

Mayor's Advisory Board on Veterans Affairs
Minutes
June 7, 2016

1. Meeting details:
 - a. Regular meeting, held in Room 1112, 441 4th Street, NW.
 - b. Convened at 1835 hrs, adjourned at 2020 hrs.
 - c. No audio recording was made.
2. Board Members
 - a. Voting Members Present (13): Wingo (chair), Pridemore (vice), Dalzell (Secretary), Curry, Dier, Giancola, Grant, Harrison, Khan, Lampkin, Mack, McLendon, Williams
 - b. Voting Members Absent (8): Kamara, Locks (Parliamentarian), Moore, Patterson, Scott, Sydnor, White, Wynn
 - c. Ex-officio members present (2): Treadwell, Black
 - d. Ex-officio members absent: (1) Preston
3. Votes taken (outside of approval of agenda, adjournment, and other routine actions): None
4. Updates from MOVA Director
 - a. Ms. Pridemore announced Director Tammi Lambert has stepped down, effective immediately.
 - b. Mr. Wingo expressed board's thanks for her service to the city and as an Army veteran.
 - c. Charon P.W. Hines, Director of the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs (MOCA), discussed the transition plan, which includes her assuming interim responsibility for OVA.
 - i. She asked board members to send her their contact info if they didn't get her message about the meeting.
 - ii. The OVA staff is moving to the "bullpen" at the Wilson Building. They have transferred phone lines and other support.
 - iii. She feels one problem is that not a lot of people know about the OVA. If people don't know about it, they can't use it. She was encouraged to see the interest, the information sharing about programs, and the commitment in the board.
 - iv. The Mayor met today with Human Resources, and the city will be working to get another director, as well as getting the right staff, including outreach liaisons to get into the community
 - v. Regarding the board's desire to have a representative in each agency for veterans' issues, she noted that each government agency does have veterans who work there, and it often falls on them to act as informal liaisons and points of contact for veterans.
5. Due-outs from board members or committees:
 - a. Carried over from May meeting:
 - i. Committees should be meeting and coordinating with the chair and vice-chair for times to report back to the board on their plans and activities.
 - ii. All members should send Mr. Wingo an email with their cell phone number so he can call to check in before meetings.
 - b. New tasks: None
6. New Business:

- a. Several members expressed support for a “hackathon” for the board to compile a list of DC offices doing with programs or special benefits for vets.
7. Old business:
- a. The proposal to create a recording secretary position on the board first raised in May was not discussed due to time constraints.
8. Guest speakers:
- a. Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor
 - i. Bill Metheny, Director, Office of Field Operations, described his office’s mission and functions. metheny.william.p@dol.gov, (202) 693-4739
 - 1. 200 Constitution Ave NW S-1325, Washington, D.C. 20210-0001, <http://www.dol.gov/vets/>
 - ii. Nationally and in DC, veterans’ employment is improving, and is now higher than non-veteran employment
 - iii. His office’s first mission is to prepare transitioning servicemembers for civilian employment. This is done through DoL’s American Job Centers (AJCs); there are four in DC and others in the surrounding areas. They can be found through veterans.gov
 - 1. All AJCs are networked, and can coordinate from the final duty station to their next home city.
 - 2. Military spouses can also get assistance if they have to interrupt careers to follow the servicemember.
 - 3. Employers can contact an AJC to go and say they want to hire veterans. There’s no fee to post jobs.
 - 4. They also offer apprenticeship programs and on the job training, which can start before ETS.
 - 5. Reservist and Guardsmen who feel they have suffered a USERRA violation can contact his office to start claim.
 - 6. Advisory Board member Lane Williams is the director for these programs in DC.
 - 7. Mr. Wingo noted that one idea has been how to have conference calls with counterparts in MD and VA to discuss committee lanes
 - 8. In answer to questions from the board, Mr. Metheny provided the following additional information
 - a. There is not one master database on jobs, but each state’s data goes into consolidated statistics. Mr. Wingo noted that this was a reminder to think in terms of how the DC data goes into our board annual report.

