

# Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

Fourth Quarterly Meeting (FY 2014)  
August 7, 2014

## I. Call to order.

Chairman Eliseo Cantu called to order the 4th Quarterly Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 9:00 a.m. on August 7, 2014, at the Stephen F. Austin Building, 1700 N. Congress Avenue, Room 170, 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.

Chairman Cantu noted the absence of Commissioner Moran from the Special Commission Meeting held on June 18, 2014, and from today's meeting, and called for the following motion:

MOTION: Excuse Commissioner Moran from the Special Commission Meeting held on June 18, 2014, and from the Fourth Quarterly Commission Meeting held today.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Secretary McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

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 announced that the Commission will take up Agenda Item XXII (Report, presentation and/or action regarding Internal Audit of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grant Administration) after Agenda Item XI

(Report, presentation and/or action regarding Advisory Committee membership), and then proceed with the current order of the Agenda.

**II. Public comment.**

Jacob A. Rothman, Midland, TX, inquired about Agenda Item XIV (Report, presentation and/or action regarding a partnership with the Supreme Court of Texas for a separate Veterans Courts/ legal services grant solicitation). Mr. Palladino explained the proposed partnership between the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Veterans Commission to form a separate Veterans Courts/legal services grant solicitation. Mr. Rothman inquired about Veterans Courts and how they address issues within a community. Chairman Cantu provided a brief overview of the concept of Veterans Court and encouraged Mr. Rothman to familiarize himself with a local Veterans Court in his area.

Mitch Fuller, Heroes Night Out, thanked the Texas Veterans Commission for awarding Heroes Night Out in Cedar Park a grant.

**III. Approve the Minutes of the Third Quarterly Meeting held May 14, 2014, and the Special Meeting held June 18, 2014.**

The minutes for the Third Quarterly Meeting held May 14, 2014, were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the Third Quarterly Meeting held on May 14, 2014, as presented.

MADE BY: Secretary McLeon

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

The minutes for the Special Meeting held June 18, 2014, were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held June 18, 2014, as presented.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Annual Election of Vice Chairman and Secretary of Commission**

Commissioner Ellzey nominated Jim Scott for Vice Chairman of the Texas Veterans Commission.

MOTION: Approve Jim Scott for Vice Chairman of the Texas Veterans Commission

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Secretary McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ellzey nominated Richard McLeon for Secretary of the Texas Veterans Commission.

MOTION: Approve Richard McLeon for Secretary of the Texas Veterans Commission

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

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

Jim Cunningham, Chairman of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The Veterans Communication Advisory Committee is currently examining ways to improve social media communication to reach out to more Veterans engaged on social media. Mr. Cunningham notified the Commission that the Committee is monitoring the elective transition program in Bexar County that is assisting Veterans with transition back into civilian life. Lastly, Mr. Cunningham notified the Commission that the committee is reviewing upcoming events for potential opportunities to reach out to Veterans in Texas.

VI. **Report, presentation and/or action regarding Texas Veterans Commission Excellence in Media Awards.**

Jim Cunningham, Chairman of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee, provided a brief overview of the selection process for the Texas Veterans Commission Excellence in Media Awards. A list of the recommended winners in each category of the Texas Veterans Commission Excellence in Media Awards was presented to the Commission prior to the Meeting.

MOTION: Approve the recommended winners in each category of the Texas Veterans Commission Excellence in Media Awards.

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Secretary McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

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

No oral presentation. Report from Bill Meehan, Chairman of the Fund for Veterans' Advisory Committee submitted a report prior to the Meeting.

**VIII. 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 Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee since the last meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission. Mr. DeFoor, notified the Commission that the Committee has organized themselves into two sub-committees. One subcommittee is tasked with reviewing training and submitting recommendations to the full committee. The second subcommittee will review and submit recommendation to increase the communication between Veterans County Service Officers and Texas Veterans Commission Claims Consolers. He also notified the Commission that the Committee is meeting with the Texas Veterans County Service Officer Association to discuss each other's goals and objectives. Lastly, Mr. DeFoor notified the Commission that he received a resignation letter by a committee member and the resignation has been effective.

