

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS AFFAIRS



MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, 13 June 2017
11th floor, Suite 1114
441 4th Street NW/One Judiciary Square
Washington DC 20001

- I.** The meeting was called to order by Mr. Spangenberg at 1840.
- II. Introduction of new member:**
 - A) Emily Grace Mate introduced herself as a resident of DC since 2012 and currently a CH47 pilot in DC National Guard.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance** was led by Mr. Locks
- IV. Advisory Board Members Roll Call**
 - A) Voting Members Present (12): Adebayo (telephone), Dalzell, Finnegan, Khan, Lampkin, Locks, Mate, Mack (telephone), Miller, Spangenberg, Williams, Wynn
 - B) Voting Members Absent (7, plus 2 excused): Curry, Dier (military duty), Grant, Jones, McClendon, Moore, Pridemore (deployed), Sydnor, White
 - C) Ex-officio members present: Black, Treadwell
 - D) Ex-officio members absent: Gibson, Honore, Preston, Strickland, Tobin
 - E) 11 voting members were present and one was on speaker-phone, so a quorum was present.
- V. Agenda** was approved by voice vote.
- VI. Minutes from June** were approved by voice vote.
 - A) Minutes are online at <http://www.open-dc.gov/meeting/monthly-meeting>
- VII. Special Guests**
 - A) Joel Murray from Financial Education & Literacy Advisers (FILA) gave a presentation about their LifeCents program.
 - 1. Mr. Ross explained LifeCents is a financial literacy program. They came in with “a 90% product” and are now working on populating the program with DC resources.
 - 2. In 2012 FELA partnered with then-Director of OVA to create the Valor program, free financial literacy program in DC. This culminated with Financially Fit DC, a mayor’s initiative, which took LifeCents and integrated agencies, resources and programs already available to give recommendations,

based on needs, financial health. FFDC is tailored for DC residents, and doing program with them gives data and helps modify the LifeCents program

3. Now they are designing a specific program for OVA. This is an opportunity to integrate it with other OVA programs. If veterans do one class and then connect into FFDC for an assessment, OVA will be able to form an aggregate understanding of whether people have budgets, are saving each month, etc.
4. Anyone can register now for FFDC version, or wait for OVA version which will come out in a week or so.
5. Q&A –
 - a. Ms. Black asked how the word about financial services gets out to “the street.” Mr. Murray said Valor has lots of connections in community, and that’s how people connect. They will now use OVA to connect them to referral centers, etc., which lets OVA give value as well as taking using others’ services.
 - b. Ms. Mate asked if either Mr. Murray or Mr. Ross know where DC vets come from. Mr. Ross said he is still trying to get that info. The VA doesn’t analyze the data for where veterans are coming from, just the location where they are getting services.
 - c. Black: isn’t the value that they may not have money, so for-profit firms won’t be looking for them
 - d. Mr. Spangenberg asked if the Services aren’t educating their personnel for financial literacy. Mr. Murray said they have personal finance programs, but not enough.

VIII. Director’s Report

A) Director Ross reported on MOVA’s activities over the last month. Highlights included the following:

1. The White House now has a veteran’s hotline (855-948-2311) for those not getting support from VA; it is an alternative to going to one’s Member of Congress.
2. OVA hosted a successful Veterans Mental Health class, with 26 in attendance.
3. They are in the final stage of publishing a new OVA pamphlet, featuring a new logo for the office.
4. OVA are one week away from its Hiring Fair at the DC Armory. Mr. Ross expects Close to 50 companies from the private sector, plus District and federal agencies. The DC government will have about 24 positions ready for immediate hire, and he emphasized these were not entry level, but included postings for doctors and contract specialists, for example, “The full spectrum of vets – from GEDs to Ph.Ds.”
 - a. Getting use of the Armory for free meant they could make attendance free for all.
 - b. DC government has already signed on to similar events periodically, possibly lined up with the end of academic semesters.
 - c. One lesson learned has been to change the messaging to small business – if they are required to provide 4-5 employees for a booth, they may not be able to participate.

