

Utah Veterans Advisory Council  
Minutes of Monthly Meeting  
August 17th, 2016

**Place:** Multipurpose Room at the SLC Veterans Nursing Home

**Members Present:** Nancy Espinosa, Wendy Griffin, Frank Maughan, Loren Miller, Chuck Stephenson

**Excused:** Brian Garrett, Gary Harter, Mike Mower, Bob Pagnani, Steve Young

**Secretary:** Alan Ferner

**Guests:** Warren Hill, Burton Johnson, Penny Larsen, Dennis McFall, Cory Pearson, Paula Stephenson, Erin Wynn

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Frank Maughan. Frank introduced and welcomed those in attendance. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Burton Johnson briefed the Council on a project for homeless Veterans called "Hosta House." Chuck Stephenson made a motion that the DVMA coordinate with Mr. Johnson for further study of this project. Nancy Espinosa seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
3. The minutes of our 20 July meeting were reviewed and approved by the members of the Council.
4. VA Regional Office: Loren Miller summarized recent activities at the Salt Lake City Regional office. One of the highlights is the hiring of approximately 200 new full time employees over the past several months.
5. VA Medical Center: Warren Hill reported that they now have 219 active provider agreements in the "Choice" program. He also indicated that about 80% of Veterans opt out of "Choice" to stay within the VA system.
6. Utah Dept. Veterans & Military Affairs: Erin Wynn advised that Gary Harter will be attending meetings of the National Association of State Veterans Directors. Dennis McFall informed the Council that he has been involved in preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of a future national cemetery to be located in Utah. He mentioned that Utah has the second highest Veteran population without a national cemetery. Cory Pearson addressed Progress on SB35, Veterans License Plate Amendments, as well as the State Parks pass for Disabled Veterans.
7. Following a discussion on planning future town hall meetings. The Am. Legion, DAV, and VFW agreed to provide their inputs for places and times at our September meeting. There are several DAV videos that can be used to debunk falsehoods about VA medical care.

8. Frank Maughan addressed HR2921 (The Putting Veterans First Act of 2017), legislation that includes increased benefits for caregivers. Nancy Espinosa made a motion that Frank Maughan author a letter in coordination with Gary Harter and Mike Mower, for submission no later than 1 September, to each of the six members of Utah's congressional delegation, requesting that they support/sponsor the legislation. Wendy Griffin seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 PM by Frank Maughan. Our next monthly meeting will be held Wednesday, September 21st, at 4:00 PM, in the Multipurpose Room at the SLC Veterans Nursing Home.