

**Minutes of the Southern Utah Veterans Home-Ivins,
Advisory Board Meeting (via Zoom),
October 14, 2021**

In Attendance: Gary Stolz (Vice Chairman), Janet Warner (Board Member), Willem Van der Elst (Board Member), Terry Dunne (Board Member), Art Davis (Board Member), Darrell Holck (Board Member), Joe McKillop (Resident Council Representative), Jeff Hanson (UDVMA Deputy Director), Tony Moore (State Officer), Jerry Olson (Nursing Home Administrator).

Zoom Meeting called to order by Vice Chairman Stolz at 4:01 pm and all present were welcomed. He then led the Advisory Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and Board Member Davis offered an opening prayer. Vice Chairman Stolz then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting if there were no corrections needed. Board Member Davis made the motion to approve, seconded by Board Member Warner, minutes approved.

1. UDVMA Department Update:

- a. Deputy Director Hanson started by thanking the board members for their willingness to serve on the board. He then gave a brief update on the status of the Pandemic by stating that each facility has had an outbreak from the Delta variant but that currently there were only 2 residents and 4 staff members positive across all 4 facilities. He stated that each facility has done a good job working thru the frequent changes and disruptions to visitation and group gatherings that occur when outbreaks happen. He also stated that the outcomes for residents have been much improved since earlier in the pandemic. He mentioned that the department has a new Newsletter available each month and that the State Officers should be pushing them to the Board Members when available. He then stated that the expansion project at the Veterans Cemetery in Bluff Dale is now complete and provides expanded space as well as easier access for internments. He also stated that the department is working on a new Veterans Cemetery in Ogden and that the state has the deed to 103 acres of land that was generously donated for this purpose. Additionally, the VA pays 100% of the funds to develop the cemetery including new equipment. The operational cost will be shared between the VA and the State. Finally, he mentioned that the effort to replace the Salt Lake City Veterans Home is continuing.
- b. Board Member Holck asked where the replacement facility to the Salt Lake City Veterans Home be located to which DD Hanson replied that it will be in Salt Lake County, but likely not be located on the VA Medical Center campus. Board Member Holck then stated that his concern was visitation of the families if the new facility was going to be far away from the current location.
- c. Board Member Holck then asked if there were any studies or statistics available regarding the future needs of Veteran Cemeteries from Vietnam era Veterans thru Desert Strom and beyond to which DD Hansen replied that the department currently analyzes the current pace of Veteran burials which averages about 50

burials per month which includes cremains interments as well. DD Hansen also stated that the Department goal was to never run out of space. Board Member Davis stated that it would be good if there were a Veterans Cemetery here in Southern Utah as well to which DD Hansen replied that the National Cemetery Administration is planning to build one in Cedar City which the State of Utah will have nothing to do with, other than it being in the State.

2. Open Items:

- a. COVID-19 Update – Administrator Olson started by thanking the board for the opportunity to speak with the board and serve Veterans.
 - i. He started by briefly discussing visitation. The facility is accommodating visitation as much as possible. He stated that when a Veteran or Staff member test positive, then it puts the facility in Outbreak status for at least 14 days. The residents can have visits, however, there are additional precautions that we are required to follow. Additionally, he mentioned that our HAI Nurse, who works for Utah’s Department of Health gives us direction during these periods on what is and is not allowed. For instance, if a resident is positive, she typically has allowed us to continue visitation in other communities, but not on the hall with the positive resident. Visits can occur indoors or outdoors, we only allow vaccinated visitors to visit indoors.
 - ii. He then briefly discussed outings by stating that we are doing outings with our residents, but we limit how many can go at one time.
 - iii. He then briefly discussed activities stating that some limited group activities are resuming along with communal dining and church services, and group exercise. We still have to follow the core principles of infection control (i.e. wear masks, socially distance, conduct hand hygiene, etc.) Board Member Holck then asked if recreation would want to hold a tai-chi class for residents to which Administrator Olson replied yes, noting that the current Recreation Director is leaving soon, but that her replacement is already identified but would will not be at the facility until sometime in November. Board Member Holck asked how the facility measures mental health of the residents given the difficulty caused by the pandemic to which Administrator Olson replied he agreed that it’s been challenging on the residents and the staff but that we were offering support groups which is being handled by our Social Services Director, Tammy Clark. He also stated that we’ve been doing other things to improve morale like bringing food trucks to the facility to have something special occasionally. Additionally, he stated that the clinical team regularly conducts assessments, including mental health of every resident. He also stated that the facility is attempting to hire an additional full time Social Worker to be able to do more counseling.

- iv. Administrator Olson then discussed staffing which has been extremely challenging recently stating that there are about 25 full time openings for CNA's, 5 full time openings in the kitchen, and 5 full time nurses. This is a national trend and we are focusing on hiring and retention for the foreseeable future until we are fully staffed again.
 - v. Administrator Olson then stated that the facility has started a vaccine booster program for residents and staff. We are working to meet the requirements of the vaccine mandate, but as of yet do not have a deadline.
 - vi. Administrator Olson then briefly discussed the VA's program for a Nurse Grant program for the purpose of hiring and retention. The facility applied for a \$25,000.00 grant to assist in this effort and that this can also be used for CNA's but that we have not yet received an answer to our application.
 - b. Resident Council Update – State Officer Moore briefly discussed the current status of activities. Board Member McKillop mentioned that he has enjoyed the effort to increase group activities and also has been having regular visitors.
- 3. Vice Chairman Stolz adjourned the meeting at 4:40 pm. Next Meetings tentatively to be held at 4:00 pm on:
 - a. 13 January, 2022
 - b. 14 April, 2022
 - c. 14 July, 2022
- 4. FYI, the next board members whose terms are expiring are:
 - a. Gary Stolz – 3/31/2022 (1st Term)
 - b. David Houston – 3/31/2022 (1st Term)
 - c. Willem Van der Elst – 4/30/2023 (1st Term)