- d. Mr. Ross would like everyone's support to promote the event on social media and other avenues. The fair is not limited to DC residents.
- e. Mr. Locks asked if the board could get an electronic version of the flier for the Hiring fair? Mr. Ross said yes.

5. The OVA newsletter is now close to 4,000 subscribers.

IX. Old Business (Chairman/Director)

- A) Mr. Dalzell said he would be sending out another copy of the board roster for members to review their contact information.
- B) Regarding the topic of revising policy on attendance, including proxy voting and telephonic attendance:
 - 1. Mr. Dalzell reported there is no record of what board discussed earlier when By Laws were approved.
 - 2. Mr. Locks proposed the members send ideas for the revised policy to him, he would consolidate them for discussion, then the board could send to Mr. Ross for them to be reviewed by the Open Government office. The board agreed to get ideas to Mr. Locks by 1 September.
 - 3. Mr. Khan asked if we know how other boards do it. Mr. Ross said the MABVA is the second largest advisory board, so it probably has more problems with this than others. There is also a pro bono legal counsel group that may help suggest answers.
 - 4. Mr. Locks said he saw the goal is to get a consistent quorum and regular participation.
 - 5. Mr. Mack said he would be one of the most affected by the policy, giving his recent assignment to a military position in Chicago. He argued that if the board is going to keep doing virtual attendance, it should use better technology – skype or other means – for members to participate.
 - 6. Mr. Williams suggested someone list the various decision points and making those the discussion points when the board continues dealing with this next meeting
- C) Mr. Ross has asked for headshots and one-paragraph bios from board members for website, and sent templates for the latter. He has received four so far. This is part of a complete redesign of the board section of the website.

X. New Business (Chairman/Director)

- A) The board began by discussing the newest committee, for Veterans Caregivers.
 - 1. DC is a Hidden Heroes City, which meant agreeing to create a steering committee on those issues. Mr. Ross saw a board committee as the way for the city to do that, and in doing so “blaze a trail” for this underrepresented group.
 - 2. Due to the possible overlap between the caregiver and health care committees, it was proposed that they be merged. This was rejected by voice vote.
- B) The following members volunteered to become chairs of committees:
 - 1. Mr. Finnegan to chair Economic Resilience
 - 2. Mr. Miller to chair Disabled Veterans
 - 3. Lane Williams to chair the Veterans Caregiver committee
 - 4. Ms. Black to chair Health Care

- C) Mr. Ross noted that committees are the gears that take our discussions into the community and augment what the OVA is doing. Mr. Spangenberg said we need members for all the committees. Mr. Dalzell reminded that non-board members may be asked to serve on committees as a way to leverage other expertise in the community
1. The board deferred the question of what to do about the Communications Committee.
 2. Mr. Spangenberg passed around a list for members to sign up for committee membership.

XI. Committee Reports

A) Report of Education Committee

1. Mr. Dalzell, acting committee chair, presented a report from the committee with 30-day plan. The focus will be on setting up initial meetings with both the administrative offices for veterans and the student-veterans groups at the major universities in DC.
2. Mr. Wynn asked whether the committee should also look into training for high-demand occupations. Mr. Dalzell said the committee would look into adding that to their objectives, but might need to coordinate it with Economic Resilience.

B) Government Relations and Policy

1. Mr. Khan said they are developing a process for how board members present ideas and get them to the director.
2. He asked members with ideas for legislation to submit them to the committee.

XII. Public Comment (Maximum 2 minute per person)

- A) Nicole Morales, Team Rubicon (<https://teamrubiconusa.org/>), introduced herself and noted that TR has around 400 members in DC, including some deployed now to several neighboring states.
- B) Melanie Avery spoke about programs offered by Veterans on the Rise (VOTR, www.veteransontherise.org).
1. VOTR is a DC-based organization focused on ending homelessness among veterans. They have partnered with others to provide health services, run second chance grants for DOJ and mentoring programs, etc.
 2. Ms. Avery said she served in the National Guard as broadcast journalist, and volunteered to be a community member of Advisory Board committees

XIII. Upcoming (Events/Meetings/Holidays)

- A) The next board meeting will be held Tuesday, 1 August.

XIV. The meeting was adjourned at 2020