

Summary of Minutes

Quarterly Meeting of the Advisory Committee
to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

Date: December 3, 2014

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Camp Withycombe, 15300 SE Minuteman Way, Clackamas

Advisory Committee Members Present:

Al Herrera, Chair	Ryan Howell	Gerard (Jerry) Lorang
Dennis Guthrie, Vice Chair	Trisa Kelly	Kevin Owens
Mary J. Mayer, Immediate Past Chair		

Guests:

Chaplain Terry Larkin, Oregon National Guard
Michelle Kochosky, Oregon National Guard
Bill Tidd, Military Officers Association of America
Betty Herrera, Ladies Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Gary Grange, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Angela Walz, Oregon Air National Guard
Crystal Atkinson, Oregon Air National Guard
Dan Herringstad, Veterans' Affairs
Evan Hessel, Senator Wyden's Office
Adolph Valfro, Washington County Housing Authority
Gary Calvent, Washington County
Greg Goloborodha, Easter Seals
Jessica Radke, SMMR
Tina McDowe, SMMR
George Bickford, Association of Naval Aviation
Jim Main, Military Officers Association of America
Monica Froese, Oregon Coast Community Action
Bill Griffith, LTCO
C. Beanchamp, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Erika Silver, Clackamas County Veterans Service Office
J. Fenner, Oregon Air Force Association
Bert Key, Veterans' of Foreign Wars
Gary Brannan, 1st Marine Division
Tina Kennedy, Clackamas County Homeless Veteran Outreach
Alisha Hamel, Historical Outreach Foundation
Steve Robb, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
Tyler Marriot, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Jay Lilly, Unites States Marine Corp Coordinating Council
John Murphy, Unites States Marine Corp Coordinating Council
Don Schram, Air Force Sergeants Association
Van Moore, Westcare and Veterans Care Centers of Oregon
Wayne Harvey, United Veterans' Groups of Oregon
Terry Brown, American Legion

William Harold, National Association of Black Veterans
John Stensland, Military Officers Association of America
Ron Cook, Military Order of the Purple Heart

ODVA Staff Members Present:

Cameron Smith, Director
Edward M. Van Dyke, Deputy Director
Sue Shaffer, Executive Assistant
Bruce Shriver, Financial Services Administrator
Nicole Hoeft, Public Information Manager
Eric Belt, Veterans Services Administrator
Cody Cox, Home Loan Program Manager
Dallas Swafford, Program Director, Oregon Veterans' Home, The Dalles
Jeremy Woodall, Program Director, Oregon Veterans' Home, Lebanon
John Osborn, Facility and Construction Manager
Dave Cooley, Grant Contracts Administrator

Chair Al Herrera called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Dennis Guthrie led the group in the pledge of allegiance. Chaplain Terry Larkin gave the invocation.

Chair Al Herrera: Welcomed those attending and introduced himself and his wife Betty Herrera. Mr. Herrera called for introductions of the committee members and guests.

Motion: Chair Al Herrera asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2014 meeting as written.

Minutes were approved unanimously.

Director Cameron Smith: Thanked Chaplain Larkin, Alisha Hamel, and the Oregon National Guard for hosting the meeting and gave an overview of the facility and the Oregon Military Museum.

Director Smith announced:

The memorial service on December 5, 2014 for Portland real estate developer Tom Moyer who served in the Oregon National Guard 41st Brigade.

The unveiling of Leonard DeWitt's memorial statue on December 7th in McMinnville, OR.

The Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial Ceremony at the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. Happily, no names were added for Veterans Day 2014.

Cameron Smith asked for those attending to keep the men and women who are deployed in their thoughts and prayers this holiday season and beyond.

Director's Report:

Director Cameron Smith began with the highlights of the report:

- The September presentation of the Advisory Committee's Annual Report to the Governor and the Legislature.
- The Secretary of State's audit and the results presented with the ODVA strategic framework to the House and Senate Veterans' committees.
- The Governor's budget request submitted by ODVA and general funds requested.
- The Veterans Service Officer (VSO) training in October which was very successful and a key role for Statewide Veterans' Services.
- Proposed ODVA Information Technology modernization and expertise staff to link to the VA healthcare system and other providers for education, health and economic opportunity for Oregon veterans.
- The announcement of Tony Garcia as the new Advisory Committee member effective January 1, 2015 and the conclusion of Irv Fletcher's eight year term as an Advisory Committee member.

Cameron thanked both Tony and Irv for their dedication to serve on the committee.

Cameron announced the birth of his second child, Romy Nimitz Smith, born during the October total lunar eclipse.

Cameron thanked the staff of ODVA who drives the work for the subcommittee reports.

