



## VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

222 W. Hospitality Ln., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0470

### Minutes of the Meeting January 23, 2022, 3:00 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE** –Members Victor Tordesillas, Rachel Hay, Jeff Allen, Jim Frost, Paul Marsh, Terry Porter, James Willingham, and recording Secretary Erika Ortiz were present. Kelly Maxwell, Octavio Sanchez, George Valenzuela, were absent. There was one guest in attendance: Michael Rector

**CALL TO ORDER** – Meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m.

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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING** – Minutes of the meeting held July 25, 2022, were reviewed. A quorum was not met so minutes could not be accepted. They will be up for review at the next meeting January 23, 2023.

**01/23/2023** – Meetings were accepted.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATE** – Busy last half of the year, County Veterans Affairs Dept continues to seek out innovative ways to reach out to members of the community. Had several events which consisted of the following:

Morongo - August

Twentynine Palms - September

Veterans Stand down in San Bernardino - October

Victorville Federal Prison for employees who are veterans - November.

Abundant living resource fair in high desert – November

Veterans and community health and wellness fair and Rancho Cucamonga sports complex – November 29, 2023

Scheduled to support city of Needles – March 8. San Bernadino County Resource Fair to support an outreach event there, TAD, BH, ARC and VA will be sending staff to support

VA has added additional staff, will be adding new positions and will hopefully be a staff of 29 once all positions are filled. In addition to the telephone services in response to COVID we have video calls in Rancho office. This should reduce the wait time of veterans who come in to the Rancho office.

Chairman asked if this will continue departmentwide or just stay in rancho? Will VSO be able to do this remotely?

RH: It will be introduced in Hesperia as well to reduce wait times.

How is remote staffing going? Will Yucca Valley/Twentynine Palms community remote office be coming back?

RH and VT: we have not brought them back, but we will look at it with volume. Provide an update at next meeting.

VT: we are adding more positions this upcoming fiscal year

#### Legislative

State is beginning to build legislations and working closely with associations. Bill to reintroduce retirement pay for Marines from state income tax. Continue emphases on getting claims entered.

Veteran communication

Coming in or phone interview to

James Willingham: VSO he spoke with at the San Bernadino office was really helpful and got great service. Very easy process to get the claim filed. Was out of there in less than an hour.

What Are the younger Veterans feelings about their service or benefits considering they are in a different climate.

VT: Being open and wiling to call for assistance. Becoming more acceptable to obtain the assistance. Veteran's families are better educated.

#### **FROM THE MEMBERS**

Jeff Allen – Do we Receive an annual report of number of veterans serviced?

RH: We should be getting a new one and a copy will be sent out.

Got bounced around through the various clinics without ever seeing a primary care provider. Once Staffing agencies received a five-year contract started cutting staff and uploading caseloads so veterans started leaving. Encourage veterans if they are experiencing this they should reach out to congressman.

**Terry Porter** – Group of young veterans in more recent wars who go through Calvary Chapel assist others by taking

veterans to appointments. They are good stewards to assist veterans and get everything they are entitled to. Personal note: during Christmas was flown out to Palm Springs to get testing. Will be scheduled for surgery for a problem with an Aorta.

**Paul Marsh** – all the water we've received is good but now we see all the trash that has gone into the wash. Currently we are trying to clean up the city. Would like to see statistics as far as how many veterans Abundant Living was able to assist in getting jobs. How effective are these events. How many veterans ended up getting a job because of the assistance they received at a resource fair. We can help facilitate and ask the questions the committee has with regards to veteran expungements and so forth.

**Jim Frost** – no update

**James Willingham:** Ran unopposed and Oath of office later this month. Next to his name on his doctor appointment it says PAT Act. What is this?

#### **FROM THE FLOOR**

**Michael Rector** – Mr. Rector introduced himself. He works for San Bernardino County Behavioral Health, is a veteran, and is looking for resources to possibly refer clients to. He would like to be more involved with the committee and get more involved with the veteran community. Been with the County in 2018.

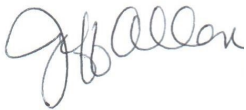
**Vote:** Nominated – Jeff Allen, Second – Jim Frost. No oppositions. Michael has become a member.

#### **DATE/TIME/LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING**

The next VAC meeting is scheduled for Monday March 27, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in the SB County VA conference room and via zoom.

**ADJOURNMENT** - Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.



Jeff Allen  
Chair