

**OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA
June 25, 2020 10:00AM
Vezev Veterans Complex
2132 NE 36th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73111**

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING:

The Oklahoma Veterans Commission held a special meeting on **Thursday, June 25, 2020, at 10:00 AM** at the Vezev Veterans Complex, 2132 NE 36th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111. A Notice of this meeting was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on June 5th, 2020

AGENDA:

THURSDAY, JUNE 25th, 2020 10:00 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM

II. DETETERMINATION OF QUORUM

a. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSIONERS

The clerk called the roll and the roll is as follows:

Ball - Present

Costilow - Present

Jackson - Absent

Lasser – Late (Arrived at 10:08am)

LeDay – Absent

Richey - Present

Secor - Present

Smithson – Present

Van Schuyver – Present

Commissioners Present: 6

Commissioners Late/Absent: 3

b. DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The clerk notified the Chairman that there was a quorum

The Chairman declared a quorum

III. INVOCATION

Commissioner Richey led the Invocation

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Smithson led the Pledge of Allegiance

V. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO VISITORS AND GUESTS

The Chairman welcomed the visitors and guests to the meeting. The Chairman of the Veterans Counsel was present, Co. Pete Peterson.

VI. OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS and OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION

a. LONG-TERM PLANNING DISCUSSION

i. Impact of Reduction of State Appropriation

A. Central Office and General Items

a. Staff Restructuring

The Director stated that due to the budget situation, there has been some restructuring of staff at the Central Office location. A change was made in the HR Department last fall, a position was absorbed. A change in staff was made in the Construction Department this week. A change was made in the Education and Compliance Department a few months ago, a position was absorbed. A change was made in Claims and Benefits this week, a manager position was absorbed. A change was made within SAA, an administrative position was eliminated, and an existing individual absorbed the role. That position is an 80/20 Federal/State split. The Deputy Director added that there were several temporary Accounting Technicians who once their hours were exhausted, were not renewed. The Director stated that the total savings from these changes was in the neighborhood of \$500,000. The Director stated that there have been no cuts to facility staff related to budget concerns.

b. OMES IT Support

Commissioner Ball requested information on the status of the refund request to OMES. The Deputy Director stated that while they were not denying that a refund was due, they were slow to commit to a number. She stated that as of today, ODVA had not been given a dollar amount from OMES. She stated that she was also waiting on the final numbers for the next contracted year. She noted that it was June 25th, and the fiscal year was set to begin July 1. She stated that OMES was expected to reach out with those proposed numbers early next week. The Deputy Director stated that the OMES contract as is bills for \$1.476 million for a dedicated support module. She stated that they are looking to change to a per device and contracted module which would reduce the contract price to \$730,000.

c. Highly Rural Transportation

The Director stated that he felt the HRTG should not continue in FY21. He stated that the program generated less than five qualified counties participate in the program in a twelve month period. The Deputy Director stated that there were 31 Veterans in non-qualifying counties that did receive assistance from the HRTG at the expense of the agency. The

program transported 17 Veterans from qualified counties in a 12 month timespan.

B. Oklahoma Veterans Centers

a. CMS Certification

The Director stated that it was his opinion that the agency should not move forward with the CMS Certification for the Ardmore, Claremore, Clinton, Lawton, Norman, and Sulphur facilities. He stated that there were roughly 18,000 100% disabled Veterans in the State of Oklahoma, 56,000 70% or above. He stated that he felt our focus should be on those Veterans who could benefit most from our services rather than continuing with CMS Certification.

b. Incentive Programs

The Deputy Director stated that she would like to implement a program that would incentivize employees who identify cost savings. The Deputy Director stated that they agency currently has the authority to award a one-time individual incentive every 12 month period, not to exceed \$500. She stated that the idea at this time is to implement an incentive program that would reward individual staff for introducing ideas that would result in substantial cost savings for the agency. She stated that this would need to be a demonstrated cost savings, not a theoretical cost savings.

The Director added that senior executive staff would not be eligible for this incentive.

The Chairman called for a break at 11:09am

The Chairman called the meeting back to order at 11:21am

C. Claims and Benefits

The Director stated that the agency has absorbed one position within Claims and Benefits. He stated that the Northwest Regional Manager position would not be covered by the remaining Regional Managers. The Director stated that to date they have brought roughly \$530,000,000 for Veterans in the State of Oklahoma. \$54,000,000 since the month of May.

D. Veterans Services

The Deputy Director stated that the reallocation of a staff member from Veterans Services to SAA is the cost savings identified for the division. She stated that his salary will be allocated with an 80/20 split Federal/State. He is filling a vacancy within SAA.

E. SAA

The Deputy Director stated that due to the reallocation, SAA was now at a break-even/20% savings for their previous vacancy.

F. Governor's Challenge

The Director stated that there had been a previous discussion with entering into an agreement with the University of Central Oklahoma to perform some academic research related to Veterans Suicide. At the time of this discussion, the dollar amount discussed was roughly \$130,000. The Director stated that they have now scaled back the scope of this project and the cost is now projected to be around \$30,000.

