Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

Third Quarterly Meeting (FY 2014)
May 14, 2014

I. Call to order.

Chairman Eliseo Cantu called to order the 3rd Quarterly Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 7:58 a.m. on May 14, 2014, in Executive Salon 1 of the Wyndham Riverwalk Hotel at 111 E. Pecan Street, San Antonio, TX 78205.

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

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.

Chairman Cantu welcomed all visitors to the meeting and notified them that the Commission will recess at 9:30 a.m. so all Commissioners can attend the opening session of the Joint Hearing between the Texas House Committee on County Affairs and the Texas House Committee on Defense and Veterans Affairs. Additionally, Chairman Cantu noted the Commission will defer Agenda Item V (Executive Director Report) and Agenda Item VI (Agency Division and Program Reports) until after Agenda Item XI (Report, presentation and/or action on process for the development and approval of the Strategic Plan).

Lastly, Chairman Cantu noted that Governor Perry had reappointed Commissioner Ellzey to the Texas Veterans Commission and his term will expire in 2017.

II. Public comment.

Morgan Little, Texas Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, briefed the Commission on the increasing number of administrative cases that have arisen with members of the National Guard and Reservist since their return to civilian life. He notified the Commission that the National Committee is currently handling these cases and they have established an extensive protocol to address these cases. He concluded his briefing

by providing the number of cases that have been resolved by the National Committee as a result of this protocol.

Jim Womack, Executive Director of Family Support Services of Amarillo, submitted a letter to the Commission regarding his organization's application for the Fund for Veterans Assistances' Veterans Mental Health Grant.

Tim Trevino, Interim Co-Executive Director of the Alamo Area Council of Governments, provided comments to Commission concerning their two Fund for Veterans' Assistance grant applications. He notified the Commission about the recent issues involving the previous leadership of the Alamo Area Council of Governments and updated the Commission on the current status of leadership at the Alamo Area Council of Governments.

Bob and Barbara Zielinski, Co-owners of Marriage Management, provided an overview of their organization's programs to the Commission. Mr. and Mrs. Zielinski elaborated on the successes their organization achieved during the duration of their previous grant from the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

III. Approve the Minutes of the Second Quarterly Meeting held February 25, 2013.

The minutes were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION:	Approve the minutes of the Second Quarterly Meeting held on February 25, 2014, as presented.
MADE BY:	Vice Chairman Scott
SECONDED BY:	Secretary McLeon
ACTION:	The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Advisory Committees:

a. Veterans Communication Advisory Committee – Jim Cunningham, Chair
Jim Cunningham provided a summary of activities conducted by the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The Veterans Communication Advisory Committee met twice since the previous meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission. Mr. Cunningham notified the Commission that the Committee discussed the Excellence in Media Awards at each meeting. Mr. Cunningham updated the Commission on the process of approving the Excellence in Media Awards. Lastly, Mr. Cunningham notified the Commission that the Committee discussed ways to improve Veterans Outreach efforts.

b. Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee – Stan Kurtz
Stan Kurtz, Veterans Employment Services Operations Manager, provided a summary

of activities conducted by the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee to the Commission on behalf of John DiPiero, Chair of the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee. Mr. Kurtz notified the Commission that the Committee had been briefed on the new rules regarding the Office of Federal Contractors and Compliance and how they affect Veterans and the reporting process. Additionally, the Committee was briefed on the current employment issues effecting members of the National Guard and Reservist. Lastly, Mr. Kurtz notified the Commission that the Committee will be briefed on the new rules issued by the U.S. Department of Labor regarding the Joint Veterans State Grant.

c. Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee – Perry Jefferies, Committee Member

Perry Jefferies, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee Member, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee since the last meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission. Mr. Jefferies briefed the Commission on the timelines and processes of each of the three grant categories for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance. Lastly, he notified the Commission that the Committee had voted on each of the recommendations for each of the three grant categories for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance and the recommendations have been submitted to the Commission for action.

d. Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee – Jimmy DeFoor, Chair

Jimmy DeFoor, Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee Chairman, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee since the last meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission. Mr. DeFoor, notified the Commission that the Committee has new members and he was elected the Chairman. He also notified the Commission about the training schedule for the next few months for Veterans County Service Officers. Lastly, Mr. DeFoor briefed the Commission on the Veterans County Service Officer Subcommittee membership and issues identified by some of the Sub-Committees.