- b. Mr. Williams said he works in the workforce center on Minnesota Avenue. He described himself as a performance person, all about tracking indicators and compliance. The DLOPS are vets reps. They have done audits of their work – many are retired SMs and they do what they are supposed to do.
- c. Wingo suggested the board could push the city’s talent management office to get priority for vets in city hiring.
- d. Mr Khan said that, as someone who runs a nonprofit, he sees a lot of vets, but often has trouble matching them to the right position. How does AJC match people to jobs?
 - i. Mr Williams said they post the job (now about 20K jobs), and everyone gets an assessment. This takes the work away from the human to make the connection.
 - ii. Additionally, if there is no link to a job in DC, the AJC can reach out to MD or VA.
- e. Mr. Dier asked how the AJCs link to the job agencies, and what kinds of relationships are there. He noted that business leaders may not be reaching out to new ways to find employees – rely on the same old monster.com, etc.
- f. Mr. Wingo asked if the DoL has used an apprenticeship program in DC. The answer was that they do have Skillbridge, which is open to all members of DoD, but servicemembers need their commanders’ authorization to use it, and they need to have a training program in their area. They may not have one in DC, like there are in other states. DoD is looking to allow permissive TDY for servicemembers to go elsewhere.
- g. Mr Wingo expressed his thought that DC doesn’t get its fair share, with lots of demand for work in WMATA and cyber fields, for example. “How would we lean in to get this moving forward?” he asked the presenters.
 - i. There should be interested businesses/trainers because they don’t have to pay salary while the apprentice is still in military.
 - ii. Mr. Dier asked about the role of the local unions. Mr. Matheny noted that at Joint Base Lewis-McCord the unions are in the lead in these programs.
- h. Mr. Mack said he has created a Google Drive page for sharing info. He has heard about the Deloitte program CORE (Career Opportunity Redefinition & Exploration) Leadership Program (<http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about->

deloitte/articles/join-deloitte-core-leadership-program.html) that can lead to consulting positions.

- i. This led to a general discussion about the line between the role of the Advisory Board, DoD, VA, DoL, etc.
 - i. Mr Matheny expressed the view that it starts with conversations leading to invitations. You start by connecting to see if those being trained elsewhere are looking to come here after ETS.
- j. What are the other nonintuitive areas for jobs in DC?
 - i. Mr. Wingo noted that “aging in place” is growing, creating the potential to use tech and start one’s own business to capture this market.
- k. Mr. Matheny noted that licensure and certification can be hard for vets. The National Governors Association realized this was an issue, took four skills sets, just published a report. Drivers, for example, need to do a lot to get a license, but maybe we can get states to communication on qualifications.
- l. Mr. Harrison works in DC VA medical center, and asked how the info is supposed to trickle down to the vets, and to the agencies that work with the vets. He’s always asked what’s available, even by those who should know. He’s working with former CSM of DC NG, and hopes the advisory board can address that.
 - i. Mr. Wingo noted that we have paper, radio, tv, and asked, “What’s the one thing you’d tell the mayor to fix this?”
 - ii. Mr. Harrison said the city should hire more peer support – individuals who uses personnel experience. This would open the door to vets to serve. Why not a specialty track for vets in the peer program? Dealing with combat vets is different.
- m. Mr. Dier noted that the OVA’s own website doesn’t include services outside of the federal VA.
 - i. Mr. McLendon noted the DC employment center is already in place and has veterans’ reps. We need to focus on getting them the info instead of building a new infrastructure.
- n. Mr. Wingo asked if we are doing something special for incarcerated vets and their return to society. Ms. Pridemore said Veterans moving Forward works with DC returning veterans, but

we need something at larger level to get the info into the VA offices – not necessarily the federal offices.