G. Union Soldiers Cemetery Development

The Director stated that this project was now at a full stop due to the current budget restrictions. He stated that pre-budget restrictions, the agency had spent \$40,000 with the same architect of the Ardmore Cemetery to begin design plans. He stated that the construction project was estimated to be roughly \$2,000,000.

ii. Growth Opportunities

A. Central Office and General Items

The Director stated that the agency would like to look into purchasing construction project management software.

B. Oklahoma Veterans Centers

The Director stated that the agency would like to enter into bulk purchasing contracts that the individual centers are empowered to purchase against.

The Deputy Director stated that the agency would like to reach out to a professional Marketing Firm to build a campaign that would cater to our target audience.

Commissioner Lasser suggested that this marketing research plan also determine where we currently have homes, and where any new homes should be built.

C. Claims and Benefits

The Director stated that this topic was covered in the previous section.

The Deputy Director stated that the agency would like to further identify the Veteran population in the State of Oklahoma. She stated that this would go hand in hand with the market research plan.

D. Veterans Services

The Deputy Director stated that they were looking to hire an additional VSR in expanding the Woman Veterans Services Program. She also stated that the agency was looking to expand on transition services opportunities with OKSTEP.

E. SAA

The Director stated that 19 of the 29 career techs in Oklahoma have been certified to access/accept GI Bill funds. He stated that this is a great improvement from where they were 12 months ago when the SAA moved to the ODVA.

F. Governor's Challenge

The Deputy Director stated that the agency is partnering with an outside company to build a Veteran Resource Locator. She stated that it is an online service, accessible via computer, phone, or tablet with access to the internet.

G. Cemetery Development

The Director stated that the agency is on schedule to break ground FY2021 for the Ardmore Cemetery.

iii. Legislative Initiatives

The Director stated that the following topics were on the short list:

State Use Exemption for Veteran Purchasing Preference

Sales Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of 100% Service Connected

100% Service Connected Veterans Required to Register With the ODVA

iv. Commission Meeting Schedule

The Director provided various options for the Commission related to meeting locations for the 2021 year as well as the number of meetings that are scheduled. Options varied from one meeting each month to one meeting every three months. The Director also offered the option to have one meeting at each of the facilities per year, and then two meetings at Central Office, for a total of nine meetings per year.

v. Action

Commissioner Lasser made the motion to empower ODVA Leadership to move forward with the Marketing Plan.

Commissioner Secor provided the second.

The clerk called the vote and the vote is as follows:

Ball – Aye

Costilow - Aye

Lasser - Aye

Richey - Aye

Secor - Aye
Smithson - Aye
Van Schuyver – Aye

Aye: 7
Nay: 0
Absent: 2

Motion carries

Commissioner Secor made the motion to suspend the progression of the CMS Certification for Ardmore, Claremore, Clinton, Lawton, Norman, and the Sulphur facilities. He further moved to leave the CMS Certification intact for the Talihina facility.

Commissioner Smithson provided the second.

The clerk called the vote and the vote is as follows:

Ball – Aye
Costilow - Aye
Lasser - Aye
Richey - Aye
Secor - Aye
Smithson - Aye
Van Schuyver – Aye

Aye: 7
Nay: 0
Absent: 2

Motion carries

Commissioner Secor made the motion to suspend the dedicated support plan with OMES and move to a per device and contracted platform.

Commissioner Smithson provided the second.

The clerk called the vote and the vote is as follows:

Ball – Aye
Costilow - Aye
Lasser - Aye
Richey - Aye
Secor - Aye
Smithson - Aye
Van Schuyver – Aye

Aye: 7

Nay: 0
Absent: 2

Motion carries

VII. LUNCH BREAK

The Commission had a working lunch and did not take a break.

VIII. PRESENTATION AND POSSIBLE DISCUSSION OF UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MISSION ACT

- a. Presentation with Opportunity for Commission Discussion and Q&A by:
 - i. Wade Vlosich, Director, Oklahoma City VA Healthcare System and
 - ii. Mark Morgan, Director, Eastern Oklahoma VA Health Care SystemAn electronic copy of this presentation is attached to these recorded minutes.

The Chairman called for a break at 1:55pm

The Chairman called the meeting back to order at 2:06pm

IX. PRESENTATION AND POSSIBLE DISCUSSION OF OKLAHOMA VETERANS PILOT PROGRAM

- a. Presentation with Opportunity for Commission Discussion and Q&A by:
 - i. Ben Robinson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Military
 - ii. Pete Reed, Chairman, Force 50 FoundationAn electronic copy of this presentation is attached to these recorded minutes.

X. RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING COMMISSIONER TOM RICHEY

The Chairman stated that this presentation will take place at the regular meeting scheduled for July 26th, 2020

XI. ADJOURNMENT

- a. CHAIRMAN
 - i. ActionCommissioner Secor made the motion to adjourn
Commissioner Lasser provided the second

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:34PM