

Minutes

STATE VETERANS COUNCIL SEMI-SEMI ANNUAL MEETING

Concord, New Hampshire

March 13, 2015 Legislative Office Building, Room 103
Concord, New Hampshire 03301 at 1:00pm

Attendees: Mary Morin, Chris McIntyre, James Adams, Bobby Broneske and Ken Leidner

1. **Productivity:** SVC members were briefed on FY14 productivity. There were approximately 7,000 active clients with a recovery rate of over 71 million dollars. (Exhibit #1)
2. **Budget:** Members were provided with an in depth explanation regarding the budget process and the issues the agency has faced during the current FY14-15 budget. (20 million dollar budget reduction which our share was originally \$25,000 but reduced to \$12,556, \$11,000 salary/benefits sweep as well as the 3.68% mandatory lapse required by Governor Hassan) (Exhibit #2)
A copy of the agency's operating expenses spreadsheet covering the last 10 years was furnished to members (Exhibit #3) and it was highlighted that the agency's operating costs have remained the same for the last decade except for when a vehicle or equipment was acquired. Information was provided that the agency pursued 2 new positions and received 1 and that we requested out-of-state travel funds so that the director wouldn't have to pay her own travel costs to and from conferences but the request was denied. Also discussed was the agency's request for 5 scanners from DoIT and the manner in which the request was processed. Members were informed that just prior to the meeting the director was told that the request was denied by the waiver committee. The benefit of having the scanners was discussed. (reduction in processing time by 4-6 weeks by allowing our service officers to scan information directly into the VA system rather than the VA receiving the forms and sending them out to be scanned). The director expressed the desire to rewrite the justification letter and define more clearly the benefit of acquiring the scanners.
3. **Legislative Changes/Updates:** Members were given a copy of the FY14 legislative issues/status spreadsheet of legislation tracked by our agency. (Exhibit #4)
4. **Procedural Changes (progress)**
 - a. **NH First/ERP:** Members were briefed concerning success in completing a third budget closing operation within the NH First budget tracking system.
 - b. **Visitation Schedule/Personnel Issues:** An update was given on staffing and the members were informed of our newest employee's resignation.
 - c. **Commission on PTSD/TBI:** Members were informed of the current status of the commission and that the agency director is a member.

d. State Initiatives: Members were briefed on the following initiatives:

- No Wrong Door- (Under the umbrella of DHHS, accessible through Service Link and Community Mental Health Agencies)
- "Have you served?" Campaign- The campaign targets everyone to ask the question in order to best assist our veterans.
- Military Culture Training- Providing veterans reference guides.
- NH Courts Justice Involved Veterans Program
- Vet to Vet Program- Managed by the agency
- PARIS (Public Assistance Reporting System) Project: -Taken over from DHHS and managed by the agency. The program will identify veterans who are on public assistance and help transfer them to federal roles in order to reduce NH Medicaid spending. The state found discrepancies within DHHS (in/out program) that created huge overpayments.

5. SVC Attendances:

- a. NASDVA Conference: Best practices were discussed.
 - b. VA Advisory Committee for Women Veterans: The director informed the members that recommendations are answered right away, no consecutive terms are allowed, and that her term is almost up.
 - c. SB 75 Relative to unfair trade practices targeting veterans: The director discussed a recent meeting where she briefed attorneys and financial planners "to get the word out" regarding this serious issue and also that this legislation has no opposition.
 - d. HB 0501 Allowing municipalities to extend the veteran's property tax credit to residents who served in the armed forces for not less than one year: Members discussed that this legislation was retained in committee for further discussion and that the director is working directly with the committee to iron out the wording on the legislation.
6. Other Business: SVC Members expressed concern regarding budget cuts and the denial of the 5 scanners that were requested from DoIT and asked how they could help. It was decided that the next meeting will be in late September. The specific day to be determined at a later time.
7. How Can The SVC Members Help? Discussion ensued as to how the members could assist the agency by attending legislative hearings and also getting the word out about the benefit of scanners in the agency.