Subcommittee Reports:

Veterans' Benefits:

Chair: Gerard Lorang; Al Herrera; Trisa Kelly

Chair Lorang began with the highlights of the report.

- The October 2014 VSO Training Conference in which attendance was an all-time high of 98 attendees. The ODVA Strategic Plan was presented at the conference; Mr. Lorang felt the plan would be a positive change in direction for ODVA. For the first time at the conference, The National Veterans Legal Services Program provided training which he acknowledged was a very valuable addition to the conference.
- The Highly Rural Transportation Grant has sub-agreements signed with eight Oregon counties for grant funding and still two pending approval. The goal of the grant is to improve transportation for veterans in rural Oregon counties.
- Veterans Administration (VA) implementing of the direct electronic claims filing process which will allow Statewide Veterans' Services, Portland and Oregon counties with the ability to file all claims electronically beginning January 1, 2015. Mr. Lorang felt the electronic filing process should shorten the claims processing time.

Home Loan Program

Chair: Kevin Owens; J. Ryan Howell; Michael Jones

Chair Owens began with highlights of the report.

- The 3rd Quarter of 2014, the ODVA Home Loan Program closed 73 loans for a volume of \$18,250.00 which represents a 12% increase in volume dollars, which marks the highest closing volume since 2008. Year to date production is 200 units for \$44,771.00. If production holds through the end of the year with an estimated 265 units for close to \$60M, it will represent the highest closing levels for the ORVET Home Loan program since 1997.
- The current State Owned Property inventory is three properties, which is a decrease from five properties the prior quarter. One property is sale pending on a lease option, and two are listed for sale and showing interest.
- ODVA foreclosure status is seven loans, which is up by two from the last reporting date. ODVA loans in bankruptcy remains at 13.
- ODVA ORVET Home Loan Program delinquency rate is 2.4%, the Federal VA loan program delinquency rate is 3.95 % and the FHA delinquency rate is 6.41%

Kevin thanked ODVA Home Loan Program manager Cody Cox for his leadership and the home loan staff for their hard work.

Kevin asked for community support for proposed legislation to allow ODVA to refinance home loans.

Oregon Veterans' Homes, The Dalles and Lebanon

Chair: Mary J. Mayer; Dennis Guthrie; Al Herrera

Dennis Guthrie began with highlights of the Lebanon Veterans' Home report.

- Overview of the dedication ceremony for the Lebanon Home on September 20, 2014.
- The current census of the home is five residents, and the home's operator Veterans' Care Centers of Oregon (VCCO) has begun the process of interviewing and hiring for the home.
- The campus phone system has experienced some problems which are being worked out with the provider, and the system is expected to be fully operational by the end of November.

Dennis invited those attending to visit the Oregon Veterans' Home, Lebanon to see the beautiful model design.

Cameron Smith announced that the March 2015 Advisory Committee Meeting will be at the Lebanon Home Community Center.

Chair Mary J. Mayer announced Jeremy Woodall as the Program Director of the Lebanon Home.

Chair Mayer began with the highlights of the Oregon Veterans' Home, The Dalles report.

- The Gold Award by the American Health Care Association to the Oregon Veterans' Home (OVH), The Dalles. The home is the first and only state veterans' home nationally to ever receive this prestigious award. Mary recognized Dallas Swafford, Cheryl Maitland and the staff of the home for their excellent work and the achievement of the award.

- The Multi-Sensory Room at the OVH is also a new addition to the home that provides audio, visual, touch and smell in a relaxing manner to help stimulate human senses. The addition has provided dementia patients with improved memory skills and relaxation therapy which can reduce aggression in some residents and possibly reduce medication amounts.

Van Moore, VCCO/ Westcare presented the Gold Award to ODVA on behalf of the Oregon Veterans' Home, The Dalles, which is the 20th nursing home recipient to receive the award.

Financial Services Division

Chair: J. Ryan Howell; Gerard Lorang; Trisa Kelly

Chair Howell began with highlights of the report.

- The 2014 Cash Flow Analysis of the Department's Veterans' Loan Program will be complete the end of January.
- The proposed bond sale in December 2014 will raise lendable funds from the issuance of Qualified Veteran Mortgage Bonds for the Veterans' Loan Program. Variable rate bonds will be replaced with fixed rate bonds.
- The ODVA Agency Requested Budget for 2015-17 biennium was submitted in August to the Department of Administrative Services, Chief Financial Office. It is hoped that most of the department's budgetary requests will be incorporated into the Governor's Recommended 2015-17 Budget.
- 2014 Audited Annual Financial Reports were conducted by the Oregon Secretary of State's Office for the Veterans' Home Loan Program and for the Veterans' Home Program by Merina & Company. The Home Loan Program audit showed a loss for the program but also a gain in the number of loans in for the year. The Veterans' Home Program showed a gain in net position. Federal VA funds received for the Lebanon Home contributed to the gain.

