MHMR.

MOTION: Approve for funding pending receipt of required documents as noted.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

San Antonio Council on Alcohol/Drug Abuse.

MOTION: Approve for funding as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Center for Life Resources (MHMR).

MOTION: Approve for funding as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Consumer Credit Counseling.

MOTION: Approve for funding as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Nobles presented the following four (4) Grant Agreement amendments for approval:

Amendment for Rains County.

MOTION: Approve the amendment as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner Scott

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Amendment for Samaritan Center was presented for information purposes only. This amendment was previously approved by the Executive Director.

Amendment for Texas National Guard Family Support Foundation.

MOTION: Approve the amendment as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Amendment for VFW Foundation. The Commissioners agreed a new grant application must be submitted for the additional funds that are being requested, and then the following motion was called for:

MOTION: Approve the amendment to extend the grant period for 12 months.

MADE BY: Commissioner Scott

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

A complete list of the grants awarded by the TVC Commissioners is available on the Texas Veterans Commission website at: <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/about/awards>.

Mr. Nobles reviewed accolades from various grantees regarding the success of the grant program, the Grant Service Area Map for the November 2010 solicitation, and FVA financials.

Gary Thomas, Veterans County Service Officer of Rains County, addressed the Commission regarding the transportation needs of veterans in rural areas of Texas. Mr. Thomas asked the Commission to consider allowing counties to use FVA grant funds to purchase vehicles for this purpose. Chairman O'Mahoney thanked Mr. Thomas, and stated the Commission will take his testimony under advisement.

Mr. Nobles presented a revision to the current wording of the grant objectives policy that will expand the definition of the 9 grant purposes to allow more flexibility to those who apply for grant funds. The amendment adds the words, "but are not limited to," in the current policy: "It is the objective of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance to provide grants to meet the needs of veterans and their families; such needs include, *but are not limited to*, the following..."

MOTION: Approve the new Grant Objectives language as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner Scott

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Cantu

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Report, presentation, and/or action regarding Fund for Veterans' Assistance Monitoring Efforts

David Nobles reported on the FVA's monitoring efforts to date, and recent site visits with various Grantees. Chairman O'Mahoney proposed discussing compliance and monitoring issues at the February Commission workshop. Discussions were held and minor revisions to the monitoring report were recommended. Mr. Nobles closed by reporting that overall the Grantees are performing well, but there are some concerns that the program is continuing to work with Grantees to resolve.

XII. Report, presentation and/or Action regarding Proposed Rules concerning the Fund for Veterans' Assistance

Chairman O'Mahoney tabled reviewing the proposed rules for a future Commission workshop that will be scheduled in February. This will allow for a more thorough review of the rules, and also allow for input from the new Director of Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

XIII. Review and update of Action Plan

Kyle Mitchell, Deputy Executive Director, gave an overview of the Action Plan that was previously provided to the Commissioners.

XIV. Date and time of next meeting

The Commissioners scheduled a workshop to review the proposed rules for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance to be held on February 24, 2011, at 11:00 a.m. in the Texas Veterans Commission Conference Room.

XV. Public comment

Morgan Little, ESGR representative presented a handout of the most recent notice of the ESGR Central Region from the National Committee. Mr. Little provided a brief overview of current events, and an update of the Guard and Reserve.

XVI. Executive Session

Chairman O'Mahoney adjourned into Executive Session at 12:48 p.m.

Chairman O'Mahoney reconvened in Open Meeting at 1:43 p.m.

Chairman O'Mahoney reported there was no action taken in Executive Session.

XVII. Recommendations for agenda items for next meeting

None.

XVIII. Commissioners' closing comments

Chairman O'Mahoney thanked the agency staff for all their work, Commissioner McLeon reported on attending the Gulf War 20th Anniversary Forum at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas on January 20, 2011. Vice Chairman Cantu extended his appreciation to staff for all their support.

XIX. Adjournment

Chairman O'Mahoney adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Minutes Approved by:


T.P. O'Mahoney, Chairman



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

2nd Quarterly Commission Meeting - Fiscal Year 2011
January 25, 2011 10:00 a.m.
Doubletree North Hotel - Robertson Room - Austin, Texas

Charles Buerschinger

Past Texas Veterans Commission
Deputy Executive Director

Scott Shepherd

Member – Fund for Veterans’ Advisory Committee

Gary Thomas

Rains County-Veterans County Service Officer

Jim Duncan

Past Chairman – Texas Veterans Commission

Roy Grona

VFW, Department of Texas, Adjutant/Quartermaster

Jacinda Johnson

Transition Assistance Advisor
Texas Military Forces
Camp Mabry

Harvey King

Interim State Director
U.S. Department of Labor
Veterans’ Employment & Training Service

Morgan Little
Chair, Texas Coalition of Veteran Organizations

James E. Nier
Former Texas Veterans Commission
Executive Director

Marianne Rogers
Chair - Veterans Employment & Training Advisory Committee

General Thomas G. Smith
Chair, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee

Ken Wallingford
Veterans Liaison, Texas Veterans Land Board