

New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for November 16, 2015 meeting held at:

Queens Borough President's Office
120-55 Queens Blvd
Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Members

Present:

Todd Haskins (Manhattan)	Samuel Innocent (Bronx)
Charles Hernandez (Bronx)	John Rowan (Queens)
Joe Bello (Bronx)	Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)
Jules Martin (Manhattan)	
Vincent McGowan (Ex-Officio)	

Absent:

Charles Greinsky (Staten Island)	Pat Devine (Bronx)
Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)	Anthony "Tony" Odierno (Manhattan)

Minutes

- Todd Haskins (Chair) commenced the meeting. (6 PM)
- All VAB members introduced themselves to the audience.

Old Business: The board reviewed the minutes from October (Bronx). The minutes were approved. The chair reminded the board and audience that our last meeting for 2015 will be on December 7th in Staten Island (location TBD).

New Business: The chair asked the board for a vote of support commending the Mayor and City Council for establishing a Veterans Department in NYC. The vote was unanimously approved.

Presentations:

MOVA. Commissioner Sutton and Deputy Commissioner Laporte gave updates on:

Homelessness: Current number is at 800 moving quickly towards 700. The system has been fully developed to get to functional zero by the end of the year. Current entry is 100 vets per month into the system with a 90-day turnaround. The City has been making available the information regarding incentives to landlords to take in veterans. Assistant Commissioner Branca has obtained a 250K grant from Deutsche Bank to assist with preventative care.

Mental Health: The Commissioner announced that the First Lady of New York City will be announcing the Mental Health Roadmap very shortly.

IDNYC: There was a brief discussion on the IDNYC numbers in regards to veterans and how Queens has the largest number of veterans of any borough and the word needs to get out.

Personnel: Deputy Commissioner Laporte introduced new outreach personnel for MOVA. There is also a social media person now. There was a reminder that MOVA has increased its numbers and that they're in putting an outreach specialist in each borough with each individual being an overlapping backup to another borough. They are still looking for a Staten Island outreach person.

Public Comments: Board member John Rowan hosted this part of the meeting. The following individuals gave public comments to the board:

Dr. Fritz Fils-Aime: President of Haitian American Veterans Association (HAVA). He talked about deported veterans from Haiti and Mexico and how we must help them. Most of them are Vietnam Veterans and the largest deported veterans are living in Mexico. He also talked about starting a Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) chapter in Haiti. John Rowan told him they would talk.

Stanley Scriven: Stated he works for Easter Seals and does outreach to veterans.

Gerald Cherenfant: Introduced himself as a US Navy veteran (retired) and has just started working at the Brooklyn Vet Center.

Rhonda Mona: Stated that she was an Army Reservist (OIF/OEF) and was looking for services.

Ryan Graham: Introduced himself as the VFW Queens County Commander. 6 years Air Force. Anyone looking to join the VFW, come see him. Talked about how the Queens VFW did Community Service on Veterans Day and the Flushing VFW Post did a 5K walk that raised money for the community.

Paul Narson: Introduced as the President of VVA Chapter 32. Talked about the need for better communication and how he wants others to come to Queens to work with veterans there. Stated that he didn't march in this year's Veterans Day parade (and neither did a number of others) because they are too old. Talked about how the Queens Veterans Day parade is growing but the VFW and Legion didn't come out. Need to better coordinate with them in the future.

There was a brief discussion on the Indigent Burial Program for Veterans. Paul Narson and John Rowan discussed the program (VVA and VFW) and MOVA stated that they were looking for more organizational friends for this program.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Meeting: December 7, 2015

Submitted by: Joe Bello, Secretary