

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS AFFAIRS



MINUTES

Tuesday, 4 April 2017
11th floor, Suite 1114
441 4th Street NW/One Judiciary Square
Washington DC 20001

- I. Call to Order by Mr. Dier at 1834.**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance (using flag on Capitol Building)**
- III. Advisory Board Members Roll Call**
 - A) Due to the evident lack of a quorum, the Roll was not taken until the end of the meeting. The following lists all members present at some point during the meeting.
 - B) Voting Members Present (including late arrivals): Adebayo, Curry, Dalzell, Dier, Grant, Khan, Lampkin, Spangenberg, Sydnor, Tobin, Treadwell
 - C) Voting Members Absent: Curry, Kamara, Locks, Mack, McClendon, Moore, Pridemore (deployed), Scott, White, Williams, Wynn
 - D) A quorum was not present when Roll was taken.
- IV. Agenda**
- V. Approval of minutes from March**
 - A) Minutes are online at <http://www.open-dc.gov/public-bodies/advisory-board-veterans-affairs>
 - B) Due to lack of a quorum, March minutes were not approved.
- VI. Special Guests**
 - A) None scheduled.
- VII. Director's Report**
 - A) Director Ross will report on MOVA's activities over the last month.
 - B) Operations:
 - 1. DCRA and a number of community partners opened a new permanent housing facility on Yuma Street SE. It was a public-private partnership and houses 14 veterans. MOVA handed out care packages.

2. America Serves is a community-based resource service run by Syracuse University. They are in a few cities, and are exploring D.C. as an option for expansion. A follow-up meeting scheduled later this month.
3. DOES – Project Empowerment is looking to get more veterans into the program. It is an city-run employment program designed to assist those with barriers to employment, and resembles the VA’s compensated work therapy program in a number of regards. It can include legal issues, such as bad-conduct discharges. It is a six-month program of paycheck, placement into temporary job, and additional job coaching if the person is unable to find permanent job. They already have a few vets on staff.
4. DC Office of Aging – MOVA is exploring co-hosting a number of events and providing information about available programs on our website. Available programs include Caregivers, Transportation, QMB, Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services (VD-HCBS).
 - a. QMB applications are run through a clinic at GWU on behalf of the District government. MOVA will be putting this information on its website as well. One benefit is free pharmaceuticals for qualified individuals.
 - b. VD-HCBS currently only has one vet, but could expand to 25.
5. UDC Workforce Development Program – MOVA exploring partnership and events. It is 100% free for district residents, with multiple job paths – health care, construction, hospitality – and locations around the city.
6. Office of the State Superintendent of Education is newly designated as the State approving agency for Veterans Programs. If a school wants to be approved for VA benefits, they would be the ones to do it. MOVA will be working with OSSE, and partnering on SSS registration.
7. Columbia Light House for the Blind has brought together a number of community partners to create a business plan for a 3-D printing company and are looking for blind-veteran candidates to take on the responsibility of starting the business. MOVA will help them look for the right candidate.
8. American Legion – working to help support Boy’s State (a summer camp for high-school juniors). This is fully free for the teens, as AL pays for the entire week.
 - a. This gives extra points for Service Academy applications.
 - b. AL will also assist with claims, pensions and DD-214 upgrades.
9. Lawyers Serving Warriors – National Veterans Legal Services Program classes and legal assistance
10. The Veterans Pro Bono Consortium – Legal Services
11. Veteran Business Opportunity Center – quarterly classes. Free for the Boots to Business program, and MOVA is exploring others.

C) Upcoming Events

1. On 5 April, AMVETS will host its annual Because We Care Day at the Washington DC VA Medical Center. Mayor Bowser has issued a proclamation declaring the day Because We Care Day.
 - a. MOVA will give out care packages for longer-term patients
 - b. VA Secretary will be there as well.
2. Budget hearing will be at 1000, 7 April in Room 500, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW
 - a. Members are encouraged to come and show their support, testify, or submit written testimony.
3. U.S. Coast Guard is organizing a restoration of the Military Cemetery at St. Elizabeth's East.
 - a. Did walkthrough and found a lot of dilapidated gravestones.
 - b. Planning meeting is set for April 19, at 1 pm.
4. At 1000 on 28 April, the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center will open a new Transition and Care Management Center.
 - a. This is more robust than the one-stop facility we've been talking about. It is not related to VAMC services, but for claims, pensions, etc. The veteran's pro bono consortium will be doing a monthly clinic there – and may find they need to do it more often to meet the demand.

D) Updates:

1. The third MOVA newsletter will be out 10 April.
2. GWU Veterans Day of Service was a big success, with over 150 individuals signed up. They cleaned up the Tidal Basin after the Cherry Blossom festival, put on a day of games at armed forces retirement home, etc.
3. More website updates are up, with more in the works

E) The Big Reveal: On Monday, 10 April, MOVA will stand-up operations at its old office space in 441 4th Street NW, Suite 870.

