

**OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**September 24, 2018 10AM**  
**September 25, 2018 8AM**  
**Vezev Veterans Complex**  
**2132 NE 36th Street**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73111**

A meeting of the Oklahoma Veterans Commission was held at the Vezev Veterans Complex, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on September 24th, 2018 at 10:00 a.m., with continuation of that meeting being held September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. Notice was given pursuant to O.S. Section 301 et seq. by submitting to the Secretary of State and by posting an agenda on the front door of the Vezev Veterans Complex at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and:

Members of the Commission and staff present at the table and presenting were:

Mr. Tom Richey, Chairman, Paralyzed American Veterans, Yukon, Navy  
Mr. Larry Van Schuyver, Vice Chairman, Military Order of Purple Heart, Edmond, Navy  
Mr. Jon Arthur, Commissioner, Disabled American Veterans, Grove, Air Force  
Mr. Pat Fite, Commissioner, Member at Large, Hobart, Army  
Mr. Gaylord "Z" Thomas, Commissioner, Member at Large, Guthrie, Air Force  
Mr. Gary Secor, Commissioner, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lawton, Army  
Mr. Lloyd Smithson, Commissioner, National Guard Association, Yukon, Air Force  
Mr. Jerry Ball, Commissioner, the American Legion, Guthrie, Army  
Mr. Paul Costilow, Commissioner, Member at Large, Yukon, Army  
Mr. Douglas Elliott, Executive Director  
Ms. Sarah Lane, ODVA Legal Counsel  
Ms. Helen Sapp, Safety Programs Administrator  
Ms. Lisa Mussett, Women Veterans Coordinator  
Mr. Jackie Whitten, Director Claims and Benefits  
Mr. Bradley Ward, Director Veterans Education  
Mr. John Wilson, Veterans Mental Health Programs Administrator  
Ms. Dorita Herd, Construction Programs Administrator  
Mr. Warren Griffis, Human Resource Director  
Ms. Tina Williams, Clinical Compliance Director  
Ms. Shantha Varahan, Chief Financial Officer  
Mr. Shawn Kirkland, Director of Homes, Ardmore Administrator  
Ms. Jennifer Bloomfield, Education and Training Programs Administrator

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2018, 10:00 AM**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richey at 10:00am

**II. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Richey proceeded with the roll. All Commissioners were present. Quorum present.

**III. INVOCATION**

Commissioner Arthur led the invocation.

**IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Secor led the pledge.

**V. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO VISITORS AND GUESTS**

Chairman Richey welcomed the visitors and guests.

## **VI. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF MEETING**

Chairman Richey defined the scope and purpose of the meeting. The first half being regular business, the second half presentations for the proposals for real property to relocate the operations of the Talihina Veterans Center.

## **VII. OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION**

### **a. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2018 OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING.**

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Thomas. A second was presented by Commissioner Arthur. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Ball, Costilow

Abstain: Richey

Action: Minutes approved May 18, 2018

### **b. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING.**

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Van Schuyver. A second was presented by Commissioner Costilow. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Ball, Costilow

Action: Minutes approved September 11, 2018

### **c. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO TITLE 25 O.S. § SECTION 307(B)(1) DISCUSSION REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT, HIRING APPOINTMENT, PROMOTION, DEMOTION, DISCIPLINING, OR RESIGNATION OF ANY INDIVIDUAL SALARIED EMPLOYEE:**

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Smithson. A second was presented by Commissioner Secor. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Ball, Costilow

- i. Action to Adjourn to Executive Session.
  - ii. Discussion of Performance Evaluation of Executive Director, Doug Elliott.
  - iii. Action to Return to Open Meeting from Executive Session.
- Executive session ended at 10:59am

### **D. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DOUG ELLIOTT.**

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Thomas to come out of Executive Session, Commissioner Secor gave the second and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Ball, Costilow

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Fite to postpone pending an evaluation worksheet and celebration of the 1 year anniversary of Director Elliott's position. A second was presented by Commissioner Thomas. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Ball, Costilow

Action: Performance evaluation postponed until February 1 2019

**e. DISCUSSION OF TRAVEL OF COMMISSIONERS SINCE PRIOR MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2018.**

**i. Travel Reports by Commissioners**

- a. Commissioner Van Schuyver was able to visit Claremore, Talihina, Sulphur, Lawton, and Norman.
- b. Commissioner Arthur was able to visit Lawton, Clinton, Norman, Ardmore, and Sulphur.
- c. Commissioner Fite was able to visit the Clinton Veterans Center.
- d. Commissioner Secor was able to visit Lawton, Sulphur, and Ardmore.

