



**County of El Dorado
Meeting Minutes
Veteran Affairs Commission**

Todd Smith, District I – Alternate John Poimiroo
 Tim Thompson, District II – Alternate Roger Reynolds
 Kurt Raffetto, District III – Alternate Jake Parsons
 Ken Welch, District IV – Alternate Timothy “Tim” Page
 Vacant, District V – Alternate Phillip Houseworth
 Lance Poinsett, Secretary Ex-Officio

Patricia Morello, Recording Clerk of Veteran Affairs Commission

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Thursday, May 21, 2020 @ 1200 hours

Veteran Affairs Commission Agendas and Minutes are available for viewing in the Veteran Memorial Building lobby at 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville CA 95667 and online <http://www.edcgov.us/veterans/commission>

CALL TO ORDER - PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG occurred 1201 hours (meeting held virtually video and conference call)

ROLL CALL

District	Present	Absent
I	Poimiroo	Smith
II	Thompson	Reynolds
III	Raffetto, Parsons	
IV	Welch	Page
V	Houseworth	

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME OF GUESTS

Patty Moley, HHSA, Asst. Director of Self-Sufficiency and Community Services; Don Semon HHSA Director; Richard Todd, HHSA Program Manager; Shawn Corely, Assistant CAO; Yvonne Kollings, HHSA CFO; Yasmin Hichborn, HHSA Department Analyst II;

ADOPTION OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR (All items on the Consent Calendar are to be approved by one motion unless a Commission member requests separate action on a specific item including moving items to or from the Consent Calendar and adopt the Agenda and the Consent Calendar for discussion. At the appropriate time as called by the Chair, members of the public may make a comment on matters on the Consent Calendar prior to action.

Note: *Vice-Chair Raffetto reports the agenda reflects June 11, 2020 date, and makes motion to correct.*

- Tim Thompson made motion to adopt agenda with correction and approve March 12, 2020 minutes, John Poimiroo made the 2nd motion. Consent calendar approved.*

CONSENT CALENDAR (Smith)

1. Chair of the Veteran Affairs Commission recommending the Commission approve the MINUTES of the regular meeting of March 12, 2020. - Approved

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

- Tot (Transient Occupancy Tax) (Raffetto/vacant)
 - Future funding – discussion (Raffetto/CAO/HHSA)
 - Attached: 2020 Capacity Assessment of the El Dorado County Department of Veteran Affairs

Don Semon: The CAO, Don Semon, Kurt Raffetto, Todd Smith and Supervisor Veerkamp met on March 3, 2020, to discuss the idea of “untying” the Veterans Grant Funding from the TOT 5% allocation, and making it a set amount that could be a line item within the County Budget. During the meeting, Todd voiced a concern about the current staffing level within Veteran Affairs. Todd said he felt the county should have two additional staff members added to the office, in order to meet the workload needs. At the time, Don Semon said he would have to have the work analyzed before being able to confirm Todd’s assertion. Shortly after the meeting, Patty Moley worked with the HHSA Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team to analyze the workload and staffing within Veteran Affairs.

- The results of the Capacity Assessment confirmed what Todd thought in that Veteran Affairs is currently understaffed by two positions (a Senior Veterans Service Officer and an Office Assistant).
- The capacity assessment indicated that Veteran Affairs has experienced a 60% increase in claims over the last four years, while remaining at the same level of staffing.
- According to the 2020 annual report of the California Association of Veterans Service Officers, El Dorado County has 13,779 veterans. The report indicates that 20.9% (2,879) of those veterans are receiving benefits, as compared to the average in California of 28%. If El Dorado County Veteran Affairs was at the 28% average, it would equate to an additional 979 veterans receiving benefits through our Veteran Affairs Department. This may be an indication that there is a need for additional marketing & outreach to veterans in our community.
- The capacity assessment further indicated that appointments at Veteran Affairs are currently out 2 to 6 weeks, with wait times for walk-ins ranging between 30 minutes & 3 hours.
- Additional concerns, captured within the capacity assessment, include medals not being distributed timely, paper files not being archived in eight years, and some Medi-Cal forms not being returned to Social Services Income Support as part of our VA medical cost avoidance program.
- During the most recent audit cycle of the Veteran Affairs Department, we had approximately 400 claims that had not been attached into the VetPro System, which could potentially jeopardizes our State funding.

Don Semon discussed the results of the capacity assessment with both Kurt and Todd. The discussion centered around the idea of moving forward with reducing the amount of money given to the Veterans Commission Grant Funding Program through the 5%

TOT by the cost of one of those two positions (the Sr. VSR at approximately \$92k) in order to better serve our veterans. Part of that discussion included a commitment that HHSA would request the other position (Office Assistant) as part of their SFY 20/21 budget request to the Board of Supervisors, understanding that the ultimate decision on the second position would be up to the Board of Supervisors. Todd and Kurt requested this item be brought to the Veterans Commission for further discussion and potentially a recommendation. In addition, they also requested that the discussion of potentially “untying” the Veterans Commission Grant Funding Program from the 5% TOT be brought to this commission meeting as well.

