

Minutes
New York State Veterans' Affairs Commission

October 20, 2010
1100-1145
Conference Call

VAC MEMBERS:

Attendees:

John Batiste
Ned Foote
Robert Mixon
Thomas Hoare
Bob Reiter

Absent:

MG Patrick Murphy
Curt Williamson
Michelle Lindsay
Luis Barsallo
Jim Edgar
Kevin McKenna
Dorsey Whitehead

NYS DIVISION OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (DVA):

Attendees:

Bill Kraus
Jason Chakot

GUESTS:

None

I. OPENING COMMENTS: Roll call was taken and the meeting was convened. Group participated in a moment of silence in honor of those who have lost their lives during military service.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING: There were no issues or comments regarding the September minutes. (Approved)

III. REVIEW OF PURPOSE, EXPECTATIONS AND 2010 SCHEDULE:

The dates for the remaining 2010 meetings are:

4 November 2010 at 2:00PM, Meeting (Capitol) Teleconference will be made available to those who can not attend in person. (866)394-2346 Code:7238821646
15 December, Teleconference

IV. ACTING DIRECTOR'S FOCUS AND PRIORITIES:

Bill Kraus provided the following update:

- Bill discussed the upcoming meeting for the NYS Council for Returning Veterans and Their Families on October 26, 2010.
- Bill also advised the commission that the October 22nd Veterans 55 and Older Seminar at the Adirondack Community College has been postponed.
- It was also brought up as a reminder that the next VAC meeting will be held immediately following the Veterans Leaders Discussion on the 4th of November.
- Bill also took a moment to recognize Tom Walker as being newly selected for appointment as a Senior State Veterans Counselor for the Northern Region.
- There were no personnel losses to report this month and Bill announced there is a new hire coming on board in the West Point office.
- There was a federal FMAP reduction that resulted in a 1.1% reduction in services to some of the county offices.
- He also discussed the Division's End of Year operations.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion began on the letter dated September 24, 2010 addressed to Chairman Batiste and addressed from County Veterans Service Officers Association of the State of New York, Inc. (Mr. Oliver)

Bob Reiter brought up a concern that the original letter sent to the county leadership should not have been sent in mass but should have gone to counties in which veterans services would be receiving a failing grade.

John Batiste stated the original letter has run its course and the reaction received is proof the service our veterans receive will improve.

It was agreed upon that the level of service received by our veterans differs from county to county.

John Batiste suggested regional meetings to help create a sense of ownership of the county veterans programs to create better service for the veterans. He also stated the county leadership as well as the VSO's should attend.

Bill Kraus recommended a meeting with Mr. Oliver to help him better understand the concern of the commission. It was agreed that Bill will help organize a meeting between John Batiste and Dennis Oliver.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A discussion began about a link (http://www1.va.gov/VETDATA/GDX/Geographical_data.asp) that was sent to Bob Reiter that helps illustrate the federal funds that come into each county for veterans.

Ned Foote recommends legislative issues concerning financial support for counties come down from NYSDVA.

Robert Mixon stated regardless of the current political climate there will be new elected representatives in office after the upcoming elections and they will continuously have the need to be feed new ideas.

John Batiste stated he would forward his committee testimony for review.

Ned Foote stated there will be a public hearing hosted by the NYS Assembly Committee on Veteran Affairs on November 5th in Syracuse.

VII. WRAP UP & NEXT STEPS:

- Alibis were solicited, no further issues to discuss at this time.
- The next meeting November 4, 2010, 2:00PM, State Capitol and by conference call (866)394-2346 Code:7238821646

The conference call concluded at 11:45 am.