



## CITY COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS



### MEETING MINUTES

17 Sep 2018

Municipal Plaza C Room, 114 Commerce St, SATX, 78205

**Commission Present:** Richard Delgado – Chairman, Chris Vierya – District 1, James Devno – District 2, Juanita Sepulveda – District 4, Al Dominguez – District 6, Tim Farrell – District 9, Matthew Scott – District 10.

**Commission Absent:** James Rodriguez – District 3, Vacant – District 5, Ramon Gonzales – District 7, James Pobanz – District 8.

**Staff Present:** Sergeant First Class Edward Brown (USA retired).

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Richard Delgado called the meeting to order.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Richard Delgado led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

### **Roll Call**

Chairman Richard Delgado called the roll noting the absence of Districts 3, 5, 7 & 8.

### **Approval of Minutes**

March 19, 2018 minutes approved by Chris Vierya – District 1 & Tim Farrell – District 9, no opposition.

### **Citizens to be Heard**

Mr. Rodgers of the Airmen Heritage Foundation at Lackland AFB with a proposal/project to build a museum to honor the enlisted military. Mr. Rodgers claimed the enlisted had no museum whatsoever to celebrate their heritage. He passed out packets to each member/district with an invitation for the 27 Oct 2018 membership meeting. He mentioned when handing out the packets that the Mayor was also invited. He talked about the packet contents which detailed the initiative for this museum. He also explained the artifacts which were donated for this museum averaging in total value around \$1M; a paver program for citizens to donate and have their names laid

out in that paver, then he mentioned how every week Lackland graduates an average of 800 Airmen with of course family members coming from all over the states to visit.

He then detailed the location of the museum which will be by the P38 gate BUT a memorandum of understanding from the Civil Engineers is in place referencing re-routing the fence line so ALL CITIZENS can view the museum even without a military ID. Mr. Rodgers then introduced the foundation President Mr. Dickens who was also present for the proposal. Matthew Scott – District 10 then asked what the VACs specific role would be in this initiative. Mr. Rodgers explained he was seeking 3 things; the VACs support, advocacy, and whatever the VAC can do to get the word out about the museum project.

## **Information Items**

Update on the COSA Veterans Hiring Preference; Matthew Scott – District 10 announced that he along with Juanita Sepulveda – District 4 and Sergeant First Class Edward Brown (USA retired) had a meeting with the City of San Antonio Human Resources Department and a City Attorney regarding the Veterans Hiring Preference proposal. He explained how he used the State of Texas guideline as a baseline to this proposal. He stated that HR was receptive to the idea and had a few initiatives they were already implementing; tracking Vets, fellowship programs and Veterans outreach programs. The recommendation was to give Veterans a preference similar to what is in place with civil service positions which is a points system. Unfortunately the COSA doesn't hire on a points system. HR was more receptive to reaching a 20% Veteran interview mark where at least 20% of qualified Veteran applicants get interviewed, not hired but interviewed.

What was proposed by the end of the meeting was to have revisions from both HR and the VAC to the proposal by the end of the second fiscal year quarter (end of Mar 2019). Matthew Scott – District 10 did mention that he was hoping for a really solid Veterans preference when it came to hiring but unfortunately unless HR changed their hiring system, that could not be achieved. Juanita Sepulveda – District 4 did mention that HR would look at re-training the recruiting teams to seek out Veterans that were qualified to achieve this 20% mark but the Vet would have to meet the qualifications because this wasn't an entitlement. The motion by both was asked of HR if there was a tie between a Vet and non-Vet at the end of an interview process would the Vet get the tie-breaker and HR stated they could not commit to that at this time. Matthew Scott – District 10 was pleased that while not ready yet at least the groundwork was laid for this proposal to move forward. Juanita Sepulveda – District 4 reminded all that it wasn't just Veterans being looked at but also Spouses and Dependents could also become part of that hiring preference demographic.

Chris Vierya – District 1 shared that he was hired in the past as a COSA Police Officer and was lucky enough to get additional points because he was a Vet and he was disappointed that system was no longer available. Sergeant First Class Edward Brown (USA retired) shared that Veteran preference is given still in the COSA hiring process ONLY to uniformed service positions (Police & Fire). He stressed that only those positions were still based on a points hiring system, but not the other non-uniform positions. Chris Vierya – District 1 asked why COSA HR couldn't just adapt their point process like they have in place for uniform positions to the non-uniform positions; SFC Brown stressed that HR would have to totally revamp their civilian hiring process which at present was strictly by evaluation and nothing else, likewise uniformed personnel take tests and civilians typically don't.

Chairman Richard Delgado asked if it was mentioned that the Council had approved a \$150K budget to hire Veterans Spouses which all present stated it was not mentioned. The Chair thought this could be a subject visited sooner than second quarter because of a pending Governance meeting where this topic will probably get

discussed. Chair mentioned that at this pending Governance meeting that CM Perry would be expecting some status regarding the Veterans Hiring Preference Project.

*No further action was required.*

Update on VAC By-Laws; Chairman Richard Delgado brought everyone up to date on how it may be some time in November to January before there is any further movement regarding by-laws. He explained that now the by-law update will be assigned to a sub-committee of the Governance committee. It must go there first before Governance. What will continue is the checking for status on this matter from the Chair to Sergeant First Class Edward Brown (USA retired) who will relay this request to the City Attorney's Office.

*No further action required.*

Update on the vacant District 5 seat; The Chair stated that James Pobanz – District 8 resigned but they already have a replacement, plus along with that District 5 also has a selection which is going through the paperwork process at this time. With that a full VAC is hopeful within the next month or two.

*No further action required.*

## **New Business**

Tim Farrell – District 9 spoke about his town hall which will be getting together with D8 in the future thus allowing more “bang for the buck” by combining districts. This is tentatively slated for Oct 30<sup>th</sup> in Hardberger Park. The format would be more of a panel discussion rather than excel slides presentation. There will also be reps from TXServes and the Good Samaritan Center @ St Phillips College present. He mentioned some of the topics would be District & County priorities for Veterans but he also mentioned it may be a good idea to discuss the Veterans Hiring Preference Initiative and see if there are any ideas for things that aren't being done for Vets that could be helpful or should be done. He also asked his VAC members to let him know if there was anything specific he would like to bring to this panel discussion that could be helpful. He mentioned he preferred trying the panel concept to give the audience a chance to ask more questions and possibly get more active participation where in a slide presentation, that may not be the case.

*No further action required.*

The Chair referenced Chris Vierya – District 1 with his pending POW/MIA Ceremony hosted by the D1 VFW Post 8397. All council members have been invited as well as all VAC Members to be held in front of the Tobin Center on Friday 21 Sep at 11:00 AM Veterans Plaza. The Chair stressed that if any members were planning on attending to let him know so info could be shared with the OMVA Office.

*No further action required.*

## **Reports**

The Chair reminded members that in the off months they should be meeting with their Council Member to inform them on their efforts plus remind them what the VAC offers.

Chris Vierya – District 1: The POW/MIA Ceremony where he will have CMs from D5 & D6 already confirmed attending.

James Devno – District 2: Veterans Outreach Program to be held on 13 Oct 9:30 to 1:00 PM @ 202 Connelly St.

John Rodriguez – District 3: Not present.

Juanita Sepulveda – District 4: Stressed she was able to speak with CM Saldana who shared his support for the Veterans Hiring Preference Initiative and that it was in the beginning steps, plus the by-laws were still being tracked but also going through a step process toward completion.

District 5: Vacant.

Ramon Gonzales – District 7: Not present.

James Pobanz – District 8: Not present.

Tim Farrell – District 9: Most efforts going towards next town hall plus expressed praise for the recent Honor Flights given to approximately 20 Vets. The effort was well organized plus the return reception was very impressive at SA International Airport.

Matthew Scott – District 10: Conducted a town hall on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Aug with good reception from AACOG, the National Cemetery with about 20 to 25 attendees. He also announced having 2 proxies whenever the by-laws get approved and proxies will be included.

Al Dominguez – District 6 (Vice Chair): Announced his stepping down and tentative replacement of Rick Sandoval, a former Regional Director of Veterans Affairs. Rick has been seen by the CM and could be in the D6 seat by next meeting. Also he announced a Vet Day event on Veterans Day at the Trevino Senior Center.

Chairman Delgado: Mentioned he spoke with the Mayor who was shocked there wasn't a Vet Hiring Preference in place. The Mayor stressed to the Chair the importance of Vets leaving active duty here in the City, he didn't want them forgotten or falling in a hole but rather the City help them in whatever way they can such as a potential Vet Hiring Preference Initiative. A reminder about town halls, there is a VAC table cloth that can be utilized and is in the Chair's possession.

*No further action required.*

## **Announcements**

The Chair mentioned that parking is difficult downtown so he wanted to re-establish the rotation of meetings going through the various District sites such as Senior/Community Centers, District Offices, the PTSD Foundation Office, Library and such where parking will be free and the CM could also possibly attend, not to mention District Citizens would appreciate the convenience.

Sergeant First Class Edward Brown (USA retired) highly recommended the Senior/Community Centers in the various Districts because of the convenience and the ability for both CM and community involvement.

Chris Vierya – District 1 also plugged the various VFWs around town which were also convenient with free parking.

*No further action required.*

Announcement by the Chair about the next meeting at the site TBD on Nov 19th.

*No further actions required.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Delgado adjourned the meeting with no further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Brown, OMVA