Don also provided the historical numbers for the 5% TOT allocation as follows;

FY13/14 - \$97k	
FY14/15 - \$108k	
FY15/16 - \$140k	
FY16/17 - \$160k	
FY17/18 - \$165k	
FY18/19 - \$205k	
FY19/20 -	<u>\$265k</u>

\$163K average with the last two years increasing by 25% and 29%, respectively

Shawn Corely, Assistant CAO: COVID 19 will have budget impacts to include TOT revenues, yet good projections are not yet available. Ms. Corley discussed over all County information and potential fiscal implications, and notes Statewide there is not enough information available on what changes may be occurring.

Commissioner Comments:

Kurt Raffetto: Todd Smith and myself, at times, differ in our opinions in how to support the TOT, but we are in agreement that reductions to the funding stream may impact future TOT allocation and grants. It’s harder and harder to justify to continuing funding as currently in place given the budgetary crisis we are now seeing and will go through. The reality is, it’s really up to the BOS and CAO to fund the SrVSR position for the VSO.

John Poimiroo: Years ago, the success of the voter approved TOT and resulting revenue stream was made with the “promise” to share funds with veterans and Chamber of Commerce/ Visitors Bureau. I strongly believe that promises made should be kept. A portion of the TOT allocation directly supports the EDC Veteran Memorial Monument grounds and maintenance, with oversight by the non-profit Veterans Alliance. Now in these unusual times and circumstances, EDC is faced with meeting looming critical risks, financial obligations, and infrastructure liabilities. Now is our chance to re-prioritize and have better control and transparency. During these extraordinary times, perhaps it is time to move away from the current method (i.e., TOT 5%). My concern is that we resolve to address the lack of staffing and funding of the VSO; it is important to bring a proper level of funding to meet the needed request to improve the service level. I think we are past the 5% funding formula and may be ready to go with the Budget Line Item approach. It may take a long time to recover (1-2 years) from this crisis, but we will recover.

The BOS is under no legal obligation to give us a set 5% of TOT funding; this has been a “gentlemen’s agreement” and the supervisors have proven they are in consistent support of veterans. I feel it’s OK to allocate these funds in a different way or amount. Currently, the allocation is \$265k, let’s fight for this specific level, in this current situation. This study gives a great background and is needed, this is our chance to step up and resolve this problem.

Tim Thompson: What is the direction to change from percentage funding to general budget line item? I understand that quantity and quality of services are severely impacted; I’m very concerned for our veterans.

Ken Welch: What would the General Fund Budget line item look like? I am in favor of supporting the VSO and continued discussion on the future of TOT.

Philip Houseworth: Thank you for the study and acknowledging the VSO is understaffed and is long overdue. My fear is that this TOT may be un-funded. My preference to the BOS would be to stay connected with the TOT percentage formula method over the budget line item method. Another concern I have is not intended for this meeting but for future discussion about Snowline Hospice TOT funding allocation plus receiving outside reimbursement for the service they provide.

- Motion: Phillip Houseworth, based upon the handout “2020 Capacity Assessment of the El Dorado County Department of Veteran Affairs” and ensuing discussion and recommendations, motion made to support the VSO SrVSR position and re-direct the salary estimate of \$92k which includes wages, benefits and indirect costs, to the position. John Poimiroo, seconded the motion. All in favor, passed.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- Phillip Houseworth: At the March meeting there was discussion about Cal-Vet Home Loan program and an issue involving veteran loan that was paid off and they lost their fire insurance. I found that USAA renters insurance will cover fire insurance rider.
- John Poimiroo: Due to the current COVID-19 crisis, to protect our at-risk veteran population and others, the EDC will not have a public ceremony. Instead there will be a pre-recorded ceremony conducted by a small group of EDC veterans and will be broadcast at 1100 hours on cable Channel 2 (Sierra Community Access Television) and streamed on EDC Veterans Alliance. There will be a published news article with more detailed information.
- Kurt Raffetto: Tentative TOT Committee meeting July 9, 2020 either by Zoom, email or an actual meeting, TBA.

NEXT MEETING LOCATION, DATE & TIME

Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville CA 95667, July 9, 2020 at 12 noon.

ADJOURNMENT: 1306 hours.

TOT=Transient Occupancy Tax

CAO=Chief Administrative Office
BOS=Board of Supervisors
EDC=El Dorado County
HHS=Health and Human Services Agency
VAC=Veteran Affairs Commission
VSO=Veteran Services Office
SrVSR=Senior Veterans Service Representative