

**OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 13th, 2023, 10:00 A.M.  
Vezey Veterans Complex  
2132 NE 36th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73111**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING:**

The Oklahoma Veterans Commission held a Regular Meeting on Friday, October 13, 2023, at 10:00 AM at the Vezey Veterans Complex 2132 NE 36th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111. A Notice of this meeting was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on December 11, 2022 and amended on September 5, 2023. Cass Newell served as the Clerk of the Commission for this Meeting. The Agenda and Minutes of the meeting actions are set out below.

**AGENDA:**

**CHAIRMAN ROB ALLEN:**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Allen called the meeting to order at 10:00AM

**II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

**A. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The roll was taken as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Present

Commissioner Ellington – Present

Commissioner Martin – Present

Commissioner Offel – Present

Commissioner Orr – Present

**B. DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

The Chair declared that a quorum was present.

**III. VERIFICATION OF PROPER NOTICE OF MEETING AND POSTING OF THE AGENDA.**

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to verify proper notice to the Secretary of State and posting of the agenda. The Clerk verified that Notice of this meeting was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on December 11, 2022, and amended on September 5, 2023 and the agenda was posted to the front door of the ODVA Central Office and was available at the reception desk of the ODVA Central Office on October 11, 2023, at 9:53 AM. The agenda was posted to the ODVA website on October 11, 2023, at 3:56 PM.

**IV. INVOCATION**

Commissioner Ellington led the Invocation.

**V. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**VI. ODVA STAFF AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Secretary of Military & Veterans Affairs John Nash

Executive Director Greg Slavonic

Deputy Director Shawn Kirkland

Director of Homes Rob Arrington

Communications Director Jennifer Bloomfield

Chief Financial Officer Lisa White

Construction Programs Administrator Nisha Young

ODVA General Counsel John Settle

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

Chairman Allen welcomed all visitors and guests to the Commission meeting and asked if anyone would like to introduce themselves to the Commission. Commissioner Allen introduced Senator Stanley to the Commission and those in attendance.

**VIII. BUSINESS**

**A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 21, 2023, OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to approve the August 21, 2023, Minutes.

Commissioner Orr seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**B. REPORTS, WITH DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: COMMISSIONER SIDNEY ELLINGTON:**

Commissioner Ellington gave report regarding employee turnover since last Commission meeting, direct care staff and direct care vacancies, and 2022 terminations and resignations agency wide. Advised next survey will be in November 2024.

**2. COMMISSIONER BRETT MARTIN:**

Commissioner Martin reported on Operation Panhandle Veteran (OPV) trip to Guymon, Hooker, and Beaver, Oklahoma. Commissioner Martin states messaging strategy is to keep getting out to the four corners of Oklahoma.

**C. GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. ADOPT 2024 OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE.**

There was discussion regarding which of the proposed schedules to use as a placeholder for 2024 Commission meetings.

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to schedule the 2024 Commission Meetings using the first Friday of each month and the locations set out below:

Friday, January 5, 2024 at 10:00 AM - Vezey Veterans Complex 2132 NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Friday, February 2, 2024 at 10:00 - Oklahoma State Veterans Home 1776 E Robinson Street, Norman, OK 73070

Friday, March 1, 2024 at 10:00 AM - Vezey Veterans Complex 2132 NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Friday, April 5, 2024 at 10:00 AM – Oklahoma State Veterans Home 1015 S Commerce Street, Ardmore, OK 73401

Friday, May 3, 2024 at 10:00 AM – Oklahoma State Veterans Home 3001 W Blue Starr Drive, Claremore, OK 74017

Friday, June 7, 2024 at 10:00 AM – Oklahoma State Veterans Home 501 SE Flower Mound, Lawton, OK 73501

Friday, July 12, 2024 at 10:00 AM - Vezey Veterans Complex 2132 NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Friday, August 2, 2024 at 10:00 AM – Oklahoma State Veterans Home 1071 S 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Clinton, OK 73601

