

COMMISSION ON VETERAN AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES



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SPECIAL CALLED MEETING May 24, 2017

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a special called meeting on May 24, 2017 at City Hall located on 301 W 2nd Street, Austin Texas 78701.

Chair Jason Denny called the Board Meeting to order at 7:06p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jason Denny - Chair
Phillip Gutierrez
Zach Goldstein
Josephine Hinds
Ramiro Hinojosa

Adrenne Mendoza
Molly Potter
David Thomas
Guillermo Villarreal

Staff in Attendance: Jeff Burton, Allen Bergeron, Tina Lee

2. NEW BUSINESS

- This meeting was called to continue the discussion of the Veteran Business Enterprise for the City of Austin. Director Samo of SMBR Department informed the commission that it is their goal to move forward and start the process of implementing the VBE. They want to make sure it is successful and the disparity study was completed and approved by council a year ago.
- Purchasing Officer Scarboro wanted feedback of the council decision and will implement the policy and ask the commission to continue to communication with the City Council and be vocal. Procurement often gets tasked with policy objectives small, local, environment etc. Adding an objective is not difficult and a service disabled program proposal should be based on criteria.
- SMBR will like to use the existing VA certification program to certify service disabled veteran businesses. They are open to other ideas at the same time and feedback.
- Commissioner asked the question on why the veteran business needs to be certified with the state and also be verified with the City of Austin?
- Assistant Director of Contracting Fernandez informed the commission that they select businesses based on evaluation and the lowest bid and for professional services they will look for the best service and experience.
- Citizen asked if the city adopts the state practice of requiring a disability rating of 20% that he would be concerned that those with higher ratings will have a difficult time getting employed and feels that are more disadvantaged.

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- The City of open to the rating criteria and will need a starting point for discussion and look at what other cities are doing.
- Citizen informed the commission that the legislature is at 20% in 27 states and none have a metric more than 20%. Some cities require their veteran business to be disabled or just owned by a veteran.
- The commission requests to see if the City will be able to manage a point system and 20% being the lowest possible.
- In June, the Council will put it in place and it will be based on their decision
- Commissioner Potter made a motion to implement the same policy at the State and Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion. The motion was passed in favor with 7:4 with two commissioners absent and two commissioners out of the room during the vote.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

4 CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- Jim Brennan, Legislature director for Veterans Coalition recognizes the City of Austin for their support to Veterans. Finds it discouraging that it took 11 years to accomplish the VBE and disappointed on the delay of the implementation of the program
- Manuel Jimenez from ATX Vets supports the VBE but he is concerned with the low disability rating and feels the rating should be increased to 60% and priority given to those who need it the most.

ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 8:19PM. Without objection