

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
MINUTES****REGULAR MEETING
February 18, 2015**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on February 18, 2015 at City Hall, Council of Chambers, located on 301 West 2nd Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair Phillip Gutierrez called the Board Meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Phillip Gutierrez, Chair
Del Kolbe, Vice Chair
Cassandra Melgar C'De Baca

Bill McLellan
David Thomas

Staff in Attendance: Tina Lee, Allen Bergeron,

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Chair Phillip Gutierrez asked Commission members to review minutes from the regular meeting on January 21, 2015. Chair Phillip Gutierrez moved to approve the last meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Vice Chair Del Kolbe. Motion passed with no objection.

2. OLD BUSINESS

- Updates by the working groups lead on the top three priorities for our Veterans.
 - Homeless Veterans – No new updates from the working group but the City of Austin is assisting HUD-VASH recipients with furniture and seeks volunteers for any aspect of this program whether its collection, labor, or outreach.
 - Female Veterans – The month of March is Women Veterans Month and they are supporting the TVC 5K run benefitting Women Veterans. More events for women veterans are scheduled for March 11th and 29th.
 - Employment and Education – No new updates from the working group and will revise/revisit the recommendations to council for submission.
- Commissioner Bill McLellan attended the 2015 TVC Spring Summit on February 4th and was astounded by how many veteran organizations are available and was impressed with the turn out. The Commission looks forward to the partnership to assisting Veterans within the City of Austin with the Texas Veterans Commission.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- The update concerning the VFW midwinter conference will be determined at a later date.
- Ronda Englander, Co-Founder of Comfort Crew informed the commission on their mission and overview. They provide assistance to Military Children with information and resources for those going through during and pre/post deployments. She informed us that there are 2 million kids with parents in the Military and is partnered with the USO and Camp Mabry. Most of the ages

involved with Comfort Crew ranges from 6-12. A video was shown on the mission and impact Comfort Crew provides to Military Children.

- Austin Recovery presented to the Commission on their interest with collaborating with Veterans in need of treatment from substance abuse and rehabilitation. They will like to treat and provide Veterans access to their facility and the ability to treat chronic drug and alcohol abuse. They provide residential treatment for 30 days and 90 days. Austin Recovery is not religiously affiliated and they have the ability to provide support to family members during the patient's treatment. They believe in peer recovery support and they are coordinating with Samaritan center and contract outpatient with Veterans Court. They have three treatment centers available which include 1) Family Outpatient 2) Inpatient and 3) Outpatient.
- VBOC Program (Veteran Business Outreach Center) is a grant up to \$35,000 and due to the short notice; the commission will like to attempt applying for this grant next year. State and nonprofit organizations apply for this grant and there is a possibility of the City of Austin SMBR office will have the ability to work on this resource center if approved.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

5. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- Carrie Sconza, TVC Women Veteran Coordinator provided information regarding the 2nd Annual Rock your Camo 5K Run. The money raised will sponsor women to attend the Women's Conference in October. They are partnered with non-profits such as F7Group and Grace after fire.

6. STAFF BRIEFINGS

- The current commission members must re-apply to be part of the commission if they are interested in continuing their service.

7. ADJOURN: Phillip Gutierrez adjourned the meeting at 3:13 PM. Without objection