

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013

The Advisory Board met all of its requirements as required under Local Law #53. Following are the notes from the approved agenda and minutes.

- May 5, 2013 meeting of the full board, attendance was taken, light refreshments were provided.

Items covered include; Congratulations to Queens Board member John Rowan on his reelection to National President, Vietnam Veterans of America.

Discussion of the May '13 "Crain's" front page article outlining returning Veterans and how they will be cared for. NYS is estimated to receive 44,000 returning Veterans in 2014. It is not clear that NYC is ready for its share of these returning men & women. VAB will inform the 2014 NYC Council members. Also a recognition was made of how our community has been effected by the storms of the winter and how local Veteran Organizations were a significant part of the recovery.

The growing VA claims back log is not acceptable.

Veteran Service Officer availability for NYC Veterans is not adequate for the current Veteran population. Look for problems if the predictions of returning service man and women are true.

A discussion of the request from NYS Senator Gregg Ball to support Senate Bill S 2803 and Assembly Bill A 7319. To amend NYS contract law in relation to state contract preference for service disabled veterans small businesses. Members will investigate and act accordingly.

Discuss the expected January '14 move of Veterans Hall. NYC will find additional space in the Municipal Building and build

our space.

Discuss the invitations to a Candidates forum on Veterans issues that we sent out to all candidates for Mayor on April 23, 2013. We will follow up. Discuss how we get the word out about the NYC Veterans Employment Fair on May 28, 2013 at MOVA. All members will inform their groups. IAVA has the RRRR, Rapid Response Referral Program in place. We should all use it. A list of the 12 upcoming events for May was distributed. Members are requested to encourage their groups to attend these events.

- June 19, 2013 Meeting of the full board, attendance was taken, light refreshments were provided.

Items covered were the distribution of the re appointment letters to NY VAB members. We heard from our guest speaker, Ms. Betsy Fabricant on her report on the service to the blind provider, Visions. They have a Veteran orientated program for rehabilitation services, mobility training and independent living skills.

A discussion of archiving material in “Veterans Hall” prior to the expected January ’14 move; concluded that all individual units were to be responsible for their material. NYC will inform us through MOVA as the schedule to move Veteran Office space proceeds.

Discussion on the lack luster response from the military for producing events in NYC that recognize service. these events bring in revenue to hotel, food & tourist related businesses. The NYC Military Public Affairs Officers are feeling the Washington budget pinch. The NYC Veteran Community will support their efforts to involve the military in our Veteran activities. MOVA will send an updated VAB membership list as requested by members. Women Veterans needs was the next discussion. The focus is on Health care, Family and child care issues, the VA Women's Veterans Clinic at Brooklyn, VA. Black Veterans for Social Justice has 500 units of

housing. Brooklyn, Bedford- Stuyvesant Veterans are looking to be more active in NYC Veterans affairs. How does VAB expand our influence in the community was discussed. The VAB is looking for sponsorship to supply the members with business cards & letterhead. Members propose a “Veteran’s Night” event with local unions and fraternal organizations.

- September 26, 2013 Meeting of the full board, attendance taken, light refreshments were provided.

Items covered were the update from Commissioner Holiday on the planned move from “Veterans Hall”. MOVA will show the floor plan for the new location at One Center St. A discussion of the Proposed Int. 480-A, a bill that will establish a Veteran liaison program involving every agency within the City. Each agency head or commissioner will be required to appoint an employee as a liaison to Veterans. These liaisons will be trained by MOVA and will work with the office to ensure that every Veteran’s needs are addressed no matter if they reach out to MOVA or to an agency directly. The purpose is to expedite service according to Kelly Taylor, Legislative Attorney, Council on Committee on Veterans, NYCC.

A discussion of “NYC Veteran’s Week” and the events that make it work will bring more attention to the needs of NYC Veterans. A working copy of the events for the week was distributed. Events range from school visits, to monument cleaning and education, to visits to local military bases. There will be press conferences to explain the week to the City residences, a patriots Tour along with an arts & service celebration by the Veteran’s Artists program. The Toys for Tots Program will be launched during this week. MOVA has received a grant from Robin Hood to train VSO’s over the next 18 months starting Memorial Day. Work Force One, the one stop shopping program for NYC Veterans was discussed. More

information will be available later on this year as these programs develop. October 24th is the date for the celebration of Hispanic Culture in the Veteran's Community. The consensus is that there needs to be more interaction between The Veterans Community and the Hispanic Community. Information will be sent to all members for distribution and participation.