Friday, September 6, 2024 at 10:00 AM - Vezey Veterans Complex 2132 NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Friday, October 4, 2024 at 10:00 AM – Oklahoma State Veterans Home 304 Fairlane Avenue, Sulphur, OK 73086

Friday, November 1, 2024 at 10:00 AM – Oklahoma State Veterans Home 2343 South Kerr Boulevard, Sallisaw, OK 74955

Friday, December 6, 2024 at 10:00 AM - Vezey Veterans Complex 2132 NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was continued discussion regarding which schedule to use as a placeholder or 2024 Commission meetings.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**2. NEW FISCAL YEAR PRIORITIES.**

Commissioner Allen stated the Commission should continue to foster a positive command climate as well as fiscal transparency.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF JOHN M. O'CONNOR, PLLC, AS OUTSIDE GENERAL COUNSEL FOR THE OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION AND THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, JULY 1, 2023, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024, PURSUANT TO TITLE 74 OKL. ST. ANN. § 18c.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to approve the proposed Engagement Agreement of John M. O'Connor.

Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**D. REPORTS, WITH DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. OKLAHOMA SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND MILITARY: JOHNATHAN NASH, DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION:**

Secretary Nash gave an update on work he and Senator Stanley are doing to fill vacant Commission seats. Cites lack of response from veteran groups DAV, VFW, and PVA. Secretary Nash anticipates response from DAV, however he has not heard from the other organizations. Commissioner

Martin states he has reached out to PVA and VFW, and has not received any response.

Secretary Nash gave update on trip to Choctaw and Mid-Del City with Senator Stanley. He will be traveling to Washington D.C. to discuss federal funding for public schools and military programs such as JROTC.

**2. ODVA: ADMIRAL GREG SLAVONIC, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION:**

Director Slavonic states this past month he has traveled to Sallisaw and Clinton with Commissioner Ellington.

Director Slavonic states that Commissioner Martin will represent the Commission on the Veterans Suicide Task Force and ODVA will be represented by Alfonso Garza.

Director Slavonic states that Rob Teel has been appointed and will represent ODVA as the AI and GenAI expert.

Director Slavonic advised that he is working with Nicole Miller to research appropriate candidates for selection of ODVA Legislative Liaison.

Director Slavonic states the selection of a CPA firm to conduct agreed upon procedures to validate the financials of the ODVA will be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

Director Slavonic states SB415 ramifications to Oklahoma Veterans that are 100% disabled will be discussed at the next Commission meeting. Senator Stanley has scheduled a meeting with Secretary Nash and representatives from the OTC and ODVA for October 30, 2023 to discuss SB415.

- vii. Discuss and possible action regarding the approval of the OVC/ODVA Research and Copying fee schedule pursuant to Title 51 O. S. §24A.1 *et seq.*

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to approve the OVC/ODVA Research and Copying Fee Schedule.

Commissioner Offel seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was discussion of the proposed fees and research conducted to determine reasonable amounts charged.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**3. ODVA: NISHA YOUNG, CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATOR, UPDATES, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:**

Ms. Young gave updates on Ardmore New Veterans Home Project, Sallisaw Veterans Home construction, Talihina Veterans Home security and maintenance, and Union Soldiers Cemetery. Sallisaw construction is 65% complete with a tentative 100% completion date of November 2024. A digital copy of this presentation is available as an attachment to these minutes.

**4. ODVA: LISA A. WHITE, ODVA CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

Ms. White gave updates to ODVA FY24 budget and FY25 budget submission. A digital copy of this presentation is available as an attachment to these minutes.

**5. ODVA: SHAWN KIRKLAND, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, REPORTS, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RE:**

Deputy Director Kirkland reports that Talihina now has two (2) residents who wished to stay until facility closure. Closing of facility is moving forward with supplies and equipment being redistributed.

