

COMMISSION ON VETERAN AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES



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**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
February 21, 2018**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a special called meeting on February 21, 2018 at City Hall located on 301 W 2nd Street, Austin Texas 78701.

Chair Jason Denny called the Board Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jason Denny - Chair
Pete Salazar- Vice Chair
Phillip Gutierrez

Zach Goldstein
Manuel Jimenez
Molly Potter

Staff in Attendance: Karen Haywood, Sylba Everett, Allen Bergeron

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Chair Denny asked the Commission members to review the minutes from the Regular meeting on January 17, 2018. Molly Potter made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes and Vice Chair Pete Salazar seconded the motion. Motion passed with no objection.

2. BUSINESS

- The commissioners gave an update on the process and progress of the Veterans Resource Center. Various organizations attended and made their inputs regarding the upcoming initiative.
- Chair Denny requests a motion for future agenda item to create time to have a mission/vision statement and objectives for the resource center. Commissioner Potter volunteered to start taking the framework of creating the mission.
 - Commissioner Potter made the motion to establish a Mission, Vision and Objectives for the One Stop Shop initiative.
 - Who is completing the needs assessment, fund, and software?
 - Vice Chair Salazar seconded and was passed with no objections.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

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4. STAFF UPDATES

- HRD provided a memo at the last meeting regarding the development of the Veterans Resource Center. Update since the last meeting is that Sylba and HR director Joya Hayes visited Combined Arms in Houston and that it was a successful trip and they are excited about learning about the organization and what resources they will bring to Austin.

5. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- Jonathan from TexVet: Webmaster at Texvet and Central veterans coalition and wanted to come. TexVet is an interactive website which is stated as a need in the memo. They are funded through HHS and Texas A&M and completely free service that is paid from the state. Love collaboration and good at partnering with other agencies and helped form the Texas Veterans Portal. Partnered with Texas Workforce Commission where job fairs are listed, VetConnect North Texas – Service for Dallas/Fort worth Area. Needs assessment completed for the Houston area a year ago and had 350 respondents and partnered with TVC to do their needs assessment of veterans in the stated and provided a massive amount of data.
- Earl with Texas Center Point: Organization offers 3 different components of employment assistance, financial assistance, housing needs, and a LCSW counselor for mental services. Noticed to make VRC effective to have different programs with different timelines. Austin is limited in what they can do for veterans in the city because of how spread out the city is and nothing is convenient for those lacking transportation
- Wes from Heroes Night Out: Veterans Resource center in Cedar Park and partnered with Texas Center Point, Easter Seals, and will be 10 years old in August and started with gift cards and was able to develop a center and to date they served over 10,000 people a year. Developed relationships with other organizations, have a place they could go in and serve active duty and their families. BBQ in May and will have all information at this one place and served over 3,000 people and not government and doors are open.
- Jim Darwin: Texas Veterans App and was asked by the Governor's office to refer software systems to veteran programs. They reviewed America Serves and United Way software system and had representatives from TVC to join them. Was in Houston and met with combined arms and partnered with 211 Texas and eventually will sign on with the Combined Arms platform. Resource accessible for the needs of the veteran based on the app's information and is a good resource for a referring agency that serves veterans. Own your own data and it is easily manipulated and can be scaled to small or large community. Cost aspect is \$6,000 a year and service providers asked to be the coordinating center and the question came regarding what happened to their data. Travis County's software cost is \$5,000 a year. Resolution regarding real estate and talking to state adjutant and VFW has holes around the state and they are talking to them to see if they could have more VRC's to be established and is wants to offer their services and assistance regarding the development of the VRC being established in the City of Austin and look at transportation needs.
- Taren Davis from Front Steps: SSVF program manager, has questions regarding who is a veteran and would like to know who helps the clients walking in to navigate the system once the VRC is open and if the VRC will have a criteria of which veterans they will

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serve. Are veterans screened out for anything like justice system, assault charges, and sexual predators? Wants to make sure that the new VRC does not turn away any veteran regardless of their background. Also she is wondering who is responsible for the safety for the clients and representatives on site once it is open? Will know more about the structure of the VRC once plans are finalized.

- Jennifer with Goodwill, come up with conversation that it could be a dis-service if a veteran is turned away. How can the VRC be a comprehensive resource instead of being grant – based? Will finalize the regulations once the VRC is open on the best practices. Are veterans screened out for anything like justice system, assault charges, and sexual predators?

ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 8:17PM. Without objection