

Veterans Advisory Board Minutes
February 23, 2016
Las Cruces City Hall

Open Meeting: The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m., and followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

American Legion Post 10
DAV Chapter 10
Marine Corps League
Member at Large #1
Member at Large #2
MOAA
United Military Women of the South West
Special Forces Association
VFW Post 3242
VFW Post 6917
VFW Post 10124
Vietnam Veterans
Military Order of the Purple Heart
(A quorum of appointed members was present)

✓ Lawrence Orvis, Chairman
✓ Dan Banks
✓ Carol Gaines
✓ Dr. David Boje
VACANT
✓ Christine Sautter
✓ Karen Woods
✓ Kyle Trout
✓ Cosme Padilla
VACANT
✓ Patrick Ramirez
✓ Fred Schneider
✓ Rod Gajewski, Vice Chairman

Approval of Agenda for today's meeting was motioned by Cosme Padilla and 2nd by Fred Schneider. All members that are present voted unanimously.

Introduction of Guests:

New Mexico Department of Veteran Services
Mesilla Valley Hospice
VHA LC CBOC
CVA
Vet Center
Self

James Turner
Kathy Olson
Crystal Davis-Whited
Cesar Contreras
Elva Diaz
Shannon Reynolds

City of Las Cruces Staff:

Travis A. Brown
Brittany Viramontes

Board Coordinator
Recording Secretary

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Acceptance of Minutes, Fred Schneider motioned to approve the minutes from January 26, 2016 with Cosme Padilla 2nd the motion, all members that are present voted unanimously.

Old Business

- **Chief Brown** stated that City Council met on Capital Improvement Projects. He reported to the board that the City is still actively working with Albuquerque on a possible land swap and they are looking at different avenues for funding.

New Business

- **Run for the Wall Event**, Mr. Orvis informed the board that the Annual Run for the Wall Event will be happening the weekend of May 20th. Bikers beginning their journey from California, Washington and Oregon who choose to take the southern route will be coming into Las Cruces the evening of the 19th where they will be greeted at Barnett Harley Davidson and food will be provided. Participants would like to lay a wreath at Veterans Park. Fred Schneider mentioned that it would be an honor for them to lay a wreath at the memorial wall. Members of the board unanimously supported the hosting of this event at Veterans Park.
- **Possible changes to VAB Ordinance**, Chief Brown stated that since the position of VFW 6917 has been vacant for many months now, the board mentioned last meeting that it would like to take the opportunity to possibly make some changes to the current VAB ordinance. One option is to ask for removal of the VFW 6917 position and replace it with a third Member at Large position. Rod Gajewski made the suggestion to have United Military Women of the SouthWest named as a member of the board and to seek younger members from NMSU. Dan Banks commented on how well Jacobo Varela did at representing young veterans from the University. He also suggested naming DAV Chapter 38 as a member of the board. Chief Brown suggested that if it is desired by the board to have a student representative they could open a third Member at Large and state that member be a student veteran. Dr. David Boje agreed that it is an excellent idea to add student veterans, United Military Women of the SouthWest and DAV Chapter 38. Christine Sautter commented that there has always been an excellent history of an NMSU Student Veteran being on the board. Dr. Boje suggested inviting student veterans to sit in the audience and observe before being appointed to the board. Fred Schneider mentioned that due to school schedule conflicts it might be a good idea to appoint up to 3 students who can rotate through meetings. Chief Brown stated that it is the boards best interest to only have one formal placement as a voting member but it would be a good idea to have back up representative in the audience. JR Turner told the board that he sees mostly Vietnam, WWII and Korean War Veterans more so that Iraqi and Afghanistan War Veterans. Mr. Schneider stated that the VFW 6917 will be holding a chapter meeting on March 10, 2016 which he would like to get himself on the agenda for to seek clarification as to whether or not they plan on continuing their participation with the board. Mr. Banks suggested that Mr. Schneider take applications to said meeting. Chief Brown stated that he can make a request in writing to VFW 6917 and asks for response in writing. He can also start drafting a new ordinance to bring to the next meeting for consideration to add United Military Women of the SouthWest and remove VFW 6917 if he doesn't receive word for their continuance & request involvement from NMSU Student Veterans. Fred Schneider motioned to table the discussion until the next meeting. Cosme Padilla 2nd the motion. All members voted unanimously.

Public Participation

- **Appeals Process- JR Turner**, the VA is starting to see an increase in appeals. The 21958 Form for appeals for dissatisfaction was implemented in September. The recommended appeal option in with a Decision Review Officer- this option saves time and the process takes about a year. It is done locally rather than in DC which can take up to three years. There are three options: video teleconference, travel board and going to DC to appeal. It is a must to abide by the time schedule to appeal. Power of Attorneys are assigned and do get involved in the appeal process.

Board Member Reports

- **Dr. David Boje** provided a handout on Tiny Home Eco-Villages as tiny living is becoming more sustainable. Mr. Shannon Reynolds stated that there are 10 students currently working on designs for a tiny home for the homeless that will cost between \$15-20 thousand. This model will be off the grid using solar power and grey water.
- **Carol Gaines** extended an invitation to any military member to sing the Star Spangled Banner, the Vietnam Medley and God Bless America as part of a choir for the Welcome Home Vietnam event on March 26th. Today (February 23rd) marks the 71st Anniversary of the flag raising at Iwo Jima. Marine Corps League has attended the ceremonies for this event for about 10 years now. Mrs. Gaines was able to attend this year. Friday there was a dinner and a program with students involved. Awards were given and a buffalo head was presented. On Saturday, the parade began at 9am and took about three hours from start to finish because each group was being recognized and did some sort of performance as they went through. Around 5pm they attended an event at Veterans Park where there was a parade of flags.
- **Dan Banks**, the DAV 10 is considering doing another Motorcycle rally later in the year but they have not yet voted to do so. More information on that is to come. Also, each veteran organization is being asked to sponsor a veteran for this year's Honor Flight.
- **Rod Gajewski** reported the loss of one of the remaining five member of the Enterprise.
- **Karen Woods**, Update for the Women's Veteran Monument, they are working on the contract terms. United Military Women of the SouthWest will have an information table set up at the Farmer's Market on February 27th. April 9th from 4-7pm they will be hosting a spaghetti dinner. Proceeds go to Community of Hope and El Caldito Soup Kitchen. On March 18th and 19th there will be a yard sale at 9060 Red Roof. Proceeds from this will go towards the monument. March 11th there will be a naturalization ceremony at the Las Cruces Convention Center with around 100 individuals being sworn in.
- **Christine Sautter** stated that MOAA will be continuing to fund the Junior ROTC scholarship. Also, they are seeking donations for Oak Street. There isn't a real need for clothing at the moment but they are looking for furniture items.
- **Fred Schneider** provided information regarding the Combined Officers Committee. This committee will stop a single organization from running the committee and will also stop drain on veteran organizations finances by stopping multiple handouts from organization.
- **Travis Brown** announced that he will be retiring the end of May. He is unsure who will take his place. It is up to the Mayor to appoint someone to replace him.
- **Lawrence Orvis**, Bingo on Wednesdays and Saturdays, first game starts at 6:30pm. Last game is \$1,000 blackout. \$10 to play. Call 526-9139 for more information.

Next Meeting: March 22, 2016

Adjournment: Rod Gajewski motioned to have the meeting adjourned, Dr. David Boje 2nd the motion. All members present voted unanimously.


Name

3-21-16
Date