

OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 26, 2018 10AM
Vezey Veterans Complex
2132 NE 36th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73111

A special meeting of the Oklahoma Veterans Commission was held at the Vezey Veterans Complex, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on October 26th, 2018 at 10:00 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 Vezey 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. 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

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2018, 10:00 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Van Schuyver at 10:00am

II. ROLL CALL

Vice-Chairman Van Schuyver proceeded with the roll. Chairman Richey was not present. All other Commissioners were present. Quorum present.

III. INVOCATION

Commissioner Ball led the invocation.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Smithson led the pledge.

V. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO VISITORS AND GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Van Schuyver welcomed visitors and guests.

VI. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF MEETING

Vice-Chairman Van Schuyver defined the scope and purpose of the meeting as a continuation of the September meetings regarding the review and evaluation of proposals of real property for site selection for relocation of the Talihina Veterans Center.

VII. 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 Arthur to go into Executive Session. A second was presented by Commissioner Secor. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

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

- 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 Secor to return to open meeting. A second was presented by Commissioner Fite. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

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

Action: Meeting was called back to order at 2:00pm

VIII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Commissioner Fite stated *“Mr. Chairman, before we do this, I would like to first say thank you to all of the folks out there in the gallery. It amazes me that they spent all this time today here, waiting for this answer. Their interest in trying to do what’s right for the Veterans. Most of them I recognize from three or four weeks ago when they were out there also, so, thank you very much for your interest. Also, thank you to the three communities that are here today, and all six communities. We got some great choices. I think this job was made both easier and harder to have to decide among these communities. Again, I want to thank you all very much.”*

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Fite to vote on each proposed site/city individually brought up in turn. A second was presented by Commissioner Secor.

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

Action: Each of the remaining three candidates will be called individually for a yea/nay vote

The Vice Chairman stated that they would begin with the 90 acre plot proposed by the town of Sallisaw.

Motion was put into place by Commissioner Secor to vote on the 90 acre plot proposed by the city of Sallisaw. A second was presented by Commissioner Fite. A vote was taken and the vote is as follows:

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

Nay: Ball

Absent: Richey

Action: The 90 acre plot offered by the city of Sallisaw was selected as the new location of the Talihina Veterans Center.

b. Community Recognition for RFP Responses

i. Action

Discussion verbatim:

- B. **Commissioner Secor stated** “ Commissioner Fite mentioned a few things, but to the top three that we just voted on, I want to tell you personally from someone coming from the Lawton area, that this was a very very good presentation from all of those cities. It made my job really hard. I was glad to see that other cities in the state of Oklahoma care as much for Veterans as Lawton does just being outside of an Army base. It was just remarkable, and I take my hat off to you to those three cities. Thank you.”
- C. **Commissioner Smithson stated** “I believe as a Commission, and probably at our next discussion, we really need to recognize for each and every city that put in for, as Commissioner Secor advised. It was a hard decision, and there was something that as you could tell from sitting out in the lobby, that we took quite a bit of time to make sure to take a look at what was done, what we felt was best, for not only the families of our veterans, but for our veterans themselves. It wasn’t an easy decision. This whole process has not been easy, but it’s one that we have taken to heart, that we’ve tried very very hard to make sure that everything was looked at the best that we could. At the next meeting in November we should somehow properly recognize each and every one of the cities that submitted any bid for this.”
- D. **Commissioner Arthur stated** “Well, we had the factors that we used, but the outside factors, the continuing factors are our employees. We have to think about those employees and what moves matter to them. Will we keep them, will we lose them, whatever. So it was great input from the different cities, and it was fun going to visit them, I wish we get better weather next time, but anyway, it was a good time and we enjoyed this pursuit of the proper site.”
- E. **Commissioner Ball stated** “I would like to thank the hospitality from all the cities that we received. It was evident that you all worked very very hard on that. More information, it really was, really was a tough decision.
- F. **Commissioner Thomas stated** “Going last, I would second everything that everybody has said. That it was a great effort by everyone, and it showed it was a hard decision, but it was an easy decision, and I think someone said to their wife that we were going to win today because we didn’t have a bad choice among them. We appreciate that from all of you.”
- G. **Commissioner Costilow stated** “Being next to last, I would like to thank everybody for your courtesy, the hard work putting all this together. It was amazing the information that you presented us. It made it as he said

difficult, but it also made it easy to go through. You did it all in a very methodical way, and I appreciate your professionalism, and your courtesies on the visits and showing us around. I feel like I made some new friends in Eastern Oklahoma.”

- H. **Commissioner Thomas stated** *“The people we didn’t thank was Sarah, and Carrie Karman here who helped us through this as well. They did a lot of that organizing and made it as easy to do as possible. We appreciate you Sarah and Carrie. Thank you.”*
- I. **Executive Director Doug Elliott stated** *“I do have some things I want to say. For all the cities, I want you to know that we did everything we could to keep this system as pure as possible, to not basically taint it in any way. The going and visiting the sites, there’s always going to be someone who’s going to try to take some liberties and try to influence some of the members or myself and try to move this one way or the other. I can assure you this was a very spirited conversation in here about which city, and every one of you rose to the top at one time or didn’t make the cut. Everyone had good points. So I can just tell you it was a very spirited debate in here. I appreciate the Commissioners, but I really appreciate you guys taking the time and going to the lengths that you did. Thank you so much.”*

IX. 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).

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

- a. Commissioner Ball requested a copy of the Minutes from the previous regular meeting.
- b. Commissioner Ball requested to discuss the trip that was taken to Indianapolis.
- c. Commissioner Smithson requested to see a generic report of deaths in our veterans’ centers per month, as well as cause of deaths for the months of September and October.
- d. Commissioner Thomas reminded the Commission they would like to discuss with the staff of auditors the most recent audit.
- e. Commissioner Van Schuyver requested a review of the approved meeting schedule for the 2019 year, and the possibility of moving the day back to Fridays rather than Thursdays.
- f. Commissioner Thomas requested to discuss the strategic plan.
- g. Commissioner Ball requested a capital improvement plan for each center.

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

Friday, November 16th, 2018

10:00AM

Conference Room

Vezey Veterans Complex

2132 NE 36th Street

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

XII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. CHAIRMAN

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

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

Action: Meeting adjournment at 2:40pm

This meeting has been transcribed from an audio recorded source October 26th, 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.