



Veterans' and Military Affairs Advisory Board

New Mexico Veterans' Memorial

April 15, 2015

Minutes

Those Present:

Archie Garcia, Pat Gaston, Brian Leen, Roger Newall, Ken O'Keefe,
Steve Overman, David Spark, Jonathan Strawn, Chris Timm and SECRETARY: Beth Hemmerich

Those Excused:

Stephen Asher, Mike Scramski, and Louis Tafoya

- I. Meeting Called to Order by Chairman Roger Newall at 9:05 am
- II. Approval of Minutes from March 18, 2015
 - a. The motion to accept the March minutes was given by Steve Overman and seconded by David Spark.
- III. Public Comments –
 - No public comments
- IV. Old Business
 - a. Albuquerque Employee Coins
 - Nothing new was discussed on the Albuquerque Employee Coins
 - b. Hiring Preference
 - Roger Newall informed the group that the hiring process is going well. He participates in the hiring orientation and reported that with an average of class of 25-30 participants, two to four veterans are hired per class, on average.
 - It was discussed that the Police Department is in need of more employees. Roger informed the group that there are a lot of applications received from veterans, however, many don't qualify.
 - Steve Overman brought up that there is discussion about military experience waiving the 60 credit hours necessary for schooling. This is not a done deal, but there is discussion for how to use the credits/experience for the Academy.
 - c. Membership
 - Chris Timm and Mike Scramski are still working on filing membership's information.
 - This item is getting close to being filled.
 - d. Projects
 - Purple Heart City signs – Roger Newall informed the group that the City has hung the signs around town. They are placed high so that vandalism is difficult to accomplish.
 - Roger said he needs to do a fact-check to locate the locations that all the signs have actually been placed and if there are any that are still needing to be hung.
 - Roger mentioned that he knows there should be one going in each direction of the NMVM. He will follow up and see if both signs have been placed.
 - Signs have been hung on I-40 and I-25
 - Roger said he will set up a meeting with the Memorial Art Group to see if there is an extra sign that can be hung inside the NMVM.
 - Roger informed the group that for the next meeting, May 20, 2015, that he would like to invite Don Loftis, President of the Veterans Memorial Foundation, to attend the meeting and present him with the Purple Heart sign for the memorial.
 - Land Property for NMVIC – Steve Overman informed the group that he saw the County assessor regarding the plot of land. That land is City owned.

- He is waiting for next steps.
 - David Sparks said that he would be willing to help Steve figure out what the next steps are.
- e. Legislation
- A special session is being discussed so that they can resolve the item (budget) that didn't pass.
 - Ken O'Keefe informed the group that the Governor was supposed to sign the Veteran related bills at the NMVM, however, due to circumstances, she had to cancel and she signed the bills in Santa Fe.
 - Jonathan Strawn read the ten bills that were Veteran related that were passed for signature from the Governor. The bills are as follows:

HB-203 Veteran and Active Military Discounted Hunting and Fishing Licenses (Rep. Alonzo Baldonado)(R-Valencia) Provides a 50 percent discount on any hunting or fishing license (except for a resident, disabled veteran, fishing and game hunting combination license, which costs \$10.00) to all veterans and active duty military personnel. (Passed 59-0 in the House; 38-0 in the Senate)

HB-220 Increased National Guard Insurance Eligibility (Rep. John Zimmerman/R-Doña, Grant and Sierra) Finds that the eligibility limits for members of the New Mexico National Guard for life insurance through the Federal Service members' Group Life Insurance program are increased from \$250,000 to \$400,000. (House 67-0; Senate 41-0)

HB-320 Limit Homeowner Restrictions on Flag-Flying (Rep. Alonzo Baldonado/R-Valencia; Sen. Clemente Sanchez/D-Cibola, McKinley, Socorro and Valencia) Proposes to amend the Homeowner Association Act to specify that an association shall not adopt or enforce any restriction related to the flying or displaying of flags that is more restrictive than the applicable state law or county or municipal ordinance.

HB-327 National Guard Assistance Eligibility (Rep. John Zimmerman/R-Doña, Grant & Sierra) Changes the requirement for New Mexico National Guard members and their families to be eligible to receive assistance pursuant to the Income Tax Act rather than the active service in the global war on terrorism would now require deployment overseas for a period of 30 or more consecutive days. Provides that the temporary suspense account from which such distributions are made shall be non-reverting. (House 67-0; Senate 39-0)

HB-427 Resident Tuition Rates for Veterans' Spouse or Child (Rep. Stephanie Garcia-Richard/D-Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and Sandoval) Extends in-state tuition to the spouse or child of a veteran of the Armed Forces that is eligible for benefits under the federal Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 or any other federal law authorizing educational benefits for a veteran or the dependents of a veteran. (House 58-0; Senate 38-0)

SB-144 Military Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Registry Act (Sen. Michael Padilla/D-Bernalillo) Cited as the Military Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Act, its purpose is to provide outreach, education and advocacy for New Mexico service members and veterans who have been exposed to open burn pit smoke or other airborne hazards during their service in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation New Dawn, the Gulf War 1990-1991, or other conflicts or theaters that may later be identified. (Senate 40-0; House 61-0)

SB-248 Property Owned By Disabled Veterans Exempt From Special Benefit Assessments (Sen. Michael Sanchez/D-Bernalillo and Valencia) Exempts the property of a disabled veteran, including the joint or community property of the veteran and the veteran's spouse, from special benefit assessments if the property is occupied by the veteran as the veteran's principal place of residence. (Senate 37-0; House 58-0)

SB-318 Extension of Sunset Dates for Occupation and Military Boards (Sen. Carlos Cisneros/D-Taos, Rio Arriba, Los Alamos and Santa Fe) Delays the sunset termination dates for several military and occupation boards and extends the term of their existence. (Senate 37-2; House 61-0)

SB-448 Makes Military Acquisition Programs Deductions Permanent (Sen. William Burt/R-Chaves, Lincoln and Otero) Deletes the sunset date of June 30, 2016 from the gross receipts deduction for receipts from transformational acquisition programs performing research and development, test and evaluation services at White Sands Missile Range. (Senate 34-4; House 56-0)

SB-506 Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption Options (Sen. William Payne/R-Bernalillo) When the principal place of residence of a disabled veteran (or that veteran's surviving spouse) granted a 100% exemption for that property under Section 7-37-5.1 is transferred during a tax year, the veteran or surviving spouse may either (1) maintain the exemption on the transferred residence or (2) move the exemption to the new principal place of residence regardless of the statutory deadlines for applying and claiming the exemption. (Senate 39-0; House 66-0)

f. Update Future Events

- Roger Newall informed the group that New Mexico would be getting a Fisher House. The Fisher House be in Albuquerque but would be for the State. There is no date for ground breaking yet. They have narrowed down the location to two possible sites. The estimated date will be in late 2016 early 2017.
 - Funding is appreciated. Roger let the group know that there has already been a golf tournament held to raise funds for the Fisher House that brought in approximately \$10K. The dollar amount is not finalized; this number is just an estimate.
 - Roger let the group know that he would try to push the importance of the NM Fisher House to State and City officials.
 - There are some problems that will need to be addressed with the NM Fisher House such as overlapping state borders. Las Cruces, NM, goes to El Paso, TX. Durango, CO, goes to Albuquerque, NM. Clovis, NM, goes to Amarillo, TX. This is just one example that will need to be addressed.
 - The Fisher House will be located on the VA property. The VA has two sites for the build location. Site is yet to be determined.
 - Fisher House Foundation raises all the funds to build the House. They will not accept in-kind donations and all financial monies must be run through their Foundation. The Fisher House will be funded and built by Fisher House Foundation and upon completion will belong to the VA.

V. New Business:

- Roger Newall informed the group that the Mayor had a statistical meeting regarding the homeless and homeless veterans. He asked the VA what their biggest dilemma was in getting the homeless veterans into housing. Their answer was paying a damage deposit. There will be an escrow account set up to hold monies and use towards damage deposits for veterans. The account will not actually pay the damage deposit, but will stand behind the veteran being housed and act as their damage deposit.
 - Pat Gaston said that there should be more organizations that operate like the NM Women's Vets program. They take the homeless, get them treatment, get them into a program, and then address NEXT STEPS. That's what's missing from a lot of the organizations that help veterans...next steps.
 - Roger Newall asked Pat Gaston to get him a copy of how their program works to see if it can be used as a model. If something is working, share it. Organizations should work together for the better of the veterans.
 - Pat Gaston informed the group that it is 31% cheaper to house someone than it is to just let them be. Letting them be includes: calling the police, hospital visits, fire ambulance responding to calls of man sleeping on bench, etc. and this adds up financially.
- Future Events:
 - May 20, 2015, Veterans and Military Affairs Advisory Board
 - May 25, 2015, Memorial Day – Memorial Day Event at the NMVM
 - June 14, 2015, Flag Day – Flag Day Event at NMVM Amphitheater
 - June 20, 2015, Warriors Memorial Run

VI. Setting of Future Meetings – May 20, 2015 at 9:00 am at the NM Veterans' Memorial

VII. Adjourn – 10:40 am.