

Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

Third Quarterly Meeting (FY 2012)
May 30, 2012

I. Call to Order

Chairman Cantu called to order the Third Quarterly Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 8:00 a.m. on May 30, 2012, in Room 170 of the Stephen F. Austin Building at 1700 N. Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701.

The following Commissioners, constituting a quorum, were present:

Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Chairman
James H. Scott, Secretary
Richard A. McLeon, IV, Member
Daniel P. Moran, Member
J.K. "Jake" Ellzey, Member

Also present was Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director.

Also present: See the attached list.

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

Chairman Cantu welcomed visitors to the meeting. He introduced TVC new employees, Kacee May, Purchaser, and Ishmael Fleming, Payroll Accountant, in Finance; Elaine Zavala, Grant Officer, and Jessica De La Cerda, Administrative Assistant in the Fund for Veterans' Assistance; and Melissa Thomas, Administrative Assistant in Veterans Employment.

II. Public Comment

Ben Bass, Director, Recovery Alliance of El Paso, reported to the Commission on homeless veterans in El Paso. The Alliance would like to provide a new level of residential alcohol and drug recovery services along with co-occurring addiction and mental health services such as PTSD or TBI for homeless veterans in El Paso. The Alliance hopes to provide services for up to 40 more veterans per year, and establish this program in a new Veteran's Transitional Living Center with 35 beds.

III. Approval of Minutes from April 30, 2012 Special Meeting

The minutes were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held on April 30, 2012, as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Secretary Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Report, Presentation and/or Action by Representatives of the Advisory Committees

A. Veterans Communications Advisory Committee - John Miterko, Vice Chair

John Miterko reported briefly on the review of the 14th Annual TVC Veterans Summit: 80 vendors attended and over 600 registered; 400 participated on Day 1 and 300 participated on day 2. Comments reflected on the surveys indicated the Summit was well received and the overall content received high remarks. Mr. Miterko also reported that more space would be needed for the 15th Annual TVC Veterans Summit and a new venue should be considered. Mr. Miterko also presented a legislative update.

B. Veterans Employment and Training – Richard Hatfield Chair

Richard Hatfield updated the Commission on the Hire Vets Award Program. He stated nominations are due by June 1 and at the Committee's next meeting on July 2 the awards will be approved.

C. Fund for Veterans' Assistance - Thomas Smith, Chair

General Thomas Smith reported on the committee meeting held May 8, 2012, the focus of which was the review and approval of the grant recommendations by the FVA staff. He reported on the status of ticket sales, and various efforts to publicize the veterans scratch-off lottery tickets. He also reported on the vehicle renewal donation sources and made suggestions to increase revenue.

V. Report, Presentation and/or Action regarding Executive Director Report

Thomas Palladino, Executive Director, provided a review of activities and events he has attended since the last meeting. Mr. Palladino reported on the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services and noted that the draft report is due in August 2012 and final report in October 2012. He briefly reviewed testimony given to the Texas Senate Committee on Business & Commerce, accolades, and general information items of the agency. Mr. Palladino noted upcoming meetings of the agency. The current Texas and U.S. Casualty Report was previously provided to Commissioners.

VI. Report, Presentation and/or Action regarding Agency Programs and Divisions, including Action Plans

The Commissioners reviewed the Quarterly Program Reports and Program Snapshots that were previously provided. Directors were provided the opportunity to brief the Commission on any new items or highlight significant items.

- A. Jim Richman, Director of Claims Representation and Counseling, reported on the impact of the number of appeals being processed due to the Waco Regional Office working exclusively on *Nehmer* cases. He also reported on the number of frustrated veterans due to the length of time to get a decision on their claim. Mr. Richman stated that the new Director for the Waco Regional Office, John Limpose, is now in place and that Tom Green County has opened a new office, staffed by the Texas Veterans Commission.
- B. Shawn Deabay, Director of Veterans Employment Services, reported that Mr. Ray Curiel from Region I, San Antonio, Hillcrest Office, was selected as this year's Disabled American Veterans National Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist (DVOP) award winner of the year and the American Legion selected the Workforce Solutions Panhandle Office Amarillo as the National Employment Local Office of the Year. The nominator was Marshall Green Local Veterans Employment Representative for that office.
- C. Rufus Coburn, Director of Veterans Education, reported that the Veterans Education program exceeded all goals, conducted over 148 visits, responded to 3,268 phone calls and emails and conducted 135 outreach activities. Veterans Education staff continues to train with VA staff on conducting the new compliance visits.
- D. Bill Wilson, Director of Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA), reported that FVA grantees served 44,358 veterans, spouses and widows so far in FY 2012. Mr. Wilson concluded his report with highlights and trends of the grantee performance benchmarks report, grant agreement amendments processed, and the grant monitoring report.
- E. Cruz Montemayor, Chief Administrative Officer, reported on the planning stages for the upcoming 2013 Summit. He also reported that the 2013 and 2014 Spring and Fall Conference RFPs were complete and under review. Human Resources is updating the personnel guide; Information Services is transitioning into the new email service; and the Women Veterans Coordinator and Veterans Entrepreneur Program will work in tandem in all upcoming events to initiate and promote both programs. He concluded his report with the Communications/Outreach activities.

VII. Report, Presentation and/or Action on FY 2012 2nd Quarter Operating Statement

Irma Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer, presented the 2nd Quarter Operating Statement for FY 2012, which was previously provided to Commissioners. Ms. Rodriguez noted that we are on target and have spent 50% of our budget.