NOTE: Agenda Items V and VI were deferred until after Agenda Item XI

VII. Report, presentation and/or action on Appropriation Year 2014 2nd Quarter Operating Statement.

Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Second Quarter Operating Statement for FY 2014, which was previously provided to the Commissioners. Mr. Osborne briefed the Commissioners on the expenditures and funding summaries for the second quarter.

No motion to approve needed.

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

No discussion or action taken by the Commission.

IX. Report, presentation and/or action to adopt repeal and new rules under Title 40, Texas Administrative Code §§461.10 – 461.120, regarding Exemption Program for Veterans and their Dependents (The Hazlewood Act).

Cruz Montemayor, Chief Administrative Officer and Negotiated Rulemaking Facilitator, briefed the Commission on the comments received during the Public Comment period for the proposed repeal and new Administrative Rules regarding the Hazlewood Exemption Program for Veterans and their dependents. Mr. Montemayor recommended the adoption of the repeal and new rules as previously published in the Texas Register, with one minor change to §461.70(d)(2) that was made as a result of the comments received.

MOTION: Approve the adoption of the repeal and new Administrative Rules regarding the Hazlewood Exemption Program for Veterans and their dependents, as presented.

MADE BY: Secretary McLeon

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

X. Report, presentation and/or action regarding recommendations for:

a. Fund for Veterans' Assistance General Assistance, Series XIV-B grants;
Kathy Wood, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Director, summarized the Fund for Veterans' Assistance grant process and timeline procedures for the General Assistance, Series XIV-B grants. Additionally, Ms. Wood explained the Commission had provided guidance to the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee to give priority to outstanding grant applications.

Ms. Wood addressed questions from the Commissioners.

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee recommended a total of $2,495,000 was proposed to be awarded to the following 20 organizations:

1. AADC – AACOG – BAAA: $300,000 recommended.
2. Anderson County Veteran Service Center: $20,000 recommended.
3. Big Brothers Big Sisters: $75,000 recommended.
4. Bring Everyone In The Zone: $20,000 recommended.
5. Child Crisis Center of El Paso: $200,000 recommended.
6. Communities in Schools of Greater Central Texas: $300,000 recommended.
7. Green Doors: $125,000 recommended.
8. Goodwill Industries of Central Texas: $75,000 recommended.

9. Hale County Meals on Wheels: $50,000 recommended.
10. Hidalgo County CSCD: $75,000 recommended.
11. Meals on Wheels and More: $100,000 recommended.
12. Nueces County: $125,000 recommended.
13. Operation Relief Center: $50,000 recommended.
14. Sabine Valley MHMR/Community Healthcore: $200,000 recommended.
15. Salvation Army – Tyler: $150,000 recommended.
16. Salvation Army – Waco: $200,000 recommended.
17. Skillpoint Alliance: $75,000 recommended.
18. Texas Legal Services Center: $200,000 recommended.
19. Texas Rural Water Foundation: $5,000 recommended.
20. Worklife Ministry/Worklife Institute: $150,000 recommended.

MOTION: Approve the recommended organizations for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance General Assistance, Series XIV-B grants.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

b. Veterans Mental Health grants; and

Kathy Wood, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Director, summarized the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Veterans Mental Health grant process and timeline procedures. Additionally, Ms. Wood provided background on the Veterans Mental Health grants and noted this grant was in conjunction with the Department of State Health Services.

Ms. Wood and staff addressed questions from the Commissioners.

