

MINUTES

STATE VETERANS COUNCIL SEMI-SEMI ANNUAL MEETING

State House – Concord, New Hampshire

January, 2009 NHES Conference Room 4:00 p.m.

Meeting opened at 2:30

1. Productivity Update

- a. As of 12/31/08 there were just over 21 million dollars in recoveries in this fiscal year. In FY 07 the agency had a 42 million dollar recovery rate.
- b. Since the last meeting in June 2008, we gained a number of clients. Our number of clients currently stands at 5899. We are continuing to purge old files and are therefore finding some clients who have passed that we still might maintain on the books. The number is small but we continue the purge to ensure our numbers remain accurate.
- c. Additionally, the agency tracked inquiries since the June meeting and in 6 months time there have been 3339 inquiries

2. Budget Status

- a. 2010 and 2011 Budget Hearings continue
- b. The only requests for increases in any classes are Salary and Benefit classes.
- c. In April 2008 the agency re-evaluated travel arrangements and came up with a plan to decrease mileage of Service Officers and yet still be able to carry out our mission to assist NH veterans and their families. It is still uncertain if this plan will alleviate a shortage in FY09 but the agency is dedicated to conserving as many resources as possible without lowering our quality of service. Budget remains on track otherwise.

3. Legislative Changes / Updates

- a. A spreadsheet was given to all SVC members to show the outcome of legislative matters pertaining to NH veterans. Despite numerous attempts, there were no changes to the current veterans property tax statutes.
- b. There was one significant addition to our tasking. SB520 now requires the agency to develop and distribute a veterans resources handbook biennially.

4. Procedural Changes (progress)

a. NH FIRST / ERP

1. Implementation is in full swing and the agency is ready.
2. FY10/11 budget implementation will be the first process initiated into the new system.
3. Three agency personnel are scheduled for training on this program in July 2008.

b. Computerization

1. Laptops are now available and in use for traveling Service Officers.

c. Audit Results

1. We had 9 state audit observations. All of these observations were minor. Final results were presented to council members.

5. SVC Attendances

a. SB 327 Commission to Study Veterans Employment

1. The commission meetings are progressing well. To date we have gathered information on numerous benefits available to veterans throughout the state and federally. We gather this information to be able to determine how the state can best implement methods to supplement areas where assistance may prove to be deficient.

b. NH Tax Assessor Training with DRA

1. We have attended several Tax Assessor Training events with the DRA to assist in educating the assessors with veterans documentation and the intent of the tax credit statutes regarding veterans. These sessions have been extremely successful for all involved.

c. State Women Veterans Coordinators Conference 2009

1. The agency is hosting this event and finalized dates have been set for June 2 through June 5 2009.

6. The New Donation Fund

a. Set-up and Maintenance Procedures have been coordinated.

b. The Council members and Director discussed a concern that approval for expenditures (by the Council) could not be accomplished at only semi-annual meetings. The Chairman then made a motion to allow Council members to approve written requests for expenditures by a 2/3 vote via mail or e-mail procedure. The vote was seconded by General Jacobsmeyer and approved unanimously.

c. As there were also concerns about use, acceptance, and solicitation (none should be allowed) for the fund, Mr. Bernard then made a motion that would require development of written guidelines for the donation fund use and acceptance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leidner and approved unanimously. Written guidance will be forthcoming.

d. There was also discussion and agreement that 2 Council members, and 2 agency personnel (the Director and Service Officer) be allowed Power of Attorney to have access to the funds again, only with approval by 2/3 of the Council members.

8. Mr. Bernard made a motion at 3:45 to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leidner and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed,

Mary Morin, Director
New Hampshire State Veterans Council