VIII. Report, Presentation and/or Action on Internal Audit of the Veterans Employment Services Program

Russell Gregorczyk, Internal Auditor, presented an overview of the final draft report of the internal audit performed on the compliance with federal requirements for operations of the Veterans Employment Services (VES) program; the effectiveness and efficiency of procedures for operating the VES program; and, whether the VES program is meeting established goals and objectives. Mr. Gregorczyk reported that the VES program was in complete compliance and that no further recommendations were needed. There was brief discussion, and the Commission thanked Mr. Gregorczyk for his report and recommendations.

MOTION: Approve the internal audit of the Veterans Employment Services Program as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Moran

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Discussion and/or Action on Internal Audit Contract Services

Kyle Mitchell, Deputy Executive Director, reported that the current contract period with Jansen and Gregorczyk expires August 31, 2012. He reported that the Commission has four options: (1) direct staff to negotiate to extend the contract with Jansen and Gregorczyk for fiscal year 2013 at a comparable rate to FY 2012; (2) direct staff to initiate the RFP process for internal auditing services; (3) direct staff to negotiate with other state agencies for internal auditing services; or (4) direct staff to hire an employee to serve as an Internal Auditor and report to the Commission. Commission Scott asked for Mr. Mitchell's opinion and Mr. Mitchell recommended option (1) and noted that the other 3 options had increased costs.

MOTION: Extend the contract with Jansen and Gregorczyk for fiscal year 2013, as presented.

MADE BY: Secretary Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Moran

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

X. **Discussion and/or Action of Agency Strategic Plan**

Chairman Cantu suggested to table the item until a Special Meeting on June 12, 2012, where the Strategic Plan will be addressed as well as electing a Vice Chairman and Secretary of the Commission.

XI. **Report, Presentation and/or Action regarding TVC Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grants**

Irma Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer, reported on the FVA projections and stated that the recommended amount for this grant cycle be lowered from \$3 million down to \$2.3 million.

Bill Wilson then stated that based on the FVA projections stated above, three grant applications shall be removed from the recommendation list.

MOTION: To remove Family Service Association of San Antonio, San Antonio Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse and Mental Health America of Greater Dallas from the recommendation list.

MADE BY: Secretary Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Moran

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Wilson presented the FVA grant award recommendations made by the advisory committee. After review of the recommendations, a total of \$2,300,000 was awarded to the following organizations:

1. Alamo Area Mutual Housing Association: \$269,547 recommended and approved.
2. Texas Legal Services Center: \$189,800 recommended and approved.
3. SPAN, Incorporated: \$24,171 recommended and approved.
4. Tropical Texas Behavioral Health: \$183,775 recommended and approved.
5. United Way of Greater Houston: \$133,639 recommended and approved.
6. Communities in Schools of Greater Central Texas, Inc.: \$295,928 recommended and approved.
7. Family Service Center of Houston & Harris County: \$208,759 recommended and approved.
8. Neighborhood Centers, Inc.: \$400,000 recommended and approved.
9. Ride on Center for Kids (ROCK): \$157,880 recommended and approved.

10. Child Crisis Center of El Paso: \$223,754 recommended and approved.
11. Andrews Center: \$204,728 recommended and approved.

Chairman Cantu stated that El Paso County and Galveston County Veterans Courts had not received the initial \$40,000 "seed" money as previous courts did. Commission Moran made a motion for the Courts to receive initial money.

Commissioner McLeon noted that the evaluations that both courts received and suggested they should reapply next cycle and follow procedures. Commission Moran withdrew the motion.

MOTION: Approve the Fund for Veterans' Assistance grant award recommendations as presented.

MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Moran

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Discussion of Date, Time and Location of Next Commission Meeting

The Fourth Quarterly Commission Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 8, 2012, in Room 170 of the Stephen F. Austin Building.

XIII. Executive Session

Chairman Cantu adjourned into Executive Session at 10:00 a.m.
Chairman Cantu reconvened in Open Meeting at 10:25 a.m.

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

Chairman Cantu reported there was no action taken in Executive Session.

Commissioners' Closing Comments

The Commissioners extended their gratitude to staff for all their support and hard work.

XV. Adjournment

Chairman Cantu adjourned the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Minutes Approved by:



Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., Chairman

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

3rd Quarterly Commission Meeting

FY 2012 -- May 30, 2012

8:00 a.m. SFA Bldg. -- Room 170

Speakers & Visitors

Emily Amps

Senator Jose Rodriguez's Office

Ben Bass

Recovery Alliance Council – El Paso

Russell Gregorczyk

CPA – Jansen & Gregorczyk

TVC – Internal Auditor

Carlos J. Guerrero

Texas Department of Agriculture (Step Grant)

Richard Hatfield

Chair, Veterans Employment & Training Advisory Committee

Jack Mason

Budget Analyst

Legislative Budget Board

John Miterko

Chair, Veterans Communication Advisory Committee

Legislative Liaison, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations

Amy Parker

Texas Workforce Investment Council

Office of the Governor

Thomas G. Smith

Chair, Fund for Veterans' Assistance

Advisory Committee

Larry Todd

Member, Fund for Veterans' Assistance

Advisory Committee

Ken Wallingford

Veterans Liaison

Texas Veterans Land Board