

# Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

Second Quarterly Meeting (FY 2015)  
February 3, 2015

## I. Call to order.

Chairman Eliseo Cantu called to order the 2nd Quarterly Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 9:06 a.m. on February 3, 2015, in Room 1-111 of the William B. Travis Building at 1701 North Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701.

The following Commissioners, constituting a quorum, were present:

Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Chairman  
James H. Scott, Vice Chairman  
Richard A. McLeon, IV, Secretary  
Jake Ellzey, Commissioner

Excused: Daniel P. Moran, Commissioner

Also present was Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director.

Also present: See the attached list.

Secretary McLeon gave the opening prayer. Vice Chairman Scott led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag and Commissioner Ellzey led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag.

## II. Public comment.

None.

## III. Approve the Minutes of the First Quarterly Meeting held November 13, 2013.

The minutes from the First Quarterly Commission meeting held on November 5, 2014 and the minutes from the Special Commission Meeting held on December 9, 2014, were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: Approve the minutes from the First Quarterly Commission meeting held on November 5, 2014 and the minutes from the Special Commission Meeting held on December 9, 2014, as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committees**

Jim Cunningham, Chairman of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The Veterans Communication Advisory Committee members were advised on their roles and the services that TVC provides. The Committee also discussed legislative issues impacting Texas Veterans.

**V. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee.**

John DiPiero, Chairman of the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee provided a summary of activities conducted by the Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The Committee received two new appointed members, and also elected the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. The Committee discussed their award program, and discovered new arenas in which organizations can be recognized for the initiatives for hiring Veterans. Lastly, the Chairman reported Karen Fastenau, General Counsel, briefed the members over the ethics policy.

**VI. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee.**

Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The Advisory Committee met in Houston, TX on September 8, 2014, and again on February 3, 2015. At the February meeting, the Committee received a briefing over the Advisory Committee training requirements from Karen Fastenau, General Counsel, and a briefing over state funding opportunities from Jeff Williford, Director of Government Relations.

**VII. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee.**

Robert Cervantes, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee Member, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The Advisory Committee discussed recommendations for General Assistance Series XV-A grants.

**VIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding the Fund for Veterans' Assistance 2014**

**Community Partnership Award recipient.**

Sarah Tillman, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Interim Director, and Robert Cervantes, member of the Fund for Veterans' Advisory Committee, presented on the Fund for Veteran's Assistance 2014 Community Partnership Award recipient. Ms. Tillman discussed the process that the Advisory Commission engages in to develop its recommendation for the 2014 Community Partnership Award.

Mr. Cervantes, on behalf of the Advisory Committee, presented Operation Finally Home as the 2014 Community Partnership Award recommendation to the Commission.

MOTION: Approve Operation Finally Home as the 2014 Community Partnership Award recipient.

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**IX. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Advisory Committees membership.**

None.

**X. Report, presentation and/ or action regarding Appropriation Year 2015 First Quarter Operating Statement.**

Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, presented the First Quarter Operating Statement for FY 2015, which was previously provided to the Commissioners. Mr. Osborne noted that TVC is currently financially sound and all budgets are on track. Additionally, Mr. Osborne addressed discrepancies associated with total funding and total expenditures.

No motion to approve needed.

**XI. Report, presentation and/ or action regarding Executive Director report.**

Thomas Palladino, Texas Veterans Commission Executive Director, provided a report on the agency's priorities and activities over the last quarter. Mr. Palladino informed the Commission that he has been meeting with elected officials since the beginning of the legislative session and has attended legislative hearings acting as a resource witness.

Mr. Palladino briefed the Commission over his previous travel to San Antonio, TX, where he met with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Secretary Robert McDonald and participated as an invited speaker at the National Student Veterans Association Conference.

Additionally, Mr. Palladino notified the Commission that he has continued to visit field

offices and staff around the state. He briefed the Commission over the progress completed with the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal. Mr. Palladino also updated the Commission on the Veterans Health Care Strikeforce Team and briefed them over the meetings he has had with the Veterans Integrated Services Network managers.

Lastly, Mr. Palladino briefed the Commissioners over the Texas Veterans Commission Annual Summit and informed them of his upcoming trips to the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Mid-Winter Conference.

## **XII. Report, presentation and/ or action on agency programs and divisions.**

The Quarterly Program Reports were previously distributed to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. Program and division staff was provided the opportunity to brief the Commission on any new items or highlight significant items that occurred within their program.

- A. Jim Richman, Claims Representation and Counseling Program Director, reported on major activities and accomplishments completed by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Richman notified the Commission about the personnel changes at the Texas Veterans Commission Waco Regional office, retirement of Brenda Branch and promotion of Dale Moyer. He updated the Commission over the progress completed with the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal and the transition into paperless claims. Mr. Richman briefed the Commission over the recent events hosted by the Health Care Strikeforce team. Lastly, Mr. Richman provided an overview of the performance measures relating to his program.
- B. Stan Kurtz, Veterans Employment Services (VES) Operations Manager, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Kurtz notified the Commission that the program has completed the VES program guide for all staff. He noted to the Commission that VES leadership has visited 32 locations and met with staff over the new guidance and addressed any issues and challenges field staff expressed. Mr. Kurtz notified the Commission that the VES program is going to be sending out a training needs assessment to all field offices to better improve the training for VES. Additionally, Mr. Kurtz updated the Commission on the work of the VES is completing in state government and addressing Women Veterans' needs. Lastly, Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Palladino briefed the Commission over the Department of Labor – Veterans Employment Training Services Audit.
- C. Rufus Coburn, Veterans Education Program Director, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Coburn addressed changes in the performance measures reporting format Mr. Coburn briefed the Commission over the Hazlewood lawsuit and reactions to the ruling. Mr. Coburn notified the Commission that his program is working to address any Hazlewood program changes.