**6. ODVA: ROB ARRINGTON, DIRECTOR OF HOMES, REPORTS, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RE:**

Rob Arrington reports a proposed strategy to increase revenue and reduce costs.

**i. Center License Renewal discussion and possible action re:**

1. Ardmore
2. Claremore
3. Clinton
4. Lawton
5. Norman
6. Sulphur
7. Talihina

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to Table the Center License Renewals until next meeting.

Commissioner Offel seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was lengthy discussion of ODVA authority to issue licenses to facilities and request for research of the issue.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**7. ODVA: JOHN M. SETTLE, ODVA GENERAL COUNSEL, REPORT RE: STATUS OF CURRENT LITIGATION IN WHICH ODVA IS A NAMED PARTY AND ANY POTENTIAL LITIGATION, DISCUSSION:**

i. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION REGARDING STATUS OF CURRENT LITIGATION IN WHICH ODVA IS A NAMED PARTY AND POTENTIAL LITIGATION, PURSUANT TO TITLE 25 O.S. §307 (B) (4), CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN A PUBLIC BODY AND ITS ATTORNEY CONCERNING A PENDING INVESTIGATION, CLAIM, OR ACTION IF THE PUBLIC BODY, WITH THE ADVICE OF ITS ATTORNEY, DETERMINES THAT DISCLOSURE WILL SERIOUSLY IMPAIR THE ABILITY OF THE PUBLIC BODY TO PROCESS THE CLAIM OR CONDUCT A PENDING INVESTIGATION, LITIGATION, OR PROCEEDING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

a. Discussion and Possible Action to enter Executive Session. ODVA General Counsel advised the Commission that disclosure of the discussions concerning the current and potential ODVA litigation cases will seriously impair the ability of the ODVA to process any claims, conduct any pending investigations and litigation on behalf of the State.

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to enter into Executive Session.

Commissioner Orr seconded the Motion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

The Commission entered Executive Session at 12:00 PM and recording was paused.

- b. Report of current and potential ODVA litigation:
  - CAPE v. ODVA, Ok. Cnty, CJ-2021-4460
  - HERD v. ODVA, Ok. Cnty, CJ-2021-2113
  - MORRISON v. ODVA, Carter Cnty, CJ-2023-02
  - OMES/ODVA v. ORCUTT WINSLOW, Sequoyah Cnty, CJ-2023-135
  - HOEY CONSTRUCTION v. ODVA, Rogers Cnty, OFM-2021-02
  - TATE v. ODVA – Rogers Cnty, CJ-2022-195
  - ARTIS v. ODVA – GTCA Claim Filed 09/15/23
  - CROSTON v. ODVA – GTCA Claim filed 09/15/23
  - WRIGHT v. ODVA – GTCA Claim filed 09/05/23
  - Potential Talihina State Veterans Home quiet title litigation.
- c. Status Report, Military Order of the Purple Heart v. Allen, et al. – Ok. Cnty, CV-2022-1551
- d. Action to return to Open Session.

Action to return to Open Meeting from Executive Session was considered. Commissioner Martin made the Motion to Return from Executive Session. Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye

The Clerk notified the Chair the Roll Call vote was 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion passed.

Meeting doors were opened and recording started.

The Commission Returned to Open Meeting at 1:59 PM.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**X. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS BY THE OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF AGENDA ITEMS IN ADVANCE OF EACH MEETING.**

Chairman Allen set November 6, 2023 as the deadline for submission of agenda items for the next Meeting.

**XI. OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING DATE AND POSSIBLE NOVEMBER 2023 SPECIAL MEETING DATE TO INCLUDE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS.**

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

November 17th, 2023 @ 9:30AM

Vesey Veterans Complex

2132 NE 36th Street

Oklahoma City OK 73111

**XII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ADJOURNMENT.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

The Motion is not debatable.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye

The Clerk notified the Chair that the Roll Call vote was 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:07 PM.