



Division of Veterans' Affairs

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING CONFERENCE CALL NOVEMBER 19, 2018

ATTENDEES

Joel Evans DVA
Ben Pomerance DVA
Jason Chakot DVA
Mary Quay DVA
Kent Eiler
Eugene Di Giacomo
Ken Rosenblum
Tanya Nelson-Walker

ABSENT

Kevin McKenna

Joel Evans opened the meeting thanking everyone for their participation in the Commission. The purpose of the Commission is to observe the Veterans' community issues and bring them to the table.

Three questions were asked of the Commission prior to the conference call.

- 1. The most important service that New York State currently provides for Veterans and their family members is _____.**
 - It is noted the Veterans Real Property Tax Exemption is a reason for Veterans and their families to move to New York State.
 - Make sure every Veterans and their family member receives the benefits they are entitled.
 - Statewide conferences to share knowledge and opportunities.
 - Webinars would be beneficial. All members have access to participate.
 - Peer to Peer Dwyer Program in counties.
 - Not all counties offer Cold War Tax Exemption It was noted the county village board needs to be advocated to educate the counties that do not offer this exemption. Lobby school boards to crunch the number of Veterans in each district. It will be a cost of less than \$5.00 per year per person who is not a Veteran to support this benefit for Veterans.

- Veterans' non-profit organizations monies is not monitored. There are no guidelines. More structure/oversight needs to be put into place to monitor the dollars given to Veterans' non-profit organization, including the Dwyer Program.

2. The greatest unmet need for New York State's Veterans and their family members is _____.

- The need for more accredited Veterans Services Officers to educate Veterans and their families of the benefits New York State offers them.
- A better pay scale needs to be offer to Veterans Service Officers
- The Commission asked, "Is there an indication of a Director for NYS Division of Veterans' Affairs?" Currently the Division is running smoothly, but as soon as a Director is appointed the Commission will be notified.
- New York State is behind with the number of Veterans receiving benefits.
- How do we better help navigate the Veteran coming home? More advocacy, entities.
- More outreach for the senior Veteran population is needed. At this time Joel noted the latest program the Division has put forth. The Division has six employees reaching out to nursing homes and private residence to assist the senior Veteran and their family to obtain the benefits the Veteran and/or his family are entitled to. "Wills for Hero's" is one legal benefit provided to the senior Veteran population.
- Currently the Division has also been outreaching to Veterans in prisons. The Division has brought in current forms and has been working with the Veterans population in the prisons to assist with benefits they or they family member is entitled to because of their previous service to our country.
- Need an avenue to better contact with County Sheriff's Association so the Division can identify Veterans entering prison life.
- Veterans advocates need to not just focus on one Veteran issue when it is brought to the limelight, such as homelessness. The focus needs to be on all Veterans issues.
- Veterans Owned Small Business owners have no tax insensitive.
- Amendment to HR Law to assist veterans into housing. And HR Law used military status, past present and future, but the word Veteran does not appear in the Law.
- How do we measure success? How do you intersect with the legislation? What's going to be advocated? How can the Veterans Affairs Commission assist.