**f. DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE 2019 CALENDAR YEAR**

- i. Proposed scheduled dates being the last Thursday of each calendar month excluding December, with exceptions for months in which the last Thursday falls on a holiday.
  - a. January 31, 2019, Vezey Veterans Complex, Oklahoma City;
  - b. February 28, 2019, OVC Ardmore;
  - c. March 28, 2019, OVC Clinton;
  - d. April 25, 2019, Vezey Veterans Complex, Oklahoma City;
  - e. May 30, 2019, OVC Talihina;
  - f. June 27, 2019, OVC Sulphur;
  - g. July 25, 2019, Vezey Veterans Complex, Oklahoma City,
  - h. August 29, 2019, OVC Norman;
  - i. September 26, 2019, OVC Lawton;
  - j. October 24, 2019, Vezey Veterans Complex, Oklahoma City, and
  - k. November 21, 2019, OVC Claremore;

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Arthur. A second was presented by Commissioner Secor. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Ball, Costilow

No vote: Smithson

Discussion: Commissioner Smithson stated that he may not be able to accommodate Thursday meetings due to a prior commitment with employment. He stated that he would attempt to make arrangements to accommodate meetings.

Action: The 2019 Meeting schedule is approved

**VIII. OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**a. DOUG ELLIOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**i. Status of Programs**

Director Elliott stated that Jackie Whitten would be briefing the Commission in more detail on the Veterans Registry Program, and that the hope was to deploy the program before the end of fall in the 2018 year, going live in 2019. The Director stated that moving this program into the world of electronic verification would be a money saving solution for the government, as well as a time saving solution for Veterans.

Director Elliott stated that the Behavior Health Initiative "Did you serve?" will be detailed by John Wilson to the Commission. The Director stated that it is the hope that Governor Fallin will sign an executive order this October.

Re: the mission statement, Director Elliott stated that the Dale K. Graham Veterans Foundation approached about a month ago to address a "Reset" of the relationship. The American Legion came in as well to express the status of the strained relationship due to the move from the old building. The Director stated that a meeting is scheduled for October 10th to attempt to repair that relationship. Director Elliott stated that the Education Initiatives will be addressed by Bradley Ward to the Commission.

The Director informed the Commission that a symposium is scheduled for October 22nd at the University of Central Oklahoma, where at this moment in time five dignitaries have sent their RSVP to attend. The Director stated that the Woman's Veterans events will be detailed by Lisa Mussett to the Commission. The Director also stated that the cemetery program would be detailed by Dorita Herd. He stated that they should hear something on this by October 1. The Transportation grant will be addressed by Sarah Lane.

The Director stated that the CMS progress at Talihina is an ongoing process. An outside firm (BKD) has been hired to assess the readiness. The Director stated that beginning with Talihina was due to the fact that their staff had shown the most progress in demonstrating knowledge of, and ability to be CMS ready. The Director stated that their MDS personnel were "Way above board".

The Director stated that as to the allegations of HIPAA violations discussed in August when the servers went down, at this time no notification of wrongdoing has been communicated to the agency from the Justice Department.

## ii. Physicians

In regard to the topic of Physicians, the Director stated that we have been unable to secure a Physician in Talihina for well over a year. He stated that we are currently utilizing a contracted Physician in that location. Last Thursday (September 20th) the Physician in Clinton notified the agency that she would be resigning in November. The Administrator in Clinton has stated that finding a Physician in Clinton was going to be difficult, and the plan at this time is to utilize a contracted Physician for that location. The Physicians in Lawton and Norman have resigned their positions in the last 60 days. The resignation in Norman prompted the termination of another Physician, as well as a part time Physician in Norman who required supervision. The Physician in Ardmore was also terminated due to the requirement for supervision. The Director stated that both Norman and Ardmore have hired a third mid-level as a result of being unable to hire a replacement Physician.

Discussion: Commissioner Ball asked the Director "How do we advertise for Doctors?" The Director stated that numerous avenues have been explored, including but not limited to Monster, as well as the State of Oklahoma Website. Commissioner Smithson asked "What is the difference between a full time Doctor, and a contracted Doctor". The Director stated that contract was "Basically the new model". He stated that the Physicians that specialize in geriatric medicine are difficult to find. Commissioner Fite stated that it was his understanding that we are attempting to hire Physicians in the 200k a year range. He asked what the average (Private Sector) pay was. The Director stated the range was from \$200k-\$400k with an average of \$250k/yr.

The Director stated that there were currently two Physicians in Claremore, as well as one in Sulphur. He stated that there was no indication that those Physicians were considering retirement or vacating their position.