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee recommended a total of $1,750,000 was proposed to be awarded to the following 11 organizations:

1. Abilene Regional MHMR/Betty Hardwick: $75,000 recommended.
2. Equest: $500,000 recommended.
3. Family Support Services of Amarillo: $100,000 recommended.
4. Heroes Night Out/Green Zone: $75,000 recommended.
5. Horses Helping the Handicapped: $75,000 recommend.
6. Marriage Management Consultants, Inc.: $75,000 recommended.
7. Mental Health America of Greater Dallas: $200,000 recommended.
8. New Destination, Inc.: $50,000 recommended.
9. Tropical Texas Behavioral Health: $200,000 recommended.
10. United States Veterans Initiative: $200,000 recommended.
11. Woman's Heart/Grace After Fire: $200,000 recommended.

MOTION: Subtract $75,000 from the recommended grant to Equest and transfer the $75,000 to Paws for Reflection; approve Equest at $425,000, Paws for Reflection at $75,000, and the recommended organizations for the Veterans Mental Health grant.

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Sarah Tillman, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Manager, listed all grantees awarded General Assistance, Series XIV-B grants and Veterans Mental Health Grants.

c. Housing4TexasHeroes grants.
Kathy Wood, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Director, summarized the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Veterans Housing4TexasHeroes grant process and timeline procedures. Additionally, Ms. Wood provided background on the Housing4TexasHeroes grants.

Ms. Wood and staff addressed questions from the Commissioners.

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee recommended a total of $2,900,000 was proposed to be awarded to the following seven organizations:

1. Alamo Area Development Corporation: $500,000 recommended.
2. CLC, Inc.: $500,000 recommended.
3. Habitat for Humanity of Smith County: $200,000 recommended.
4. Lubbock Regional MHMR/StarCare: $200,000 recommended.
5. Meals on Wheels and More: $500,000 recommended.
6. Rebuilding Together – Houston: $500,000 recommended.
7. Tierra del Sol Housing Corp.: $500,000 recommended.

MOTION: Approve the recommended organizations for the Housing4TexasHeroes.

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Sarah Tillman, Fund for Veterans' Assistance Manager, listed all grantees awarded a Housing4TexasHeroes grant.

XI. **Report, presentation and/ or action on process for development and approval of the Strategic Plan.**

Jeff Williford, Government Relations Manager, briefed the Commission on the progress made on the Strategic Plan and the Legislative Appropriations Request. Additionally, Mr. Williford noted to the Commission the timeline of operation for these two documents.

Chairman Cantu recessed the meeting at 9:20 a.m. and reconvened in open meeting at 10:41 a.m.

V. **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 outreached to the University Systems regarding the new Hazlewood Rules, GI Bill Benefits, and Veterans Services on Campus. Mr. Palladino provided an update on the Women Veterans Initiative and noted that progress continues to be made with this initiative. Mr. Palladino updated the Commission on the status of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services and noted the new report will be completed by October 1, 2014. Additionally, Mr. Palladino briefed the Commission over the events that were taking place during May 13-15, 2014, and how Texas Veterans Commission staff assisted with coordination. Lastly, Mr. Palladino noted all of his upcoming meetings and events that he will be attending this upcoming quarter.

VI. **Report, presentation and/or action on agency programs and divisions:**

The Commissioners reviewed the Quarterly Program Reports that were previously provided. Directors were provided the opportunity to brief the Commission on any new items or highlight significant items that occurred within their program or division.

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 briefed the Commission over the changes in Spring Training for the Veterans County Service Officers and Texas Veterans Commission Claims Counselors. Mr. Richman updated the Commission over the progress made with ensuring compatibility with the VA paperless claims initiative. Lastly, Mr. Richman updated the Commission on the progress made with the Claims Backlog.

b. Shawn Deabay, Veterans Employment Services Director, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Deabay briefed the Commission over the changes made to the Local Veterans Employment Representative and Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs as

a result of the new guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service. Mr. Deabay notified the Commission that he has been meeting with the Texas Workforce Commission concerning this new guidance.