- o. One speaker noted older vets may not have enough income and need retraining, they may lack computer skills – how do you reach them?
- p. Mr. Curry argued there needs to be someone at each agency that is the POC so anyone can call them to reach into the agency. A resident shouldn't have to hunt for the POC.
 - i. Mr Wingo said he would like the board members to go to the agencies to find out the POCs and get the info.
 - ii. Mr. Dier said we his military experience taught him to have a plan before you start talking about the problem— We should apply this to presenting issues to the mayor.

b. Psychosocial Rehabilitation Recovery Center (PRRC), DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center

- i. 50 Irving Street NW, Washington, DC 20422
- ii. Ms. Yvonne Grissett, Certified Peer Support Specialist & WRAP Facilitator, (202) 745-8000 ext. 56445, Yvonne.Grissett@va.gov
- iii. Mr. Maurice Harrison, Certified Peer Support Specialist & WRAP Facilitator, Maurice.Harrison@va.gov
- iv. Mr. Eric Birts, Certified Peer Support Specialist & WRAP Facilitator, Eric.birts@va.gov
- v. Mr. Harrison's comments:
 - 1. He said he appreciates the feedback on VA services.
 - 2. DC mental health agencies get funding from city and have requirements – reasonable to call for a vet representative in them. They had one where there was a vet rep who wasn't a vet. This suggested a need for vet community support workers – they could help train the other CSWs
 - 3. He is concerned about the returning vets – education and retraining can make them turn around. He wouldn't recommend reemployment before retraining because they need to be set up for success.
 - 4. Those returning from war have struggles, they go to usajobs.com. He shares information with the grassroots employers – they don't know how to find the vets they could hire.
 - 5. He agreed "it's a sad website" for OVA. He was told a lot of the services for veterans are outsourced – one agency he checked with ran out of funding, apparently didn't get back to the vets. But no one monitors numbers when people claim what services they provide.

- vi. Ms. Grissette's comments:
 - 1. We need to remember the female veterans – they may go through combat not connected to guns (sexual trauma)
- c. Cheron Hines:
 - i. In addition to her comments on the transition of the OVA, she provided a more general review of her portfolio.
 - ii. She described herself as the daughter of a Gulf War veteran, who missed events while deployed.
 - iii. She oversees 12 agencies, and has two outreach liaisons per ward. In addition to OVA, this includes the following offices and their related advisory boards:
 - 1. Serve DC
 - 2. The District of Columbia Youth Advisory Council (DCYAC)
 - 3. Mayor's Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Affairs (LGBTQ)
 - 4. Mayor's Office on African Affairs (MOAA)
 - 5. The Mayor's Office on Women's Policy and Initiatives (MOWPI)
 - 6. The Mayor's Office of Religious Affairs (MORA)
 - 7. The Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA)
 - 8. The Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services (MOCRS)
- d. Steve Walker, Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments (MOTA)
 - i. Mr. Walker thanked the board members for their service.
 - ii. He noted that various departments have vets programs (and some have heads who are vets), and they should have their reps at the Advisory Board meetings. It would be a good way to directly answer the questions – we should expect to get them sitting at the meetings.
 - 1. Of 223 appointed positions, 26 are vets, and 12 are on the cabinet.
 - 2. The Department of Human Resources (headed by a Navy vet) recognizes need to make sure all know they have a veterans' office.
- 9. Other actions:
 - a. Ms. Pridemore will be at military training for the next six weeks, with limited connectivity.
- 10. Public comments:
 - a. American Veterans Committee:
 - i. In his capacity as AVC president, Mr. Saif noted that he had hosted Mr. Burgeton, a Norwegian veterans' representative in DC for an event. They discussed challenges seen around the word and how different countries are addressing their needs.
 - ii. Mr. Burgeton has appointed Mr. Khan as chair for the Americas within the world veterans federation.
- 11. Upcoming meetings and events

- a. Next monthly board meeting will be held July 5th, probably in the same room. See <http://www.bega-dc.gov/board-commissions-meetings/mayors-advisory-board-veterans-affairs> for agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen R. Dalzell
Secretary

DRAFT