

BOD Meeting Minutes 8/14/21

BOD

August 14, 2021
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RingCentral Meeting

Attendees:

Officers/ BOD	John Rowan, Tom Burke, Bill Meeks, Jack McManus, Dottie Barickman, Gumersindo Gomez, Bob Grabinski, Skip Kochreich, Dennis Howland, John Margowski, Pete Peterson, John Riling, Dick Southern, Dan Stenvold, Kerwin Stone, Ted Wilkinson
State Council Presidents Committee Chairs:	Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin
Staff	Mokie Porter, Wes Guidry, Dr. Artie Shelton, Sharon Hodge, Alex Thompson, Janelle Andrew, Quentin Butcher

Report of the Chair: Start: 12:00 pm Eastern Standard Time

Agenda: VVA SPECIAL MEETING

August 14, 2021

Board of Directors open - Prayer; a moment of silence, and the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call by National Secretary

Officers' Reports: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America

Conference of State Council Presidents – R. Moody

HGDP Report – Q. Butcher

- **T. Corey**

Veterans Benefits Program Director’s Report – F. Mullaney, Esq.

Government Affairs, Executive Director’s Report – S. Hodge

Communication Department – M. Porter

Veterans Health Council – Col. A. Shelton

Membership Department – P. Wiley

Committee Reports

Agent Orange/Dioxin & Other Toxic Exposures

POW/MIA

PTSD and Substance Abuse

Veterans Benefits

Veterans Incarcerated and In the Justice System

Economic Opportunities

Membership Affairs

Minority Affairs

Public Affairs

Women Veterans

Constitution

Veterans Against Drugs

Veterans Health Care Committee

2021 National Convention Planning Committee

Finance Committee

***Investment Sub-Committee – D. Stenvold**

Government Affairs

Unfinished Business

New Business

Adjourn

Old Business

**Unfinished Business:
Business:**

Discussion

- **John Rowan:** Dr. Shelton's Pharma colleagues have secured a grant for a survey of Veterans with members of Congress partnered as well.
 - 71% of veterans rate the VA as excellent or good at meeting healthcare needs
 - 51% on VA healthcare are satisfied with their options for care
 - While most veterans are satisfied with the VA in general, they often want a secondary backup. (Medicare, private, etc.)
 - 44% of those surveyed were Vietnam era
- **John Rowan:** general discussion about latest on COVID/delta
 - **Gumersindo Gomez:** Banquet held to honor 77 veterans
- **Tom Burke:**
 - In process of getting all staff back into office with a hybrid schedule; Montgomery County reissued the indoor mask mandate
 - Board approved use of One Digital HR consulting
 - Assisting us with various HR functions, updating HR methods like policy information and document management
 - Starting with HR assessment of our current operations including: employee recruiting, onboarding documents, improving compliance, benefits information, etc.
 - Further down the line, we hope to have someone work in office to assist with personnel matters.
 - CB Auto partnership continuing to develop
 - In June: 24 cars sold through the program

- Feedback so far has been extremely positive
- **Bill Meeks:**
 - Approved contract with Doubletree, meetings coming up
 - Rolling out another list of special questions from the President in the coming week
 - Disciplinary policy needs board approval
 - One chapter voluntarily closing
 - 5 honorary life member requests
- **Jack McManus:**
 - Currently, 70% of budgeted revenue in, spent 39%
 - Applied for new PPP, which was granted to the tune of \$682,000
 - Budget surplus of \$947,000 on FY21 not on FY22, not showing up on financials until August
 - Finance subcommittee on budget adherence continues to send out budget management reports, slightly behind, but new format is a plus. Good shape financially in general
 - **HGDP:**
 - New agreement for participating state councils (32 SCs and 8 MN chapters that will no longer have a SC)
 - Revenue expectations will be sent out annually
 - The semi-annual reports will become one annual report in tandem with the regular financial report
 - Use of funds has broadened
 - For MN chapters, funds will be distributed by National
 - During the peak 5-6 months of COVID, HGDP did not solicit, phone lines were shut down, etc.
 - Warehouses ended up filling up with donations which wasn't inventoried until the end of 2020; ended up totaling \$947,000 in delayed funding surplus
 - 20% automatically goes to SC and chapters in the program
 - The proposal is to leave \$265,000 to cover budget expenses (such as the HR contract that was recently approved)
 - Distribution on remaining \$500,000 through a grant program open to non-participating SC and chapters, as well as non-profit partners who need assistance in the wake of the pandemic
 - 20% to SCs, 45-60% to chapters, and the remaining to non-profits
 - Chapters must have FY-21 financial report up-to-date to be eligible
 - The intent of these grants is to aid SCs and chapters afflicted by COVID
 - Hope is to have it wrapped up before October 1st
 - Questions:
 - **Dottie:** The numbers and figures you reported will be sent out to the Board in writing correct? **Jack:** Yes
 - **Dottie:** when will the non-profits begin making these requests? **Jack:** when we send the notification out.
 - **Gumersindo:** How many of these non-profit partners are there? **Jack:** at this point, there are 3 or 4 requesting assistance (AVVA, Sons and Daughters, Wives, Families of POW/MIA)