## iii. Budget and Building of Oklahoma Veterans Center, Ardmore Division

The Director stated, "This last one is kind of a bombshell" and outlined the beginning of planning for the budget and building of a new Ardmore facility. The Director stated that the Commission would as is the norm be briefed by Shantha Varahan regarding the budget, and that they would be asking for a unique request when legislation reconvenes. The Director stated that there was currently an estimated twelve million dollars in excess this fiscal year. He stated that if we leave that money unused, the legislature will reallocate to the general fund. Alternatively, the Director stated that he would like to use those funds in an effort to make a move to rebuild the Ardmore center. The Director stated that "If for whatever reason" they were not able to secure a location in Ardmore; he would like those monies to be used to pay the bond down in process for Talihina. The Director stated that he would like that finalization to be an "Either or".

The Director stated that the twelve million alone will not be enough, but if we continue in the path that we are currently on, we could as an agency have an additional twelve million at the end of the next fiscal year. The Director stated that parts of the Ardmore facility were over 100 years old, and there was no major recoupment cost that would need to be paid back at this time. The Director stated that this was all dependent on the legislation not returning the monies back into the general fund. Director Elliott notified the Commission that there would be an Action item coming at the conclusion of Shantha Varahan's presentation to the Commission today, and asked that they take action on the budget request.

Discussion: Commissioner Smithson asked the Director about the land mass the Ardmore location was currently sitting on. The Director advised that property consists of "55 acres". Commissioner Smithson asked if it would be possible to build the new facility on the existing land. The Director stated that while it would in fact be possible, it would interfere with the plans currently in place to build the cemetery on the 44+ acres of the current Ardmore location.

The Director asked the Commission "What are your questions?"

Discussion: Commissioner Arthur asked the Director "Do you have some place in mind?" The Director stated that he did not. The Director stated that the reason this was being brought up in the day's meeting was because the legislature would reconvene in November. Commissioner Smithson asked if it would be possible to upgrade the current structure that we have, and find another location for the cemetery. The Director stated that a new location, in a possible more rural setting would be a better option concerning the safety of the Veteran residents. Commissioner Ball stated that the north area of the current structure was only 25 years old. The Director stated that there would not be a recoupment cost on that, as anything 20 years old or older would not fall into the recoupment period. The Director also stated that the building does not qualify as a historical site, as there have been too many upgrades/alterations to the original structure.

**b. SARAH LANE, ODVA LEGAL COUNSEL, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**i. Delinquent Accounts**

Ms. Lane stated that as of August 1, the active maintenance outstanding was \$820,000; due largely in part to new Residents coming into the centers whose applications had not carried over to the collective as yet. She stated that from the \$780,000 that was outstanding in May, we have collected \$269,000. She stated that we currently have three centers that are "Down", and two centers that are "Up". Ms. Lane stated that the total number of delinquent accounts was 106. The smallest delinquent balance to report was \$0.73 (Norman) and the largest being \$66,752 (Claremore).

**ii. Electronic Payments**

She stated that there are currently 166 residents using ACH (Roughly 20%). Ms. Lane also stated that we are fully capable of accepting debit and credit card payments at this time. She stated that the approval process completed in May via the Government Technology and Acquisition Review Board (GTARB). She stated that the Office of the State Treasurer was currently running ACH's, and that eGov was being used for the debit and credit card transactions. She stated that we were currently in the process of transition over to use eGov for all transactions. Ms. Lane stated that all ACH reoccurring are fee free at the Resident and Family level, but that there is a small fee when using credit/debit cards. The fee is 2.5% for a merchant fee, as well as a \$2.00 per transaction fee.

**iii. Highly Rural Transportation Grant**

Ms. Lane briefed the award of a Highly Rural Transportation Grant from USDVA. Eight counties in Oklahoma are eligible for assistance through the HRT Grant; Beaver, Cimarron, Dewey, Ellis, Grant, Harmon, Harper, and Roger Mills.

She stated that the official award notices will issue October 1, but that we had been given a notice of intent to award. The maximum award per entity is \$50,000. Ms. Lane stated that the submitted plan fell just shy of that, and we had been approved for the “Full amount of our request, which was \$49,936.” Ms. Lane stated at this time, the plan is to use a vehicle that we already have in inventory, and indicated that the vehicle in mind currently resides at the Ardmore facility. She stated that it would likely be housed at the Clinton location, due to the proximity of the rural counties previously mentioned.

iv. **2019 Legislative Initiatives Overview**

In re: the 2019 Legislative Initiatives Overview, Ms. Lane stated the items were:

1. Revise calculation of creditable time in state service under OPERS to broaden inclusion of active duty time, regardless of when it occurred.
2. Extend sales tax exemption to spouses of deceased 100% service connected disabled veterans to include those that are awarded a rating after date of death.
3. Authorize priority or set aside for any acquisition made by or on behalf of the ODVA to veteran owned businesses.
4. Provide ODVA with authority to pay expenses for food, lodging, meeting facilities, etc. as may be necessary to host seminars and receptions relating to support of veterans and development of veterans services.
5. Clarify that veterans with a characterization of discharge as "Dishonorable" are not eligible for admission to any Oklahoma Veterans Centers.
6. Revise definition of veteran eligibility for Veterans Registry to the broader definition set forth in 72 OS 2.
7. Broaden criteria for eligibility for reimbursement for burial expenses from Veterans Indigent Burial Fund.
8. Exemption of ODVA from OMES IT support requirements.
9. Removal of expiration of authorization for in-house counsel.

c. **HELEN SAPP, ODVA SAFETY PROGRAMS, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

i. **Workers Compensation Update**

Ms. Sapp stated that this year, we had decreased premiums by 5%, saving the agency over \$30,000. Ms. Sapp stated that from FY16 to FY18, a 43% decrease in premiums has been accomplished. She stated that we as an agency have spent half a million dollars less in workers compensation payouts than FY17. She stated that a savings of 1.4 million dollars from FY16 to FY18 could be calculated. Ms. Sapp stated that remaining reserves totaled less than 3.8 million, a decrease from last FY by nearly 1 million dollars, 1.4 million dollar savings since the safety program inception. She stated that the number of opened claims had decreased by 59% since FY15.

d. **WARREN GRIFFIS, ODVA DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

i. **Human Resources Update**

Mr. Griffis stated that as of this morning, ODVA employed 1856 individuals out of 1970 authorized positions. There are currently 315 GALT employees, and 114 State vacancies. Mr. Griffis stated that each center was currently below 1% in re: staff shortages, with the exception of the Talihina center, which was down 17%. Mr. Griffis stated the average turnover rate for RNs was 45.75%, 67.69% for LPNs, and 33.53% for PCAs. In Re: Overtime, Mr. Griffis stated that the agency has seen a decrease in overtime by nearly 50% since FY14. Overtime was 1.7 million in FY14, 2.08 million in FY15, 1.8 million in FY16, 1.02million in FY17, with \$917,000 in FY18. The re: the voluntary out option for the laboratory technicians, Mr. Griffis stated that we were ending eleven positions, affecting 8-9 individuals.

**e. SHANTHA VARAHAN, ODVA CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

- i. FY19 Budget Projections
- ii. Expenditure Budget to Actual FY19
- iii. FY19 Revenue Projected to Actual
- iv. Revolving Fund Revenue
- v. Average Occupancy
- vi. Total Days of Care
- vii. Agency Special (Trust) Fund
- viii. Current Capital Projects
- ix. FY17, FY18 Non-Grant Major Projects
- x. Emergency Declaration, July, August 2018

Ms. Varahan reported to the Commission regarding the Chief Financial Report (a copy of the Chief Financial Officer's Report is attached to the file copy of the meeting minutes).

**xi. Requested FY20 Budget**

Ms. Varahan requested that the Commissioners vote to approve the budget request, and the previously mentioned proposal Director Elliott brought to their attention re: the building of the new Ardmore location/or payment on the bond at the Talihina location.

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Arthur to approve the budget request. A second was presented by Commissioner Costilow. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Ball, Costilow  
Abstain: Smithson

Action: FY19 Budget request is approved.

At 12:22pm Chairman Richey called for a break

At 12:38pm Chairman Richey called the meeting back to order

**f. LISA MUSSETT, ODVA WOMEN'S VETERAN COORDINATOR, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

- i. Women's Veterans Events and Employment

Ms. Mussett stated that the program mission was to insure that women veterans within the state of Oklahoma have access to federal and state benefits and services, outreach, and education. Ms. Mussett spoke to the Oklahoma Women Veterans Recognition Event, and let the Commission know that event was to take place the first weekend in October. She stated that she was currently working on a marketing plan, specifically targeted at Oklahoma Women Veterans, creating brochures, as well an email address specially created for the states female Veteran population. Ms. Mussett stated that visits are currently being scheduled at all seven Veterans center locations, so that she may reach out personally to not only our female Residents, but female Veteran staff members.