1. This provides space to take on interns, other events, and have a bigger presence.
2. The Director shared credit with the board and community, who made the case for needing more space.
3. New phone numbers, business cards to come.

VIII. Old Business (Chairman/Director)

A) Hall of Fame resolution

1. Director suggests holding a meeting to reconsider the proposal. He had a three-hour meeting with legislative team. MOVA could host it in the new office space, as well as online. He believes creating it is within his purview.

IX. New Business (Chairman)

- A) Interim Vice-Chair Dier raised the question of how to advance the board's strategic planning process, committee work, and other activities.
1. He noted that in interviews to join the board, he was asked about his ideas and vision. He suggest spending time in the May meeting to talk about what each board member would like to see in the program.
 2. On committees, he would like to work with all to make it work better. He suggested creating 30/60/90-day calendars, with a white board to keep things tracked and be accountable at least to ourselves. He believes the board needs to keep things on the forefront if it is to work on them.
 3. Social media – he believes the board members need to individually support the promulgation of the message. He suggested three posts per week from each members to get the energy going. The mayor's State of the District speech had items it would have been good to put out. This outreach needs to not just be professional, but personal and engaging: "Not a bullhorn on a corner, but back-and-forth and dialogue." Success is having friends of friends repeating the word. He suggested members look at the LA office of veterans affairs as one example.
 4. Field trips – the board needs to get out into the community. He suggested the board is currently in an ivory tower, with people coming to it. One approach would be to have committee-driven field trips for the board to go out to veterans as a group, which would be a way to learn more.
 5. A final area was to engage ANCs.
 - a. Mr. Dalzell noted that there are also going to be Ward-level activities like meetings to discuss the proposed budget, and these may be easier to fit into members' schedule while still exposing us to the public.
 - b. The Director noted that the board has 21 voting and 5 ex-officio members, and should be able to reach out to every ANC or Ward every few months. He'll share the link to the ANCs. A member just needs to go and take the two minutes in community member time to introduce themselves. Some public members have said that the committee doesn't get too involved in the community.
 - c. The Director added that someone could build an onling document to track who's going to ANCs.
 6. There was discussion about whether the board could actually hold metings on the road. The Director suggested that the board probably doesn't want to make it the monthly meeting, but could do outreach events. He suggested going to 1500 Franklin Street, the four transitional homes in SE, and VAMC.
- B) Mr. Curry asked if the board has money for business cards or other marketing support? Maybe just a standard card that we all fill in with our name and number.
1. Other ideas included having a backpack or nametag to publicize who we are?
 2. Others noted that the MOVA website has outdated names and emails for about half of us. The Director said changes are in beta and will be posted soon.
- C) Mr. Spangenberg noted that the board needs to refresh the list of committee members, need to share them again.
1. Mr. Dier noted that the board can also add community members to the committees, which would be a good way to expand our reach, and open doors.

2. The Director noted that the board still needs to assign members to the new caregivers committee.

D) Nancy Black introduced herself as the new ex-officio member from DBH.

E) It was suggested that the board needs a better way to share info, such as a Google Drive space for committee materials as well as archives.

1. Mr. Curry noted he was put in charge of Education Committee but had no handover.

X. Committee Reports

A) Legislative – Mr. Khan wants to get the committee organized and engage with the meetings the Director is having with Legislative Affairs.

XI. Public Comment (Maximum 2 minute per person)

A) Andre Jones introduced himself as a member of the DC National Guard who deployed to Iraq, and is now a federal contractor and host of the Veterans Report online show.

B) Nicole Morales of Team Rubicon introduced herself.

1. TR started 7 years ago with Haiti, and is 80% military veterans; others are first responders and civilians. The program provides vets with identity, purpose and community. More info is at <https://teamrubiconusa.org>.
2. They have events to enhance skills and build camaraderie between emergencies.
3. TR has 418 members within the DC limits and has done work with Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and other groups. Could also help with the graveyard clearing and other activities the board has discussed.

C) Daniel Mehdi of the Travis Manion Foundation introduced himself. Mehdi is a Marine vet who recently retired from the DEA and is now a program manager at TMF (see <http://www.travismanion.org>).

1. Travis Manion was killed in Fallujah in 2007, and the foundation was established to empower vets to work with middle school and high school students. This includes veteran youth-mentorship programs, with free presentations to any kind of group. These can be for one day, or a day a week for ten weeks.
2. They also have veterans transition workshops, focused not on resume writing but helping vets identify their strengths and passions, and find a field that goes beyond a paycheck. They bring in other VSOs so vets know all the alternatives, and educational speakers to discuss different fields

XII. Upcoming (Events/Meetings/Holidays)

A) Next board meeting 2 May 2017. The agenda will be posted at <http://www.open-dc.gov/public-bodies/advisory-board-veterans-affairs> at least 72 hours in advance, and will include summer plan, committees, and members' vision for service on the board.

B) The GI Film Festival kicks off 25 May. See <https://gifilmfestival.com/> for more details.

XIII. New board members Tobin, Black, and Adebayo introduced themselves

XIV. The meeting adjourned at 2000 hours.