- o VVA has had a long term understanding with Veterans Support Foundation, providing administrative and financial support. We have terminated that partnership, effective 8/21, as it was costing us more than the \$50,000 they were providing for these services
 - There were also other complaints and issues that arose from within the VSF
- o Following previous discussion of GA 21, the responses received from the Board were “dismal”, so a special Board meeting, tentatively September 11, will occur
- **Rex Moody (CSCP):**
 - o Requesting an updated org chart and phone directory for the National HQ
 - o CSCP list update sent out to SCPs
 - **Dennis Howland:** SCPs need to search for their SC on the chapter locator to make sure contact info and websites are up-to-date
- **Tom Corey – HGDP Liaison Committee:**
 - o Committee is currently Tom, John Rowan, and Marsha Four, along with HGDP Director Quentin Butcher; Meet at least once a year
 - o **Quentin:**
 - Usually gives weekly updates to Tom and John; often end up meeting more than the required once per year
 - The program is currently stable, with all contracts still active. Some are starting to show a decline, so 2022 will be telling of the program’s future after a rough 2020 and a middle of the road 2021.
- **John Riling – Veterans Benefits:**
 - o Committee meeting was July 12, with John Margowski chairing
 - o Approved the MOU from Idaho
 - o Rejected the resolution submitted by South Carolina
 - o Discussed working on an MOU with Veterans Voices
 - o Committee meeting on August 3 to go over resolutions sent to Government Affairs
 - Keep Veterans Benefits 5 (Civil liberties of active duty military personnel)
 - Retire Veterans Benefits 6 (Just compensation for injuries sustained by active duty military personnel)
 - Keeping Veterans Benefits 28 (Removal of 5% annual deductible for VA pension eligibility)
 - Keep Veterans Benefits 30 (US DVA spina bifida and birth defects program)
 - o Received mandate from VA that employees and VSOs be vaccinated
- **Sharon Hodge – Government Affairs**
 - o Currently supporting around 8 different pieces of legislation sent over by the VA House committee
 - o Removed hypertension from the Toxic Wounds bill
 - o Legislative alert on bill removing chain of command outside of DoD
 - o Meeting with new Health undersecretary soon.
 - o VA putting together a toxic exposure research group to do an internal investigation
 - o Caregiver program lost a tier and may lose another in the future, which would remove some of our veterans from qualification. Keep an eye on it.
 - o Side-by-side of PACT and COST acts was sent out

- **Mokie Porter – Communications:**

- 50th Commemoration Committee
- VVMF met with John to discuss 40th commemoration event
- Marketing CB Auto and increasing awareness
- Increased online fundraising outreach
- August 30th is the deadline for convention awards submission
- Hosting Arlington in 2022

- **Dr. Artie Shelton – Veterans Health Council:**

- Recall on Philips CPAP machines, ask a doctor about yours if you are unsure; the ozone cleaners add to the deterioration of the foam that led to the recall.
- Pharma provided a \$20,000, with a potential for another \$10,000 later this year
- Strongly recommend all members get vaccinated, including the pneumococcal vaccine
- US Public Health Service Commission Core would like to 45-minute presentation on the opioid epidemic for our members

- **Agent Orange/Dioxin & Other Toxic Exposures**

- Last meeting was July 29
- Concerned about veterans that don't have computers or aren't tech savvy receiving reports
- Resolution out of Texas on hypertension passed to be discussed at the convention
- Updates on toxic exposure tri-folds
- Despite letters from the VA Secretary and Senator Moran indicating no more research is needed on Public Law 114315 for the children, we will continue fighting for more research

