



Agenda

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Veteran's Advisory Board
July 8, 2015
City Hall
200 Lincoln Avenue
Councilor's Conference Room
4:30pm to 5:30pm

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Agenda
3. New Business
 - a. Review of Resolution and Discussion of the Role of the Board – Chris Calvert
 - b. Election of Vice-Chair – Chris Calvert
 - c. City Clerk Forms – Terrie Rodriguez
4. Communications from Staff
5. Communications from Committee
6. Next Meeting and Adjourn

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VETERAN'S ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING: July 8, 2015**

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The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.		

MINUTES OF THE
CITY OF SANTA FE
VETERAN'S ADVISORY BOARD

July 8, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the City of Santa Fe Veteran's Advisory Board was called to order by Chris Calvert, Chair at 4:30 p.m. on this date in the City Councilors' Conference Room, 200n Lincoln Avenue, 1st Floor, City Hall, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Calvert, Chair
Chris Abeyta
Kevin Dettelbach
Hank Hughes
Jim McCormick
Frank Pearce
Carmen M. Rodriguez
Gregory Scargall

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Terrie Rodriguez, Youth and Family Services Division Director

OTHERS PRESENT:

Patricia Boies, Santa Fe County Community Services Department
Chuck Zobac, visitor
Jo Ann G. Valdez, Stenographer

not working. He is here to try and bring some new ideas and he could assist with obtaining funding.

Carmen M. Rodriguez said it is a pleasure to be here. She would like to tell the Mayor that we are happy to have this Committee.

Ms. Rodriguez acknowledged and complimented Gregory Scargall for the Santa Fe Community College for being ranked number one in the nation for a 2-year career technical institution.

Ms. Rodriguez said she represents a couple of things; she represents the businesses in the community and is with the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves organization. ESGR is a volunteer organization that reports to Albuquerque on how they can support the employer and the guard and reserve individuals when they have to find a job or they are having problems with their employer, or the employer is having trouble with the employee. ESGR meets once a month on the first Thursday of the month. Ms. Rodriguez invited the Committee Members to attend a meeting and said she looks forward to working with all of the Committee Members.

Hank Hughes is the Executive Director of the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, which is a coalition of approximately 60 agencies that work with homeless people in various capacities in trying to get them into housing. Along with Mr. Calvert, he is on the Veterans Helping Homeless Veterans Committee, which is a group that was formed about four years ago to raise seed funding for groups around the state, primarily northern New Mexico, that work specifically with homeless veterans in trying to get them housed.

Mr. Hughes noted that the Coalition decided to be part of an initiative to try and end veteran homelessness in our state by the end of this year. They would like to get homeless veterans connected to housing within a month and their goal is to house about 800 veterans this year.

Frank Pearce is retired from Los Alamos National Laboratory after 30 years as a Senior Security Specialist and Emergency Manager. He also retired in 1981 from the Marine Corps as a Major and spent a lot of time working with the Navy. He served in Vietnam in the 80's as an advisor to a Vietnamese Army unit.

Mr. Pearce said from what he has personally experienced, it is not easy for a retired military veteran in Santa Fe to find out where the contacts are; and he thinks that

Ms. Rodriguez introduced Chuck Zobac noting that he contacted her today because he heard that the Mayor put together this Committee. He also has a radio show and Ms. Rodriguez asked him to tell the Committee about this.

Mr. Zobac said he is also on the Committee of the Vietnam Veterans of America and is also a member. He served in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968. He noted that he has had people on his talk show like Gregory Scargall. He started a show about two months ago that is called "Calling All Vets" and the show airs on Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on KVSF-101.5. He has had people like the head of the VA Regional Office; the head of the VA Medical Center; representatives from the Veterans Center and the former Deputy Secretary (John Garcia) of the VA itself, on this show. Today's guest was Chuck Howell, President of the New Mexico Veterans Wellness and Healing Center in Angel Fire. Mr. Zobac is on the Committee of Directors for the New Mexico Veterans Wellness and Healing Center.

Mr. Zobac said he is not here because of the radio show but because he would like to see some positive things happen for veterans. He referred to a recent article that was in the *Albuquerque Journal* last Sunday that talked about the fact that the City of Las Cruces is very close to not having any homeless veterans. He noted that he tried contacting someone from Las Cruces but was not successful.

Mr. Zobac said he is 100% disabled mostly because of agent-orange cancer. He said he too would like to seriously make a difference for our younger veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. He personally does not want to see them go through what he has experienced, as a Vietnam vet. In his opinion, the most successful program the VA has put together was the Vietnam Veterans Drop-In Centers. He agreed that there are so many people who do not know where to go or where the resources are.

Chair Calvert said Mr. Zobac could be a great asset for this Committee in getting information out and publicizing things.

Mr. Zobac said he is interested in the vacancy on the Committee.

Terrie Rodriguez noted that there is a vacancy on the Committee and two people have been approached to serve on the Committee based on the different positions on the Committee. She informed Mr. Zobac that they need a letter of interest that will go to the Mayor and a resume. She thinks Mr. Zobac will be helpful to the Committee to report on the things that are going on throughout our community.

Chair Calvert asked if everybody had a chance to review the Resolution that authorized this Committee.

Ms. Carmen M. Rodriguez asked if they could make any editorial changes.

