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## **Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs Begins Process to Cease Operations at Talihina Veterans Home**

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – The Oklahoma Veterans Commission discussed the process of ceasing operations at the Talihina Veterans Home during the meeting held at the Vezey Veterans Complex on Thursday. The Commission made the difficult decision with a vote of 5-0 for the agency to begin the process as soon as possible.

During the meeting ODVA staff described the ongoing effort to replace the Talihina Veterans Home with the State Veterans Home currently under construction in Sallisaw. As construction on the Sallisaw Home has slowed with an estimated completion date now in October 2024, a conversation was necessary regarding the timeline of this long-expected transition due to continuing budget complications of the Talihina Home.

“The operational challenges in Talihina are to a point of greatly impacting the rest of the agency” said Deputy Director, Shawn Kirkland after the conclusion of the Thursday meeting. “While a difficult one, the decision today is the fiscally responsible thing to do for the ODVA”.

“Our first priority is of course the residents and staff who are currently at the Talihina Home,” Interim Executive Director Greg Slavonic added. “There will be many conversations with them in the days to come as we work to provide the best possible outcome for all involved.”

Jennifer Bloomfield, the Communications Director for ODVA, emphasized the importance of honest and transparent communication with residents and their families, the veteran community, the staff, and the citizens of Oklahoma during the next of several steps. “This is not something that is going to happen overnight”, Bloomfield said. “We will be making sure that our residents and their families, as well as staff, are fully informed and assisted throughout the entirety. Ideally, we would hope to see all of them elect to transfer to one of our other Homes as we await the completion of Sallisaw.”

The agency noted that all current residents and staff of the Talihina Home will hold priority status for transfer to the Sallisaw Home upon its completion.

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