- D. Sarah Tillman, Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) Interim Director, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Ms. Tillman notified the Commission that the Fund for Veterans' Assistance General Assistance, Series XV-B grant and Veterans Mental Health grant applications have closed, and FVA staff is currently reviewing all applications to be sent to the Advisory Committee. Ms. Tillman updated the Commission that the FVA's compliance visits, and on the current status of the needs assessment process. Additionally, Ms. Tillman updated the Commission on the status of the VA Transportation Grants in Highly Rural Areas.
- E. Cruz Montemayor, Chief Administrative Officer, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Montemayor notified the Commission about the addition of training coordinators for each program. Mr. Montemayor also briefed the Commission over the acquired space on the 4th floor of the Stephen F. Austin building and notified the Commission that some Departments would be utilizing this space.
- F. Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Osborne informed the Commission that all financial documents have been submitted to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner. Mr. Osborne also notified the Commission about the hiring of an accountant to assist with travel and grant reimbursements.

Lastly, Mr. Osborne briefed the Commission over the revised exceptional item list in response to the introduced General Appropriations Act. Mr. Osborne provided details into the changes made to the Claims Representation and Counseling Program. Mr. Osborne requested approval from the Commission.

MOTION: Approve the revision of the Texas Veterans Commission exceptional item list.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Secretary McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Jeff Williford, Government Relations Director, reported on major activities and accomplishments made by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Williford notified the Commission that the focus of his division has been geared to the legislative session. Mr. Williford updated the Commission on the American Sniper screening in which is division assisted in planning. Additionally, Mr. Williford briefed the Commission over the Texas Veterans Commission's Annual Summit and provided an overview of the panels that will be conducted. Lastly, Mr. Williford notified the Commission that the Senate Finance Committee has requested the agency to layout

its budget priorities on February 5, 2015.

- H. Rachel Shumaker, Communications and Veterans Outreach Director, reported on major activities and accomplishments made by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Ms. Shumaker briefed the Commission over successes resulting from press releases and campaigns completed by her staff. Ms. Shumaker notified the Commission that her staff attended the National Student Veterans Association Conference in San Antonio, TX and promoted campaigns that encourage using veterans education benefits. Lastly, Ms. Shumaker updated the Commission on the recent promotional event relating to the Texas Wide Open for Veterans website.
- I. Tim Keesling, Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN) Manager, reported on major activities and accomplishments made by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Keesling updated the Commission on the progress of the Military Veteran Peer Network and provided an overview of the number of peer volunteers that are part of MVPN. Mr. Keesling briefed the Commission over the Veterans Dorm initiative taking place in the Travis State Jail Facility. Mr. Keesling updated the Commission over the progress of the Veterans App and how MVPN is able to be part of the connection of services. Lastly, Mr. Keesling notified the Commission over the new hires of the Faith-Based Outreach Liaison and his mission.
- J. Rachel Shumaker, Communication and Veterans Outreach Director, briefed the Commission over the outreach efforts that the division has made. Ms. Shumaker updated the Commission on the virtual coffee seminars and the confidence in uniform seminars conducted the by division. Lastly, Ms. Shumaker updated the Commission on the Women Veterans Rock Your Camo 5K event.
- K. Duncan McGhee, Veterans Entrepreneurship Program Manager, reported on major activities and accomplishments made by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. McGhee notified the Commission of the progress that his team has been making in assisting Veterans with reaching their goals of becoming Veteran business owners. Mr. McGhee updated the Commission on the program's two newest initiatives – the Veteran Entrepreneur Academy and the Small Business Administration Grant.

**XIII. Executive Session.**

Executive Session was held from 10:42 a.m. to 11:10 a.m.

**XIV. Discuss and take possible action on the items considered in Executive Session.**

None.

**XV. Discussion to set date, time, and location of next Commission Meeting.**

The Commission discussed the date, time, and location of the Third Quarterly

Commission meeting. TVC staff suggested the Third Quarterly Commission Meeting be scheduled on May 6, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Stephen F. Austin Building, Room 170. The Commission expressed no conflicts with the Third Quarterly Commission meeting date and agreed to accept this date, time, and location for the Third Quarterly Commission meeting.

**XVI. Adjournment.**

Chairman Cantu recognized each Commissioner for closing statements. The Commissioners extended their gratitude to Texas Veterans Commission staff for all their support and hard work in serving our Texas Veterans.

MOTION: Adjourn.

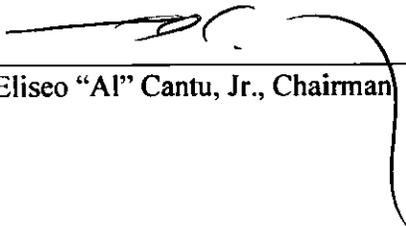
MADE BY: Secretary McLeon

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Cantu adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

Minutes Approved by:

  
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Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., Chairman

**TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION**  
2nd Quarterly Commission Meeting  
FY 2015 – February 3, 2015  
9:00 a.m. – William B. Travis Building – Room 1-111  
Speakers & Visitors

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**Craig Bean**  
Office of the Governor

**John DiPiero**  
Chair, Veterans and Employee Training Advisory Committee

**Jim Cunningham**  
Chair, Veterans Communication Advisory Committee

**Jimmy DeFoor**  
Chair, Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee