

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission
4141 N. 3rd Street (North S. Herrera Way), Phoenix, AZ 85012
September 13, 2012

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners

George Cushing, Chair
Jeffrey Olson, Vice Chair
Terrie Gent
Philip Hanson
Wayne Krula
Ronald Perkins
Lionel Sanchez
David Toliver, Sr.

AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Homer Rodgers, Assistant Deputy Director
Gabe Forsberg, Strat Planner/Women Vets Coor
Dave Hampton, Public Information Officer
Katherine Harding, Exec Asst to the Director

Guests

Nicola Winkel, AZ Coalition of Military Families
Lt. Col. Denise Sweeney, Total Force Team
Gene Crego, State Cmdr Vietnam Veterans of America

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Chairman George Cushing. The minutes were approved as published.

Communications – The Commission was invited to participate in the Tucson VA event on November 10. Kat Harding reported her contact with Linda Stiles, the Governor's Office Boards and Commission Director. Director Strickland and she will meet in October to discuss the applications to fill the Commission's vacancy at that time.

Total Force Team (TFT) – Nicola Winkel provided the Commission with three handouts, a copy of the slide presentation, a postcard regarding employment assistance to veterans and their families, and a folded card that outlined to help military personnel who are in crisis. Lt. Col. Denise Sweeney, one of the Deputy Directors in charge of TFT also in attendance.

In the past, there were a number of support services for military personnel and their families which functioned at the Arizona National Guard. Each of those units functioned separately, conducting their own outreach and serving their clients. The number of new support services were added as federal funding was available and the organizational structure required change. The Adjutant General organized all supportive services under one large umbrella called the Total Force Team or TFT.

Ms. Winkel works specifically with the Arizona Coalition of Military Families (ACMF) and she reviewed the purpose for that portion of the TFT. Rather than working with an individual who needs assistance, the ACMF serves as a clearinghouse for information. The purpose of the ACMF is to build service delivery capacity and to educate service providers and others about local resources.

The TFT has become a state model for establishing local collaboration amongst various services providers. Ms. Winkel reviewed some of the "best and promising" practices before

introducing their centralized database for services available to military, veterans and/or their families.

TFT was awarded a grant to develop a database containing contact and other essential information about organizations that can provide services. It will not use the spreadsheet style, which provided information that can become quickly obsolete or isn't useful (what she called "orphan data"). The Arizona Association of Counties has also been approached to be a partner on the project so that services available statewide can be included.

The data will eventually provide statewide services that have been vetted, using specific criteria regarding how funds are used and the satisfaction of their customers. In addition to online information, there are efforts underway to identify people who can help identify local services and actually help clients access the services they need.

Agency Updates – Dave Hampton was standing in for Director Joey Strickland who is attending the annual National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs convention. Homer Rodgers provided information about his construction projects. Each of the Region Managers provided a report about their area of responsibility.

Cathi Starr is the Regional Manager for southern Arizona and works from Tucson. Dave Mosier is in charge of northern Arizona and is located in Prescott. Tom Jones takes care of the western part of the state from his office in Yuma. Martha Alderman is located at the VA Regional Office in Phoenix and is responsible for central Arizona.

Chairman Cushing described the Commission's new direction to the Regional Managers. Instead of hosting town-hall style meetings, the Commission is more interested in setting up a tabletop display and staffing a table at an event. There are two Commissioners assigned to each of the four regions of the state. The assigned Commissioners will work with the Regional Manager to identify venues that would be suitable for the Commission to set up a table and meet with veterans in the area.

The Regional Managers periodically prepare reports of outreach events in their respective areas and offered to send an email copy to the Commissioners assigned to their region.

- Region 1 (Central) Cushing and Perkins
- Region 2 (Northern) Hanson and Sanchez
- Region 3 (Southern) Gent and Olson
- Region 4 (Western) Toliver and Krula

Mr. Hampton finished the agency report by reporting that there are no legislative issues being introduced by the agency. He also provided a list of the 11 current legislative members who are veterans. Depending on the election outcomes, there may be 2 additional veterans who will be serving in the Arizona legislature next year.

Commission Guidelines and Strategic Plan Review Committee – Vicechair Jeff Olson reported that the committee has been actively editing the documents. Lionel Sanchez and Dave Toliver met earlier in the day, and they are making excellent progress. Vicechair Olson reviewed some of the changes the committee wanted to make. The committee will

bring a final version of the Guideline to the October meeting, setting aside the Region Responsibilities at this time. The committee also requested the attendance policy be included in the guideline.

Chairman Cushing asked that a committee be formed to review the August 11, 2005 policy. Terrie Gent, Ron Perkins, and Wayne Krula will report their findings at the October meeting.

For the Good of the Order – Wayne Krula thanked the Regional Managers for their reports and all that they do to support veterans every day. Phil Hanson asked that a copy of the handouts be sent to him.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held October 13, 2012.