



VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

222 W. Hospitality Ln., 3rd Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0470

Minutes of the Meeting Zoom Meeting May 17, 2021, 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE –Members Frank Guevara (Board Liaison), Danny Marquez, Jim Frost, Kelly Maxwell, Octavio Sanchez, Ramona Evey and recording secretary Johnna Yuhas were present. George Valenzuela, James Willingham, Jeff Allen, and Terry Porter were absent.

CALL TO ORDER – Meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – Minutes of the meeting held March 29, 2021 were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE – Frank Guevara gave an overview of County VA events:

- Visits to the department are increasing, there is a continuous flow of visits resulting in twice as many as in 2020.
 - The option for a video interview has been added, however, not many veterans are open to this option and prefer the phone. Face-to-face interviews are expected to make a return, however, guidance from the County Administrative Office/Board of Supervisors is still needed. Face-to-face interviews are currently on a situational basis only. When they return they will be held by appointment only to control the lobby traffic. Appointments will be scheduled no further than 2 weeks out. Phone and zoom interviews will continue to be held.
 - Staff is returning to the office and continues to offer all services.
 - The new Veteran Service Officer, Adrian Sosa, is doing well and finished his first phase of training on Friday.
 - The last vacancy has been filled by Robert McDaniel, however, he has not started yet.

FROM THE MEMBERS

Octavio Sanchez – Octavio gave a brief introduction of himself and his military history. Mr. Sanchez is focused on the need within the community, especially with the homeless population and mental health. The biggest issue he sees is losing veterans to mental health issues. Some reach out for help but still get turned away. A discussion is had regarding a veteran who was turned away from the Vet Center. Typically the Vet Center is a resource for those with mental health issues, and if further assistance is needed the veteran is referred to the VA Hospital in Loma Linda. Danny Marquez adds that due to covid, many of the groups are not currently meeting, getting the vets reconnected to the groups would be a great help.

Kelly Maxwell/Ramona Evey – Ramona is running the Orenda house and doing a good job. She took over in February of last year. Orenda house has 20 beds, there are currently 15 residents 3 are non-veterans. Last week they were able to bring a homeless veteran off the street, and get them housed and into a bed. Grant money is nearly exhausted, and getting new grants may be hard as most public grants require 3 years of operation. Private grants are an option and are being looked into. A fundraiser is being held on May 29, 2021, with the proceeds going to Orenda House. Kelly is continuing his work into alternative affordable housing design.

Danny Marquez – Continuing to work on some projects, and will expand further when the plans are finalized.

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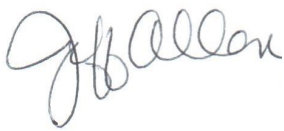
Jim Frost – Will be visiting the sister wall to the Veterans Memorial Wall in Missouri. It is a full-scale model with the same names on black granite from the same quarry.

DATE/TIME/LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next VAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 26, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT - Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeff Allen".

Jeff Allen
Chairman

/jy