**g. DORITA HERD, CONSTRUCTION ADMINSTRATOR, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

- i. Review of all construction projects concerning Ardmore, Claremore, Clinton, Lawton, Norman, Sulphur, Talihina, Central Office and agency wide projects

Ms. Herd reported to the Commission regarding the Construction Projects Concerning; Ardmore, Claremore, Clinton, Lawton, Norman, Sulphur and Talihina, Central Office and agency wide projects (a copy of the Construction Administrator's Report is attached to the file copy of the meeting minutes)

ii. Grant Status on Cemetery

Ms. Herd stated that the application is still acceptable and that there was nothing more at this time that we needed to do. She stated that our location on the list is determined by the other applicants who also applied. She stated that the priority list was expected October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**h. JACKIE WHITTEN, CLAIMS AND BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

i. Veterans Services Report, Claims and Benefits Division

Mr. Whitten submitted documentation to the Commission covering FY18 (a copy of the Claims and Benefits Administrator's Report is attached to the file copy of the meeting minutes)

ii. Veterans Registry

Mr. Whitten stated that he was currently working with OMES and other agency staff to build the Veterans Registry. He stated that 2020 was the deadline, though he believes it should be up and running by fall, fully implemented by the beginning of next year.

iii. Service Offerings of ODVA for Veterans Families

**i. BRADLEY WARD, VETERAN SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

i. Education Initiatives and Symposium

Mr. Ward stated that the biggest focus at the moment was college access and degree attainment for all of the military connected students in Oklahoma. He stated that this extends beyond just the users of the GI Bill. He stated that he submitted surveys to fourteen institutions, and was able to identify 200 responses, 13,000 GI Bill users alone at this time in Oklahoma, and it is the hope to reach out to more individuals via these surveys that may otherwise not be identified.

Mr. Ward stated that the Governor's Veteran Services Symposium would take place on Monday, October 22 at the University of Central Oklahoma Nigh University Center, 3rd Floor, and beginning at 8am. He stated that he would have more information available during his presentation which will begin at 10am.

**j. JOHN WILSON, VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

i. "Are You A Veteran" Initiative

Mr. Wilson stated that he was asked to relay from Jackie Whitten that the joint services officer training seminar would be held November 7th and 8th at the Reed Conference Center.

He stated that re: Commissioner Smithson's question about grief counseling, the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services may be available for that. He stated that he would get clarification, and communicate the information to the Commissioner once validated.

Mr. Wilson stated that by asking the question, "Did you serve/Are you a Veteran?" previously reported numbers of suicide among Veterans could be drastically reduced. He stated that community providers do not routinely ask if a member of immediate family were in the armed forces, or if the member themselves is a Veteran. He stated that only 29% of providers agreed with the statement "I am knowledgeable about how to refer a Veteran for medical or mental health care services at the VA."

He stated that changing the verbiage was key. He stated that not all Veterans will “Raise their hand” and say they are Veterans, female Veterans in particular, but it has been discovered that when you phrase the question, “Did you serve?” the hesitation diminishes. He stated that under the proposed executive order, a website would be created where providers could go, select their profession, and a drop down menu would redirect to a PDF with a guideline of questions to create a therapeutic conversation that will better benefit the Veteran. He also stated that a partnership is being sought with providers across the state to promote the “Did you serve?” logo, and begin the education and training process.

**k. SHAWN KIRKLAND, ODVA DIRECTOR OF HOMES, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**i. Oklahoma Veterans Centers Census**

Mr. Kirkland stated that he has plans to modify the current report in reports to come. He stated that we are currently at 91% census. He stated that the agency saw 55 admissions in August, with 39 denials. He stated that the waiting list was still substantial.

**ii. Service Connected Disabilities**

Mr. Kirkland stated that there are currently 469 70-100% service connected Veterans in our homes. He stated that that number is increasing. There are currently 666 Veterans that are less than 70% service connected, and 167 Veterans who are currently private pay Residents.

**iii. Demographics for Age, Gender, and Service Period**

Mr. Kirkland explained that there are currently 222 WWII Veterans in our homes, 344 Korea Veterans, 577 Veterans from the Vietnam era, and 44 Veterans who served in the Gulf War. He also stated that the average age of a Veteran in our homes was 77 years old, with the oldest Veteran being 103 and the youngest being 33 years old. He also stated that there were currently 35 female Veterans across all seven centers.

**l. TINA WILLIAMS, ODVA COMPLIANCE OFFICER, REPORT WITH POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**i. Medicare**

Ms. Williams stated that there were four different parts (A,B,C,D) to Medicare. Medicare Part A was classified as hospital insurance, Part B as medical insurance, Part C sometimes covering vision and dental care, and Part D being prescription drug coverage. Ms. Williams provided the Commission with a documentation breakdown of the different parts.

**ii. CMS Progress at Talihina**

Ms. Williams stated that as to the CMS progress at Talihina, the Director had discussed, and explained well. She stated that we do not currently have a Medicare individual hired, but that the current MDS staff at Talihina had been very open, and had asked many questions. She stated that the willingness to learn was evident.