Ryan shared details of both Oregon Veterans' Homes designs and outstanding care provided to Oregon Veterans.

Legislative Affairs

Chair: Dennis Guthrie; Kevin Owens

Chair Guthrie began with highlights of the report.

- Legislative Concept #504 - Makes amendments and repeals outdated statutes relating to veterans in ORS 406-408.
- Legislative Concept #505 - ODVA acts as a fiduciary for veterans. The current broad statutory authority for ODVA to act in this capacity is not clear and specific as needed. ODVA proposes a change in the verbiage to better serve veterans in the ODVA conservatorship program.
- Legislative Concept #509 – ODVA Home Loan Program provides Oregon veterans with below market rate home loans. The Foreclosure Avoidance Program requires lenders to meet with loan borrowers and a mediator prior to the foreclosure process. The proposed solution to exempt ODVA from the requirement to enter into mediation and negotiate a foreclosure avoidance agreement with veteran borrowers.
- Legislative Concept # 510 – Limited information on veterans (such as loan application, HIPAA, DMV and DD214 records) is protected. Personal contact information is not protected, and, in order to protect veteran personal information obtained by ODVA, there

must be an exemption to the disclosure requirements under the Oregon Public Records Law Chapter 192.

- ODVA policy and process for memorials on ODVA grounds. Ground rules for proposed memorials are in the process of being developed by the work group to present to the advisory committee.

Oregon National Guard Deployments and Reintegration Efforts

Chaplain Terry Larkin began by introducing Michelle Kochosky and expressing his delight with the strategic partnership between the Oregon National Guard (ORNG) and ODVA. ORNG staff attended an ODVA Strategic Plan briefing at the department and plan to attend a legislative briefing. Mr. Larkin acknowledged the significance for Cameron Smith and General Hokanson attending together which presents an image that ODVA and ORNG are strategically linked together. ODVA and ORNG are partners in taking care of our service members, veterans and their families.

Chaplain Larkin gave an overview of deployed Oregon Army National Guard soldiers who are in Afghanistan and Kuwait since August and September, returning in May or June. Chaplain Larkin gave an update of the Air National Guard deployed soldiers and engineers. The total deployment is in excess of 1,300 soldiers and he asked for continued prayer for the soldiers and their families. Chaplain Larkin continued with an overview of the Oregon National Guard and the services they provide to all service members in Oregon.

Michelle Kochosky began with an overview of the Oregon National Guard resources available to Oregon veterans and their families highlighting the strain deployment can put on family members and The Guard's Family Assistance Programs that assists families including spouses, siblings, parents and children. Ms. Kochosky encouraged those attending to contact the ORNG if they are aware of any families in need of assistance and concluded with a reminder of the over 1,000 Oregon soldiers deployed and stated that they offer assistance throughout the state of Oregon to those families.

Chaplain Larkin concluded that while the Oregon National Guard does not directly offer services, they are an excellent resource to connect resources available to service members their families and veterans within the state of Oregon.

Cameron Smith gave an overview of the nationally recognized reintegration program, the federal funds available and potential tightening of those funds. Champlain Larkin gave an update of Federal and State funds the guard receives and how those funds could be cut, highlighting the need for state funding to replace cut federal funds.

Announcement of the demobilization ceremony scheduled for December 7, 2014 at the Portland Air National Guard Base, to recognize Airmen from the 142nd Civil Engineer Squadron and members of the 142nd Security Forces Squadron.

Break

Unfinished Business

Follow up on policy and process for establishing new memorials on ODVA grounds.

Laurie Skillman, Senior Policy Advisor gave an update to the process for memorial placement as discussed between ODVA staff and the Legislative Affairs and Policy Subcommittee of the ODVA Advisory Committee. Guidelines and polices will be established by the ODVA for future memorial placement. A process will be established for submission of proposals.

Memorial criteria such as size and location will be established.

Dennis Guthrie, ODVA Advisory Committee member, announced he would address questions asked during the break regarding a campaign by State Representative Julie Parrish (representing the West Linn area) to have a referendum put on the 2016 ballot for Oregon lottery funds to benefit Oregon veterans. A goal of gathering 150,000 signatures has begun with support from veterans' organizations.

Gerard Lorang, ODVA Advisory Committee member, gave an overview of his report on the challenges facing volunteers to become certified van drivers. Noted was recognition of the challenges by the Veterans' Administration, communities and the Advisory Committee. Mr. Lorang expressed that it is not the role of the Advisory Committee to fix the process, but the committee offered advice to ODVA.

Mr. Lorang referred to the actions items included in the report and noted that the Bend area has overwhelmed the volunteer driver system with applicants and commended the work they do to recruit volunteer drivers.