**IX. 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 Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee to the Commission since the last Meeting. Mr. DiPiero notified the Commission that the committee received a presentation over the Fort Hood Transitional Assistance Program and was briefed on the new rules and coordination regarding the Transitional Assistance Program. Additionally, the committee was briefed on the Solider for Life program and how this program is improving the education amongst employers about how hiring Veterans can improve their businesses. Lastly, Mr. DiPiero notified the Commission that the committee discussed and decided on the recommendations for each category of the Texas Veterans Commission Employer of Veterans Awards.

**X. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Texas Veterans Commission Employer**

**of Veterans Awards.**

John DiPiero, Chairman of the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee, provided a brief overview of the selection process for the Texas Veterans Commission Employer of Veterans Awards. A list of the recommended winners in each category of the Texas Veterans Commission Employer of Veterans Awards was presented to the Commission prior to the Meeting.

MOTION: Approve the recommended winners of the Texas Veterans Commission Employer of Veterans Awards.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**XI. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Advisory Committee membership.**

No Action.

*NOTE: The Commission took up Agenda Item XXII prior to Agenda Item XII.*

**XXII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Internal Audit of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grant Administration.**

Ms. Patti Bizzell, Internal Auditor for Jansen and Gregorczyk, provided an overview of the internal audit she conducted for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grant Administration. Ms. Bizzell highlighted the conclusion of the internal audit and notified the Commission that the Fund for Veterans' Assistance had implemented all key recommendations from the previous internal audit. Lastly, Ms. Bizzell, presented the key findings and key recommendations for this year's internal audit to the Commission.

MOTION: Approve the Internal Audit for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grant Administration.

MADE BY: Secretary McLeon

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

*NOTE: The Commission proceeded with the current Agenda order after the presentation under Agenda Item XXII.*

**XII. 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 the Texas Veterans Commission's Strategic Plan has been submitted and the Legislative Appropriations Request will be submitted today, pending the Commission's approval. Mr. Palladino provided an update on training that is being completed by the Veterans Employment Services program to brief the Veterans Employment Staff on their new roles as a result of the new rules issued by the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service. Mr. Palladino notified the Commission that he and Shawn Deabay, Director of Veterans Employment Services, will be participating on a panel discussing outreach strategies to Employers at the Veterans Institute Workshop sponsored by USAA and Disney on August 19 in San Antonio. Additionally, Mr. Palladino briefed the Commission on the new initiatives that the Agency is leading and notified the Commission that more information on these initiatives will be presented during their appropriate agenda items. Lastly, Mr. Palladino noted all of his upcoming meetings and events that he will be attending this upcoming quarter.

**XIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Military Veteran Peer Network.**

Jeff Williford, Director of Government Relations, briefed the Commission on a proposed partnership between the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Texas Veterans Commission to provide statewide coordination to the Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN). Mr. Williford briefed the Commission on the background and the duties of the MVPN and how DSHS currently assists the Military Veteran Peer Network. Mr. Williford introduced Sean Hanna from the Military Veteran Peer Network to elaborate on the services they provide.

Mr. Sean Hanna explained to the Commission how the Military Veteran Peer Network works and what services they offer Veterans. He elaborated on the partnerships that the Military Veteran Peer Network has with the local Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers around the state and how they collaborate to reach out to Veterans.

MOTION: Approve the forming of the partnership between the Department of State Health Services and the Texas Veterans Commission.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Secretary McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**XIV. Report, presentation and/or action regarding a partnership with the Supreme Court of Texas for a separate Veterans Courts/legal services grant solicitation.**

Jeff Williford, Director of Government Relations, briefed the Commission on a proposed partnership between the Texas Veterans Commission and the Supreme Court of Texas for a separate Veterans Courts/legal services grant solicitation. Mr. Williford provided a background over the conversations between the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Veterans Commission. Lastly, Mr. Williford explained the financial details on how the grant would be funded to execute the separate Veterans Courts/legal services grant solicitation. Mr. Williford explained to the Commission that the Fund for Veterans' Assistance would be administering this newly created grant solicitation.

**MOTION:** Approve the forming of the partnership between the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Veterans Commission, pending Legislative Approval of the Supreme Court of Texas' exceptional item listed in their Legislative Appropriations Request.