- **Economic Opportunities**

- DOL and Small Business Administration has been keeping the committee up-to-date on COVID programs
- Next Veteran issue will feature a column detailing the Payroll Book, which will have a link at the bottom for a free copy
- Orange County Veterans Memorial Park Foundation wants our support

- **Membership Affairs**

- July committee report is out and circulating
- Membership continues to grow to goal of 89,000 members before the convention
- Age verification was performed in June and certain members age has been corrected
- Florida, California, and Washington did well recruiting in July
- Working on verifying members over 100; considering recognizing them at the convention

- **Minority Affairs**

- Selected Marc McCabe to receive committee's award at convention
- Conference calls with Sen. Cory (Booker?) in tandem with Korean War vets
- Former committee member/Chair Jerry Yamamoto has passed away

- **Public Affairs**

- Subscribe to the web weekly that Mokie sends out, our columns will be included
- With school restrictions waning, it's a good time to contact schools regarding vets in classrooms programs
- JROTC Cadet Program top 3 selected by the awards committee
- JROTC and Eagle Scout medals are available (mporter@vva.org)
- Zoom meeting with Phil Waite from the 50th anniversary committee
 - Ensure pins are disbursed to as many Vietnam vets as possible
 - Connect with other commemoration organizations and have vets congratulating other vets
 - Want to get SC and chapters input on this program and put a vote before the Board

- **Women Veterans**

- Meeting next month
- Put together a letter in support of the Service Members and Veterans Empowerment Support Act
- Support for another bill for making advancements in mammography and medical options for vets; hugely important for matters of breast cancer
- Travel bill for veterans
- Attended DoD committee meetings; report on sexual assault in the military finished and recommendations put forward
- The women veterans coins have sold out; still have honor pins that we will bring to the convention

- **Constitution**

- 11 amendments submitted by members, 20 committee-sponsored amendments weeded down to 8
- One authorizes meetings conducted on an internet platform for all levels of VVA or there's 4 separate amendments authorizing it on the national, state, chapter levels
- Amendment on allowing a convention date to be changed in the event of an unusual circumstance
- Amendment from election committee that would eliminate nominations from the floor
- Amendment dropping required members to open a chapter from 25 to 15
- Another proposed one would require any membership board decisions to first be approved by a mail ballot to all members
- Another proposed a virtual convention
- Rules moving forward on virtual meetings

- **Veterans Health Care**

- Added language to some resolutions and removed others. Information on which will be available come convention time.
- Confidential Caregivers Program; recent changes makes it difficult to qualify. We should push for legislative changes before it negatively affects vets

- **2021 National Convention Planning Committee**

- o 368 preregistered: Region 1 – 20, Region 2 – 32, Region 3 – 89, Region 4 – 62, Region 5 – 61. Region 6 – 25, Region 8 – 18, Region 9 – 36
 - o Reminder that registration forms must be completed along with delegate release forms; some have been submitted without
 - o Getting multiple calls a week about the COVID situation and what will be required at the convention. We will follow North Carolina's guidance, meaning masks will likely be required.
 - o **Wes:**
 - We have plans in place should the guidance change. Have to adapt as the situation changes
 - Several committees will have booths, but having volunteers there at all times may prove difficult. We are going to have a “super booth” with multiple tables with a VVA staffer at a podium to answer questions
 - Make sure you book your flight; don't use Southwest
 - **Resolutions Committee**
 - o Sharon compiled all committee actions on resolutions. Working on printing and disbursing. Should be out by September 1st
 - **Investment Sub-Committee**
 - o Unlike in previous years, we've been meeting bi-monthly with investments to keep track of them. Last meeting was July 15
 - o 2% increase with membership account; 4% increase on reserve account
 - o Membership account: \$2,874,055.42; Reserve account: \$7,396,734.28
 - o 3% overall increase; been playing things safe should any major set-backs occur
 - o Please feel free to reach out to Dan with any questions or concerns
 - **Government Affairs**
 - o If you're a committee chair and your response is requested, please follow up; some resolutions were returned because we didn't have a quorum
 - **Dennis:** Receiving extra copies of the Veteran, not sure what to do with them
 - o Suggested that extra copies received by SCPs should be distributed to the community (vet centers, clinics, library, etc.)
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Meeting Adjourned: 2:18 PM Date 8/14/21 (Eastern Standard Time)