- October 24, 2013 meeting of the full board, attendance was taken, light refreshments were provided.

VAB received a briefing from Fisher Wallace Laboratories on their new stimulator that treats insomnia, anxiety, depression & chronic pain. The Veteran legislative agendas of the VFW, American Legion, Catholic & Jewish War Veterans was discussed. The AFL, CIO "Union Veteran Council" chaired by J. Cox was discussed as a possible opportunity for veteran employment. A legislative committee was formed by the MOVA members Lee Covino (SI) & Pat Devine (Bx), they will keep us informed of legislation that effects our community. Discussion on how MOVA is a Veterans Resources Center and how it helps our community was very positive. Looking forward to further from MOVA to help our community remain strong and connected. Further discussion on the move to One Center St. was engaged. Timing may require that "Veteran Hall" move to its final location in increments. Because of construction delays the groups on the 8th floor may have to move to the 3rd floor of 346 Broadway as we transition to the Municipal Building. Local Law 480-A discussed in our prior meeting was passed by the NYCC. This Bill supersedes Executive Order # 110. Following up on the invitations sent to all the candidates for Mayor, we have asked for space on the "Intrepid" for the candidates night. The VA backlog on claims is a very hot topic in the Veteran's Community. Relief from this condition is necessary in the immediate future. There was a consensus of the

board to stay on after the election until informed by the Mayor's Office and by the NY City Council.

Veterans Day is fast approaching; all VAB members will be invited to the Mayors Breakfast held at Gracie Mansion.

Black Veterans for Social Justice was awarded two SSVF Grants to continue their good work in the community. The focus on women with families by BVSJ is a very important and very strong pillar of their program. This is very helpful in the face of the returning veterans and their needs in 2014.

The Republic of Korea has reached out to MOVA regarding the need to update the information on the NYC Korean Veterans Memorial in Historic Battery Park. A power point of the upgrades to the memorial will be sent to VAB members. Legislative goals introduced by VAB member Marvin Jeffcoat (Queens) were discussed. Items include; Funding for VSO's, The Veterans Enterprise Opportunity Act, S 7489 & A 10388, The alternative Veteran's Property Tax Exemption; S 4387 & A 7957 2011-2012, Civil Service

Veterans Buy Back bill, S 6904 & A 8067B, The Traumatic Brain Injury Bill S 6089 & A 9473, Veterans Courts, the PFC Joseph Dwyer Veteran's Peer-to-Peer Support Program.

Veterans Courts have shown itself to be a very valuable addition to the tools the DA has when seeking justice for infractions to the law. The VAB has been very influential in encouraging that this system be expanded in all City & County Courts. There is a desire on the part of all state wide Veterans organizations that this system be incorporated into all the NYS Judicial Districts. Copies of the letters sent to all the candidates were distributed to the board.

The issues around the high rate of suicide were discussed at length. NYC has in place the Suicide Prevention Initiative to study why the rate of suicide is so high in the Veterans Community nationwide.

The PFC Joseph Dwyer Veterans peer-to-peer support program is in place to help identify and avoid this tragedy.

The invitation to give testimony at the NYCC Committee on Small Business was discussed. VAB will develop its testimony and attend.

- December 10 2013 meeting of the full board, attendance was taken.

Items discussed were the follow up on the legislative items of the year, plans for receiving the next administration were discussed. A update on the move from Veterans Hall were made. The Commissioner gave a Service Representative report. They are going to where the Vets are, measuring the action and filing claims on behalf of those Veterans who request it. This is a long process that must be maintained. Current locations getting service are the Harlem Vet Center, Jericho House, local Collages, the officers work 35 hours per week.

Included in this report is a memo from the United War Veterans Council Ex. Director, Pat Gualtieri, thanking the Veterans Advisory Board for its support for the successful agenda of events that were produced in NYC this year to honor service.