**MADE BY:** Commissioner Ellzey

**SECONDED BY:** Vice Chairman Scott

**ACTION:** The motion passed unanimously.

**XV. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Texas Veterans Healthcare Strike Force Teams.**

Kyle Mitchell, Deputy Executive Director, updated the Commission over Texas Veterans Healthcare Strike Force Teams. He noted to the Commission that he has been working closely with the Governor's Office to execute the Texas Veterans Healthcare Strike Force Teams. He provided background to the Commission on how the Texas Veterans Healthcare Strike Force Teams were formed. Lastly, he noted to the Commission that the funding for the Healthcare Strike Force Teams has not been solidified, but they are still working with the Governor's office to find a funding solution.

No approval required.

**XVI. Report, presentation and/or action regarding the Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017.**

Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of the Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017. He highlighted the changes in goals made to the Texas Veterans Commission program areas. Lastly, he highlighted each of the exceptional items.

MOTION: Approve the 2016 and 2017 Texas Veterans Commission Legislative Appropriations Request and allow staff to make administrative changes as necessary prior to submitting the Legislative Appropriations Request.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Secretary McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission recessed from 10:48 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

**XVII. 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 his programs involvement in preparing the curriculum for the Texas Veterans Commission's 67th Annual Fall Training Conference in Houston, Texas on September 8-11, 2014. Additionally, Mr. Richman updated the Commission on the VA electronic initiatives. He elaborated on the status of the Stakeholders Enterprise Portal and the Centralized Mail Portal, and the Enterprise Veterans Self Service initiative. Lastly, Mr. Richman provided an overview of his programs performance measures.
- B. Stan Kurtz, Veterans Employment Services Operations Manager, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Kurtz briefed the Commission over the finalization of the program's structure and operational strategies. He highlighted the progress that the program is making with implementing Salesforce. Mr. Kurtz noted to the Commission that the program held a Leadership training session to provide guidance for implementing the newly released Veterans Program Letter, Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program Reforms and Roles and Responsibilities of American Job Center. Lastly, Mr. Kurtz updated the Commission on the progress completed by the Veterans Employment Liaison and the Women Veterans Employment Coordinator program. He noted to the Commission that the Veterans Employment Liaison developed a process to educate other program staff about individual state agencies hiring requirement and an agency user guide to better assist staff with developing quality state applications. Mr. Kurtz briefed the Commission over the events and fairs that the Women Veterans Employment Coordinator program participated in.

- C. Cynthia Rosas, Veterans Education Program Specialist, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the program since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Ms. Rosas briefed the Commission on visits completed by Veterans Education program staff. She updated the Commission on the progress made with the Hazlewood Database Transfer process and the Veterans Education Excellence Award Program. Lastly, Ms. Rosas elaborated on certain items within the performance measures for the Commission.
- 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 notified the Commission that the Request for Application for General Assistance – Series XV-A grants closed on July 31, 2014, and the FVA received a total of sixty (60) applications. She briefed the Commission over the next steps that staff and the FVA Advisory Committee will take to review the applications and make recommendations to the Commission. Additionally, Ms. Wood briefed the Commission over FVA's Big Check presentation tour and invited the Commission to attend future presentations. Ms. Wood updated the Commission on the status of FVA's application for the VA's Transportation for Veterans in Highly Rural Counties Grant. She notified the Commission that staff has attended informational webinars, but is still awaiting a response from the VA. Lastly, Ms. Wood noted to the Commission that a press conference was held at the Capitol during the week of July 4th to announce the implementation of FVA's newest Veteran Donation feature through the Department of Public Safety.
- 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 work completed by his staff to prepare for the Texas Veterans Commission's 67th Annual Fall Training Conference in Houston, Texas on September 8-11, 2014. Mr. Montemayor reported on the summer enrollment that the Human Resources division is completing to ensure all benefits are up to date for staff. Lastly, Mr. Montemayor, updated the Commission on the Agency's Continuity of Operations for the Emergency Management Plan.
- F. Chip Osborne, Chief Finance Officer, reported on major activities and accomplishments by the division since the last Texas Veterans Commission Meeting. Mr. Osborne noted to the Commission that all reports for the third quarter were submitted in a timely manner. Mr. Osborne concluded his presentation by noting to the Commission that the finance division, working with the Government Relations division, completed the work on the Legislative Appropriations Request.
- 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 briefed the Commission over the work his division completed on the Strategic Plan and the Legislative Appropriations Request. He noted to the Commission that his staff will now start working to develop a legislative and budget

strategy as the legislative session nears. Lastly, Mr. Williford briefed the Commission of dates of interest relative to the 84th Texas Legislative Session.