**iii. Survey**

Ms. Williams spoke to the mock survey that was upcoming by BKD. She stated that that would be taking place soon. She stated that Talihina was excited to be the first center to be CMS Certified. Ms. Williams provided the Commission with documentation graphing the state and federal survey results for each center from 2013-2018. Ms. Williams stated that as an agency re: Federal survey the numbers were: 2013-30,2014-26,2015-43, 2016-26, 2017-16, and 2018-10. Ms. Williams stated that as an agency re: State survey the numbers were: 2013-6, 2014-30, 2015-41, 2016-15, 2017-9, and 2018-0.

#### iv. Education

Ms. Williams stated that the Relias training program was revamped over the course of the last two months with the addition of the new Education and Training Programs Administrator. She stated that each of the seven centers had been visited by the new ETPA, and their individual training plans had been reviewed.

Ms. Williams stated that the training plan for 2019 has already been rolled out, and is ready for next year. She stated that the overall completion of the training in the centers has drastically improved.

In re: Education, Ms. Williams stated that the majority of the education and travel is paid by P-card, which provides the agency with cash back rewards. She stated that this year, the agency received \$43,000 in rewards. Ms. Williams stated that Director Elliott wanted our Veterans to have these funds, so an evaluation was done by the Activities Director in the Norman center. Ms. Williams stated that the goal was to assess what activities could be implemented and designed to meet the needs of our Residents in our Special Needs Units. She stated that the Activity Directors across all seven locations have come together as a team, and that they are excited to bring their ideas to the table. In addition, Ms. Williams stated that the Norman Veterans Center is also in the process of turning their barber shop into a vintage shop. She stated that the idea originally came from Director Elliott, but when the Activity Director in Norman was told about it, she went straight to her Administrator. She stated that the idea had been met with great enthusiasm.

#### v. Clinical

Re: Clinical, Ms. Williams stated that a new report had been rolled out to the Directors of Nursing in all seven centers. This new form would include data for flu, sepsis, deaths, as well as bed holds. She stated that this would cover data that was previously requested from the Commission. Ms. Williams stated that this report would automatically graph the desired results, providing an easy to read report that would be updated weekly. Ms. Williams stated that a request to the centers had been made to stagger the Administrative staff from the Nursing Department. She stated that the goal was to cover longer shifts, and provide more oversight. Ms. Williams stated that she was able to work together with the Directors of Nursing at each location to come up with a schedule that would meet this need. Ms. Williams stated that as a result, the agency as a whole has seen a decrease in number of falls, pressure ulcers, and weight loss. Ms. Williams addressed Commissioner Smithson's request for definition of "Skilled Nursing Facility" vs "Nursing Home". She stated that a skilled center was usually short term, where as a nursing home was long term, and considered "Home" to the Residents who reside there.

### IX. OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Oklahoma Veterans Commission shall hear public comments limited to only matters that are listed on the current meeting agenda. Open public comments are limited to five minutes per person. The Board Chairman may interrupt and/or terminate any presentation during public comment which does not conform to the procedures outlined under this section. The Board Chairman reserves and retains the right to interrupt, terminate, or postpone public comments as necessary to effectuate the management of the public meeting.

Mrs. Neuschaefer, wife of a Resident at the Norman Veterans Center addressed the Commission. Ms. Neuschaefer discussed her concerns re: the "Doctor situation". She stated that she was concerned that the contracted Doctors were not spending enough time in the facility, and that she felt the care did not compare to "What we had before." She also addressed her concerns re: the PCC issue that was experienced a few weeks ago. She stated that the time it took to get medications to the Veterans during the down time was excessive. Mrs. Neuschaefer addressed her concerns with the current amount of staffing. She stated that the Nursing Department was understaffed, and stretched thin. She also stated that she appreciated the current set-up of the room, with the microphones, and the access to the slides for the public.

Roy Griffith, previous Administrator from the Talihina Veterans Center addressed the Commission. Mr. Griffith stated his previous experience within the administration. He stated that he was concerned about the new furniture that Central Office had purchased, and the amount that was spent. He stated that if the Commission chose to close Talihina, there would be a recapture clause, in which case 8 million dollars would need to be paid back to the Federal VA. He spoke to his disagreement with closing the beds on the SNU. He stated that by closing the beds, the organization was losing money. He stated figures of funds from the federal government that had been given to the agency over the span of several years. He asked the Commission "Where did the money go?" He spoke to the 5% raise that was given to the employees in 2014. He stated that the lack of continuing this program yearly was the reason for lack of staff. He suggested building a 50 bed unit with private rooms at each center, rather than building on a new location for Talihina. He stated that it would be cheaper.