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 briefed the Commission on the program's compliance visits that were completed throughout the state to review licenses and certified programs issued by the Veterans Education Program. Mr. Coburn updated the Commission on the progress made with the approval process for non-degree programs. Mr. Coburn updated the Commission on the Hazlewood Database transfer. Lastly, Mr. Coburn briefed the Commission on the progress his program has made with the Veterans Education Excellence Award Program.

d. Kathy Wood, Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) Director, reported on major activities and accomplishments made by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Ms. Wood briefed the Commission over the recent grant process and the work her staff completed. Ms. Wood briefed the Commission over FVA's experience with Amplify Austin and the I Live Here I Give Here Campaign. Ms. Wood briefed the Commission over the progress made in working towards a non-profit foundation. Ms. Wood noted the increase in funds received as a result of the new lottery tickets. Lastly, Ms. Wood updated the Commission on FVA's application for VA's rural transportation grant.

e. Cruz Montemayor, Chief Administrative Officer, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Montemayor briefed the Commission on the future work to be completed by staff for upcoming training conferences. Mr. Montemayor noted the work that staff completed for the various events that to took place during May 13-15, 2014.

f. Chip Osborne, Chief Finance Officer, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Osborne briefed the Commission on the progress that has been made with the new collaboration efforts that the finance and division directors have been conducting over their operational budgets. Mr. Osborne noted to the Commission that the finance division has started work on the Legislative Appropriations Request and will be working with Mr. Jeff Williford, Government Relations Manager, to finalize the proposed exceptional items.

g. Jeff Williford, Government Relations Manager, reported on major activities and accomplishments made by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Williford briefed the Commission over the interim charges issued for the Texas Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and Military Installations and the Texas House Committee on Defense and Veterans Affairs. Lastly, Mr. Williford briefed the Commission over the accomplishments made by the Executive Director

Field tours.

h. Rachel Shumaker, Communications and Veterans Outreach Manager, reported on major activities and accomplishments made by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Ms. Shumaker briefed the Commission over the expansion of personnel in her division. Ms. Shumaker elaborated on the accomplishments achieved through the first Women Veterans Initiative 5K. Lastly, Ms. Shumaker briefed the Commission over her division's outreaching efforts through social media.

XII. Discussion to set date, time, and location of next Commission meeting

The Commission discussed the possible date, time, and location of a Special Commission Meeting. TVC staff suggested the Special Commission Meeting to be scheduled for June 18, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. in Austin, TX. Additionally, the Commission discussed the date, time, and location of the upcoming Fourth Quarterly Commission meeting. TVC staff suggested the next Commission Meeting to be scheduled on August 6, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. in Austin, TX. The Commission expressed no conflicts with these two dates. The Commission agreed to accept these dates, times, and locations for the possible Special Commission Meeting and for the Forth Quarterly Commission meeting.

XVI. Executive Session.

No executive session was held.

XVII. Discuss and take Possible Action on the Items considered in Executive Session

None.

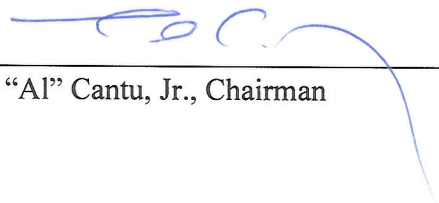
XVIII. Adjournment

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:	Vice Chairman Scott
SECONDED BY:	Commissioner Ellzey
ACTION:	The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Cantu adjourned the meeting at 11:54 a.m.

Minutes Approved by:



Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., Chairman

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION
3rd Quarterly Commission Meeting
FY 2014 – May 14, 2014
8:00 a.m. – Wyndham Riverwalk Hotel – Executive Salon 1
Speakers & Visitors

Jimmy DeFoor
Chair, Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee

Bob and Barbara Zielinski
Marriage Management

John Martinec
BAHEP Cares! Executive Mentoring 4 Veterans

Lori Thomas
Community Healthcare

Parry Jefferies
TexVet

Toby Cross
Nueces County Veterans Service Officer

Morgan Little
Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations

Tracy Sepulvado
Community Healthcare

Ted Hughes
Department of State Health Services

Paul Bastaich
President, Veterans County Service Officer Association of Texas