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 the events, webinars, and campaigns her staff facilitated. Ms. Shumaker briefed the Commission over success of the 16th Annual Veterans Summit. She also elaborated on the successes of the Memorial Day Media Campaign the Texas Veterans Commission participated in. Lastly, Ms. Shumaker updated the Commission on the successes of the webinars conducted by the Women Veterans division and the Veterans Education program.

**XVIII. Report, presentation and/or action on Appropriation Year 2014 3rd Quarter Operating Statement.**

Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Third 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 third quarter.

No motion to approve needed.

**XIX. Report, presentation and/or action on Fiscal Year 2015 Operating Budget**

Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Fiscal Year 2015 operating budget to the Commission. Mr. Osborne provided highlighted details on each of the program's and division's budgets. Lastly, Ms. Osborne noted to the commission that there is no deficient in the budget.

MOTION: Approve the purposed Operating Budget for FY 2015.

MADE BY: Secretary McLeon

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**A. Report, presentation and/or action regarding an increase in the salary of the Executive Director as provided by the 2015-2016 General Appropriations Act.**

Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, presented the purposed increase in the salary of the Executive Director as provided by the 2015-2016 General Appropriations Act to the Commission for approval. Lastly, Mr. Osborne noted this increase will be utilized by currently appropriated funds.

MOTION: Approve the proposed increase in the salary of the Executive Director as provided by the 2015-2016 General Appropriations Act.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**XX. Report, presentation and/or action regarding the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Veterans Mental Health Grant awarded to Mental Health America of Greater Dallas.**

Kathy Wood, Fund for Veterans Assistance Director, provided an overview of the current circumstance affecting the Mental Health Grant awarded to Mental Health America of Greater Dallas in Grant Series XIV-B.

MOTION: Rescind the grant previously awarded to Mental Health America of Greater Dallas.

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Secretary McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**XXI. Report, presentation and/or action to propose amendments to agency rules:**

Karen Fastenau, General Counsel, briefed the Commission on the proposed amendments to agency rules. A copy of the proposed amendments to agency rules were previously distributed to the Commission for review.

MOTION: Approve staff to submit the agency's administrative rules for all items under Agenda Item XXI (A-C) to the Texas Register for publication and comment.

MADE BY: Commissioner Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Vice Chairman Scott

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**XXIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Internal Auditor contract services**

Chip Osborne, Chief Financial Officer, briefed the Commission over the current contract period with Jansen and Gregorczyk, Internal Auditors. He noted to the Commission that

the contract allows the Texas Veterans Commission the option to extend, on a yearly basis, its contract with Jansen and Gregorczyk.

MOTION: Direct Staff to negotiate to extend the contract with Jansen and Gregorczyk for Fiscal Year 2015 at a comparable rate to Fiscal Year 2014.

MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

**XXIV. Discussion to set date, time, and location of the next Commission Meeting:**

The Commission discussed the possible date, time, and location of a First Quarterly Commission Meeting for Fiscal Year 2015. TVC staff suggested the First Quarterly Commission Meeting for Fiscal Year 2015 to be scheduled for November 5, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. in Austin, Texas. The Commission expressed no conflicts with this date. The Commission agreed to accept this date, time, and location for the First Quarterly Commission meeting for Fiscal Year 2015.

**XXV. Executive Session.**

No executive session was held.

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

None.

**XXVII. 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.

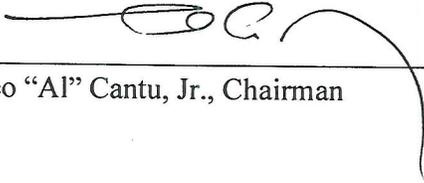
MADE BY: Vice Chairman Scott

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Ellzey

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously.

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

Minutes Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a horizontal line followed by a loop and a long, sweeping tail that curves downwards and to the right.

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Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., Chairman

**TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION**  
4th Quarterly Commission Meeting  
FY 2014 – August 7, 2014  
9:00 a.m. – Stephen F. Austin Building – Room 170  
Speakers & Visitors

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

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

**John DiPiero**  
Chair, Veterans Employment & Training Advisory Committee

**Jacob A. Rothman**  
Self, Midland, TX

**Ted Hughes**  
Department of State Health Services

**Sean Hanna**  
Military Veteran Peer Network

**Patti Bizzell**  
Jansen & Gregorczyk CPAs

**Mitch Fuller**  
Heroes Night Out