

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS AFFAIRS



MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, 3 October 2017
11th floor, Suite 1114
441 4th Street NW/One Judiciary Square
Washington DC 20001
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

- I. Call to Order** by Interim Vice Chairman Spangenberg
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Advisory Board Members Roll Call** (by Mr. Locks)
 - A) 9 voting members were present; therefore, a quorum was not obtained.
- IV. Approval of Agenda**
 - A) Lacking a quorum to approve, the draft agenda provided by the Secretary was used as the de facto agenda.
- V. Approval of minutes from July, August, September**
 - A) Minutes are found as attachments under their respective meetings at <https://www.open-dc.gov/public-bodies/advisory-board-veterans-affairs>
 - B) Lacking a quorum, no minutes were approved.
- VI. Special Guests.** The following individuals were recognized.
 - A) Chris Fletcher -- The Mission Continues
 - B) Deirdre Armstrong -- National Veterans Intermediary
 - C) Chevonne Woodard -- American Legion Post 8
 - D) Dan Mehdi -- Travis Manion Foundation
 - E) Kayode Alaka -- (no affiliation noted)
 - F) Michael Ball -- Serving Together
 - G) Shay Rangel -- Omni Global Strategies
- VII. Director's Report**
 - A) Director Ross reported on MOVA's activities over the last month.
- VIII. Old Business** (Chairman/Director)

- A) Chair for Homeless Veterans Committee (Vice Chairman)
 - B) Revising policy on attendance, including proxy voting and telephonic attendance (Parliamentarian)
 - C) Headshots and one-paragraph bios from board members for website (MOVA)
- IX. New Business (Chairman/Director)**
- A) Director Ross will give a presentation on a proposed D.C.-specific transition course
- X. Committee Reports (Vice Chairman)**
- A) Committee chairs will give oral updates on committee actions
- XI. Public Comment (Maximum 2 minute per person)**
- XII. Upcoming (Events/Meetings/Holidays)**
- A) 7 November: Next board meeting
- XIII. Adjournment**
- XIV. Special Guests**
- XV. Director's Report:** Director Ross reported on MOVA's activities over the last month.
- A) Operations:
 1. 2 veteran roundtables
 - a. *standing room only*
 - b. Will continue through Fall 2017
 2. 2 Vocational Rehabilitation sessions
 - a. In conjunction with VA claim, people from around the country asked to fly in
 - b. VA Cemetery team came to set up a table the day before
 - c. Trying to commit to doing this monthly
 3. 4 – 9/11 events
 - a. Service days and vigils
 - b. Voice of America did a nice news piece and video
 4. VA Mental Health Summit – Veterans Treatment Court
 - a. Full house for the event, mainly service providers. It has started a great conversation on Veterans Treatment Courts.
 5. DSLBD Build a Dream Workshop
 - a. Excellent workshop with some great people. Will likely be building on this course in the near future
 - b. First of its kind 5-8pm
 - c. Cohort kind of environment
 6. Small Business Bootcamp

- a. Good course for a Monday event. One more scheduled for the event of November.
 - b. Department of State
 - c. 60 registered, 15 in room
 - d. 1 more in November
- 7. Spoke at Travis Manion Foundation event
 - a. Focusing on strength building
 - b. Connected to other veteran organization (Mission Continues)
- 8. DCNG Military Ball
- 9. Office of Tenant Advocate 10-year anniversary – Veterans Housing Panel
- 10. TVC Mankin Award from Board of Veteran Appeals
- 11. CBC Veterans Event
- 12. Launch of D.C. Radio
- 13. No Wrong Door Leadership meetings
 - a. Veterans street team
- 14. We continue to build Veterans into the conversation for government programs and services.
- 15. Met with VAMC Mental Health Advisory Committee
- 16. U.S.Vets First Stand Down
- 17. Very successful DD-214 clinic and DAV Claims Clinic
- 18. TVC Silver Gala
- 19. TWC Veterans Gala
- 20. First Veteran Street Team
 - a. Working on refining the concept, but this is something that we are going to be doing more of going forward.
- 21. Since July we have distributed over 2000 pamphlets
- 22. Newsletter is over 5,100
- 23. Working with student veterans to launch a new D.C.-specific veteran group
- 24. Resource guide is complete and on the website
- 25. Advisory Board info is on website
 - a. Not many board members have submitted bios or photos
 - b. Plan to add enacting legislation and by-laws
 - c. More web updates are coming along – a bit time consuming

B) October's main focus is admin and Veterans Day planning

1. Purposefully light on events.

C) Updates:

1. DoD MOU has been signed – just waiting on DoD to sign
2. Transportation MOU has been negotiated. Need to sign and advertise RFA.
3. Nachee Miller has coordinated a DAV Claims Officer to volunteer once a week
4. Veterans Day Event – Update from Elliot

D) Initiatives:

1. LGBTQ Veterans Outreach Initiative
 - a. James is leading this
2. Women Veterans Outreach Initiative – Women Veterans License Plate Legislation
 - a. A way to serve underserve veterans who do not always self-identify
 - b. More information to come next month
3. D.C. Networking Events
 - a. Trying to make one happen once a month
 - b. Combination of TED Talk and networking

XVI. Old Business (Chairman/Director)

A) Chair for Homeless Veterans Committee (Vice Chairman)

1. Chevonne Woodard (stepped up)

B) Revising policy on attendance, including proxy voting and telephonic attendance (Parliamentarian)

1. Still trying to get information regarding the law
2. Still taking opinion of board members

C) Headshots and one-paragraph bios from board members for website (MOVA)

1. Please send in bio.
2. Ask Eli or Elliott for template
3. Eli will ask for photographer to come to next meeting to take headshots
4. Joel will just sent template out

XVII. New Business (Chairman/Director)

A) Director Ross gave a presentation on a proposed D.C.-specific transition course. Among the key points were the following:

1. Trying to reach veterans before there is a problem.
2. Making DC a Vet Friendly City
3. Trying to develop a pipeline for veterans from service to DC

4. New initiative is called “DC Welcomes Vets”
5. Initial objectives:
 - a. Identify gaps in veterans’ programs
 - b. Make website user-friendly
 - c. Study tax breaks like those offered by states
 - d. Develop a specialized driver license and vehicle registration for veterans
 - e. Offer discounts on hunting permits
 - f. Develop specialized housing
6. Mr. Khan had printed a list of all current benefits offered by DC (Military.com)
7. Suggestions to ease transition:
 - a. Letter from the Mayor inviting them to DC
 - b. First-time home-buyer program
 - c. Property/income tax discount
 - d. Educational benefits
 - e. District Government Agency positions
 - f. Integration with governmental services
 - g. Benefits for disabled veterans’ children

B) This led to a discussion of the greatest problems for DC Veterans. Suggestions included the following:

1. Inability to access benefits
2. Bureaucratic barriers
3. Not a lot of data
4. Housing

XVIII. Committee Reports (Vice Chairman): Committee chairs gave oral updates on committee actions

A) Government Affairs (Mr. Khan)

1. The committee looked into veterans’ benefits in DC and Illinois.
2. The committee is looking into ideas for reducing the age for veterans to get some benefits.
3. The committee is also looking at benefits given to veterans globally.
4. One idea is to look at what the city offers disabled people as a whole and add veterans to the qualifying recipients
 - a. Two benefits not listed as potential veterans’ benefits include 50% off property tax and two years’ free (vehicle?) registration for disabled veterans.

- b. Mr. Curry noted that you do not have to be 100% disabled for some of these benefits. He was able to get the discount. Such benefits typically read “Senior/ Disabled Vet”

XIX. Public Comment (Maximum 2 minute per person)

- A) Deirdre Armstrong Deirdre.armstrong@nvi.org
- B) Chevonne Woodard Chevonne.woodard@gmail.com
- C) Dan Mehdi- Character training Daniel.mehdi@travismanion.org
- D) Michael Ball- Improving veterans access to service mball@everymind.org
- E) Shay Rengel Shay@omniglobalstrategies.com
- F) Kayode Alaka kayodealaka@aol.com

XX. Upcoming (Events/Meetings/Holidays)

- A) 7 November: Next board meeting
- B) From Director:
 - 1. October 3, 17, 31 – Voc Rehab
 - a. Will host in our office
 - b. Trying to build engagement
 - 2. October 17, 24, 31 – DAV claims officer will be on deck
 - a. Will host in our Office
 - 3. October 11 & 25 – Veteran Roundtables
 - a. 12-2pm Will host in our Office
 - 4. October 27 – Veterans Pro Bono Consortium Pop-up Clinics
 - a. 3 locations:
 - i. VA Transition Clinic
 - ii. NLSP – lots of openings
 - iii. U.S.Vets – lots of openings
 - 5. November 2 – D.C. Humanities Event for Transitioning Veterans
 - a. Location TBA
 - b. Happy Hour re: transitioning after service
 - 6. November 7 – DD 214 Upgrade Clinic, location TBD
 - a. Mass clinic; 3 or 4 attorneys
 - 7. November 8 – Veterans Roundtable
 - 8. November 8 – Center City PCS Veterans Day event
 - a. *need volunteers
 - b. One person from each branch speaks about what it means to be a part of the military
 - c. Handmade cards from kids

9. November 9 – UDC Veterans Day

10. November 11 Veterans Day Event -- Playground redone

- a. Expecting 100-200 volunteers
- b. Carmen Berry is taking lead of getting community together \
- c. MPD, Travis Manion, Mission Continues, Team Rubicon, VSO's
- d. 9-2 Service Project
- e. 3-6 BBQ, speakers

XXI. Adjournment by Interim Vice Chairman Spangenberg