Action Item: The ODVA Advisory Committee to commend the Bend area for their extraordinary work in organizing and gathering volunteer drivers.

Motion: The ODVA Advisory Committee advised ODVA to step up their efforts to communicate the need for volunteer drivers around the state and to report back to the Advisory Committee on the progress of those efforts.

Kevin Owens asked for clarification of the expectations for ODVA to recruit volunteer drivers in Oregon.

Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: The ODVA Advisory Committee members should continue to increase their outreach efforts to communities, County Veterans Service Officers and Veterans Service Organizations. The committee members should report back with issues facing their communities.

Motion approved unanimously.

Question: Wayne Harvey asked if the Portland VA will go to Bend to complete the driver certification process, instead of requiring volunteers to travel to Portland for certification.

Gerard Lorang answered that the VA has many steps for certification of drivers, and it would require VA send multiple staff members to complete certification.

Ian Dirks, Portland VA, gave an overview of the Transportation Work Group at VA which consists of multiple agencies, veterans groups and community members that together in part of their work address veteran transportation issues.

Mary J. Mayer, ODVA Advisory Committee member, gave an update to the development of the Advisory Committee page on the ODVA website that she and Nicole Hoeft have been working on. Ms. Mayer gave an overview of the webpage and commended Nicole for the layout and ease of navigation for the site. The new ODVA website is expected to be available in the spring of 2015.

Ms. Mayer gave an overview of the ODVA donation webpage and the opportunity to donate to the Oregon Veterans' Homes, Suicide Awareness, Women Veterans and the Veterans Support Fund.

Director Cameron Smith and Bruce Shriver, ODVA, gave an overview of donations made to ODVA and the use of the donations received. Donations to the Veterans' Homes can request a specific use such as projects and recreation at the homes. Other donation categories are general use of funds received.

Mr. Smith announced:

- The Military Museum Tour for the Advisory Committee, following the meeting and the Advisory Committee Orientation scheduled for January 21, 2015.
- A proposed tour of the Portland VA Medical Center for committee members in April 2015.
- Deputy Director Ed VanDyke has successfully identified veteran cremains from the Oregon State Hospital, and the interment of those cremains is scheduled for May 2015 at Willamette National Cemetery.

New Business:

Mary J. Mayer, ODVA Advisory Committee member, gave an overview of the Veterans' Homes Subcommittee Annual Project which involves creating a comprehensive marketing plan for admissions and staffing for the two Oregon Veterans' Homes. This morning, Mary met with Dallas Swafford, Jeremy Woodall and Ed VanDyke to review who is responsible for the overall marketing plan. In reviewing the contract, it was established that the homes' contractor, Westcare Management, is responsible for the overall marketing of the homes. The subcommittee and ODVA staff plan to meet again in January with Westcare representatives to discuss the overall marketing plan, home admissions and staffing.

Mary J. Mayer gave an update to the upcoming Advisory Committee feature exposé which will be in the February issue of the *Vets News* and the internal ODVA newsletter, *Now Hear This*.

Public Comments:

Tina Kennedy, Homeless Veteran Outreach Specialist, of Clackamas County Health, Housing & Human Services gave an overview of the services they provide and the outreach efforts to reach Clackamas County veterans. Ms. Kennedy announced the January 17, 2015 Stand Down at the Oregon City Christian Church which hopes to assist 200 Oregon veterans.

ODVA Director Cameron Smith gave an overview of the Oregon State Hospital cremains interment by the Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon.

Announcements:

Gary Grange, Military Order of the Purple Heart gave an overview and announced signature gathering efforts for the ballot measure which calls for 5 percent of the net proceeds of the Oregon Lottery to be invested into a fund for veteran services.

Crystal Atkinson, Oregon Air National Guard, gave an overview of volunteer opportunities the Guard can help coordinate.

Gerard Lorang, ODVA Advisory Committee member, commended the Historical Outreach Foundation which provides non-profit support to the Oregon Military Museum which is undergoing a \$15 million remodel. Mr. Lorang acknowledged the program offered by the foundation to educate Oregon students on military history and encouraged those interested to contact the Historical Society or the Military Museum.

Gerard Lorang announced the opportunity for all Oregon veterans to provide their stories to the Veterans' Legacy Database at veteranslegacies.com.

Alisha Hamel, Historical Outreach Foundation, announced the re-opening of the Oregon Military Museum scheduled for August 15, 2015.

Al Herrera, Advisory Committee Chair, announced the events submission form on the ODVA website for submitting events for publication.

Next Advisory Committee Meeting:

Date: March 4, 2015

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Edward C. Allworth, Oregon Veterans' Home, Lebanon, Oregon

Motion to adjourn at 11:44

Approved unanimously.