Madeline Kervin, Daughter of a Resident at the Lawton Veterans Center addressed the Commission. She stated that she was concerned with the level of care that her Father was receiving because at 10:30pm, there was not a staff member present at the facility to run indicated bloodwork. She stated that her Father had to be sent to the local hospital. She stated that her Father spent additional time in the hospital because the Lawton Center had stated that they did not accept Residents released from the hospital on the weekends. She stated that she had six questions to present to the Commissioners. She began with a statement as to the number of Veterans currently residing in the Lawton facility. She stated that many of them were bedridden, and would likely "Never go home." She asked the Commissioners why ODVA Administration, namely Director Elliott and Ms. Williams, were sacrificing the care of Veterans for political profit.

Chairman Richey attempted to intervene. Ms. Kervin stated that the Chairman not take any of her five minutes. The Chairman stated to Ms. Kervin that she was making accusations, and that would not be accepted. The Chairman stated that her time was finished. A heated exchange between Ms. Kervin and the Chairman followed, at which time Chairman Richey stated that the room be cleared at 2:06pm. Ms. Kervin, upset by the reaction, left the room under protest.

Don Faulkner, former Mayor from the city of Talihina addressed the Commission. He stated that he had been asked why the city of Talihina had not presented an RFP. He stated that he would briefly present an oral RFP. He stated to the Commission the reasons why he felt the facility should stay in Talihina. He presented a letter from the Choctaw Nation stating that they were willing to sit down and have a conversation on anything that would need to be done to keep the center in Talihina. He asked the Commission how a new building would be taking care of veterans. He stated that it's people who take care of Veterans, not buildings. A brief discussion between Mr. Faulkner and Commissioner Smithson took place. The Commissioner asked Mr. Faulkner "But can we provide the Veterans better than what's there?" Mr. Faulkner stated in reply that there is great staff in Talihina, and thanked Ms. Williams and Director Elliott for pointing that out in their previous statements.

Pete Peterson, Chairman of the Oklahoma Veterans Counsel addressed the Commission. Mr. Peterson stated that like all in the room, he was there to make sure that the Veterans got "The best shot." He stated that the new location for the Veterans Center was a "Critical decision." He stated that it would impact both current and future Veterans. Mr. Peterson stated that the Commission needed to consider the distance from the new location to the hospital, the availability of qualified staff in a steady supply, a positive environment for the staff to work in, and located within a gracious community. He stated that the community should also be able to provide resources. He stated that "No state agency has the money they need." Mr. Peterson stated that the Commission needed to look at the "Long term.", as the decision made in the room would outlast all present there today. He asked that the Commission take into consideration what he had said. He stated that this needed to be a partnership, with the Veterans in mind.

An unknown individual in the gallery asked the Commission if they had considered scholarship programs to attract Doctors. A brief discussion followed by unidentifiable individuals in the room.

**X. LUNCH BREAK**

Chairman Richey called for a motion for lunch. Commissioner Secor made the motion, and many Commissioners responded “Second” simultaneously. Lunch was called at 2:22pm

**XI. CALL TO ORDER**

At 3:02pm Chairman Richey called the meeting back to order

**XII. PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS FOR REAL PROPERTY AND SITE SELECTION FOR RELOCATION OF THE TALIHINA VETERANS CENTER.**

- a. Holdenville, Oklahoma, presentation by Diana Swadley.
- b. Hugo, Choctaw County, Oklahoma, presentation by David Rawls .
- c. McAlester, Oklahoma, presentation by Kirk Ridenour, Director of Economic Development and Dr. Timothy Cathey, MD, Assistant Administrator of McAlester Regional Health Center.
- d. Muskogee, Oklahoma, presentation by Mayor Bob Coburn, Marie Synar, Industrial Development Director and Planning and Gary Garvin, Economic Development Director.
- e. Poteau, Oklahoma, presentation by Mayor Jeff Shockley, CEO of Eastern Oklahoma Medical Center, Representative Rick West, OK House District 3.
- f. Sallisaw, Oklahoma, presentation by Keith Skelton, City Manager, George Bormann, Economic Development Director, and Robin Haggard, Director of Finance

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT – TO DISMISS THE COMMISSION UNTIL SEPTEMBER 25, 2018 AT 8AM**

**a. CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman, Tom Richey called the adjournment at 4:37pm

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2018, 8:00 AM**

Members of the Commission and staff present at the table and presenting were:

Mr. Tom Richey, Chairman, Paralyzed American Veterans, Yukon, Navy  
Mr. Larry Van Schuyver, Vice Chairman, Military Order of Purple Heart, Edmond, Navy  
Mr. Jon Arthur, Commissioner, Disabled American Veterans, Grove, Air Force  
Mr. Pat Fite, Commissioner, Member at Large, Hobart, Army  
Mr. Gaylord “Z” Thomas, Commissioner, Member at Large, Guthrie, Air Force  
Mr. Gary Secor, Commissioner, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lawton, Army  
Mr. Lloyd Smithson, Commissioner, National Guard Association, Yukon, Air Force  
Mr. Jerry Ball, Commissioner, the American Legion, Guthrie, Army  
Mr. Paul Costilow, Commissioner, Member at Large, Yukon, Army  
Mr. Douglas Elliott, Executive Director  
Ms. Sarah Lane, ODVA Legal Counsel  
Ms. Jennifer Bloomfield, Education and Training Programs Administrator

**XIV. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richey at 8:08am.

**XV. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Richey proceeded with the roll. All Commissioners were present. Quorum present.

**XVI. INVOCATION**

Chairman Richey led the invocation.

**XVII. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Van Schuyver led the pledge.

**XVIII. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO VISITORS AND GUESTS**

Chairman Richey welcomed the visitors and guests.

**XIX. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF MEETING**

Chairman Richey defined the scope and purpose of the meeting.

**XX. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO TITLE 25 O.S. § SECTION 307(B)(3) DISCUSSING THE PURCHASE OR APPRAISAL OF REAL PROPERTY; DISCUSSION REGARDING THE REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS OF REAL PROPERTY FOR SITE SELECTION FOR RELOCATION OF THE TALIHINA VETERANS CENTER.**

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Thomas. A second was presented by Commissioner Smithson. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Ball, Costilow

- a. Action to Adjourn to Executive Session
- b. Review, Evaluation, and Discussion of Proposals for Purchase or Appraisal of Real Property Proposed for Site Selection for Relocation of the Oklahoma Veterans Center, Talihina Division.
- c. Action to Return to Open Meeting from Executive Session

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Smithson to come out of Executive Session, Commissioner Secor gave the second and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Costilow

Absent: Ball

**XXI. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. Discussion of Recommendation for Purchase of Real Property and Site Selection
  - i. Action

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Fite to cut the list by three, and postpone action pending site surveys in the cities of Poteau, Sallisaw, and Muskogee. A second was presented by Commissioner Arthur.

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Costilow

Absent: Ball

Action: The Commission will cut the list to three, Poteau, Sallisaw, and Muskogee. The Commission will postpone action pending site surveys in the cities of Poteau, Sallisaw, and Muskogee.

**XXII. NEW BUSINESS**

Pursuant to 25 O.S. § 311, "New Business" shall mean any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting (twenty-four hours prior to the meeting).

No new business

**XXIII. SUBMISSION AND DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS BY THE OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.**

Commissioner Secor stated that he would like to discuss the Pilot program in greater detail. He would like to present a report to the Commission at the next regular meeting. Commissioner Thomas stated that he would like to have the complete meeting packet presented to him before the next meeting, rather than just the agenda. Commissioner Smithson told the Commission that Shane Faulkner was working on getting the list of ODVA email address for the Commissioners, as well as their log-in information, and that needed to be communicated upon completion. Commissioner Van Schuyver stated that an official email list for the Commission needs to be presented to the centers, and the Commission needed to agree on what address was going to be used.

**XXIV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING DATE.**

Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
10:00AM  
Conference Room  
Vezey Veterans Complex  
2132 NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**i. Action**

Commissioner Secor stated that he thought a special one item meeting should take place before the regularly scheduled meeting. He stated that this meeting should take place after the site surveys to the three remaining cities in the running. Commissioner Secor suggested dates to the Commission. A brief discussion followed. A date of October 26<sup>th</sup> was suggested, with a start time of 10:00am.

A motion was put into place by Commissioner Secor to hold a special meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am for a one line item. A second was presented by Commissioner Thomas and the vote is as follows:

Aye: Richey, Van Schuyver, Arthur, Fite, Thomas, Secor, Smithson, Costilow

Absent: Ball

Action: The Commission will hold a special meeting October 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am.

**XXV. ADJOURNMENT**

**a. CHAIRMAN**

Commissioner Arthur put into place a motion to adjourn. All Commissioners present were in agreement. The Chairman, Tom Richey called the adjournment at 5:25pm

This meeting has been transcribed from an audio recorded source September 24th-September 25th, 2018 by ODVA Staff Member JGB. Transcription not noted to be in quotation is not and should not be interpreted as verbatim dialog and is provided merely as a summary of and interpretation of events.