Chair Calvert said no, the Resolution has already been approved. He explained that things that are listed as things the Committee should work on are suggestions and does not mean that the Committee is limited to those things.

b. Election of Vice Chair

Chair Calvert said according to the Resolution, he is supposed to appoint a Vice-Chair but he is not going to do this right away because he is going to ask for volunteers, and he thought the people should have a little time to see how the Committee is operating before they volunteer to do this. He noted that the Vice Chair will serve when the Chair is not available. He suggested that appointment of the Vice Chair be done at the next meeting.

c. City Clerk Forms

Ms. Rodriguez informed the Committee Members that they could park in the Convention Center Parking Garage and staff will validate the ticket.

Ms. Rodriguez asked the Committee Members to sign and send back the package that they received from the City Clerk's office. She noted that the Committee Members have been appointed in staggered terms, some for a two-year term and some for a one-year term. She asked the Committee to discuss the time that they want to meet; if they want to change the agenda; or if they want to have an executive committee, etc. She said the Committee should provide a report to the Governing Body on the progress that is being made. She noted that the City Clerk's office pays for a Stenographer to do minutes and these minutes are posted on-line on the City's website.

Chair Calvert said the Committee will be meeting once a month unless there is some extraordinary circumstance; however, they can meet more often if they have things to do or take care of.

He said in going back to Section 3 of the Resolution (*Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee*), he would like the Committee to discuss this. He said they do not want to compete with, or duplicate efforts of other organizations. He said one of the things we

Mr. Dettelbach mentioned that there is a comprehensive website called e-benefits. He said he deals with veterans every day and a couple of things that he sees are: 1) it is a great idea to create pathways for veterans to resources 2) the wives of veterans have just as many problems as the veterans do. 3) In regards to jobs, we need sustainable programs and mentorships outside the circle of veterans. 3) The housing issue is extremely important. He was in agreement with Jim McCormick that the Committee needs to fix the low-hanging fruit, make it happen, and build on that to gain the confidence of the vets. The insecurity issue and barriers of the veterans out there is 100%.

Mr. Scargall said as he looks down this list, he checked off numbers 2, 9, 10 and 12 because he thinks these are all really strong areas to focus on. However, he also hears what these gentlemen are saying. He said there is frustration out there and we just came through the VA crisis last year. He thinks this Committee has a huge opportunity. He explained that the Resource Center is not out there to duplicate or replicate what anyone else is doing. They are there to advocate, identify and to build stronger bridges. He said the communication between the veterans' service organizations throughout the community is almost non-existent. Mr. Scargall said he knocks on doors all the time in trying to build that bridge but it is difficult to sustain it.

He said the Committee needs to have patience because there are a lot of issues out there and they are all important. He thinks that the Committee needs to sit down, prioritize the roles and be an "action committee" and get things done. The Committee can reach out to the veteran organizations and tell them about the problems.

Mr. Scargall mentioned that they tried to put in for a homeless veterans grant that is called the "Homeless Veteran Reintegration" program through the Department of Labor; however, they did not get the grant.

He said he saw that a city on the east coast took an initiative to say that they are tired of waiting on the "other guys", so they went door-to-door to assist their veterans and started to make a real difference in people's lives. He noted that there are over 16,000 veterans who live here in New Mexico but we don't see or know where they all are. He thinks that it is up to the Committee's leadership and minds to come together and make something happen that is going to help the veterans.

Mr. Pearce said communications is our biggest problem and a major factor. He noted that he reads the *New Mexican* every day and there are special sections once or twice a week that is devoted to animals and other subjects. He thinks the Committee

how to gather it and she is visualizing some kind of book that would include all the resource contact numbers that can be distributed.

Mr. McCormick said this is the age-old way of the government doing this and he thinks it has been done. He said this could be volumes and he is not sure this gets into the veterans' hands. In terms of the sustainable part of getting information out, Facebook would be great because you can do posts every day; therefore having a Facebook page would be essential for this Committee.

Mr. Zobac asked Chair Calvert if he has had any communications or references with the City of Albuquerque. He said the person that is in charge of the Veteran's liaison for the City of Albuquerque is a good friend of his. He offered to provide his contact information to the Committee. He said we don't need to build on something if they have already built it. He noted that suicide prevention is not listed on the Suggested Goals of the Committee and he thinks this is a tragedy among veterans.

Mr. Hughes said maybe the Committee needs to strengthen some sort of peer support system because those people who have trouble accessing services need someone personally to help them get through the system and the red-tape.

Chair Calvert said there is the information and then there is the media and how to get the information out to people. The Committee needs to look at who they are trying to serve, pull the information together and figure out how this information is sent out through the media.

Mr. Scargall said he is thinking about the two portals that are being worked out that Ms. Boies reported on, so there could be some redundancy there.

Mr. Scargall asked if there was a press release done when the City formed this Committee.

In response, Chair Calvert said he was trying to get the City Public Information Officer to attend this meeting to get more information out about the Committee. He thinks this is one of the things that the Committee can ask for - that the City assists in getting this information out.

Ms. Terrie Rodriguez added that she sent information to the Public Information Officer about the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

Terrie Rodriguez said housing is one of the biggest obstacle in this town and the City Housing Department is working on coming up with a housing initiative for special needs people, at the request of the Santa Fe Behavioral Health Alliance. There will be a meeting on Wednesday, July 15th from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Market Station office at the Railyard, 500 Market Station. All Committee Members were invited to attend.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEE

The Committee discussed the meeting dates for future meetings and there was consensus to continue meeting on the second Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for August 12, 2015 at 4:30 p.m., possibly at the Market Station office at the Railyard on 500 Market Station, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Approved by:


Chris Calvert, Chair

Respectfully submitted by:


Jo Ann G. Valdez, Stenographer