

# MVCC Meeting Minutes

**January 4 2016**

**MVCC Commander:** Gary Laweryson

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 1905 followed by prayer by

**Chaplain Ad-litem:** Jack Stearns.

**Roll call:** Of Officers, Member organizations.

All officers present except Treasurer – excused.

Organization present: AMVETS 3; KWV-1; MCL-1; MCVC-1; MOAA1; MOPH-1; VFW2; VFWA 0; VVA-1.

**Introduction of guests:**

**Secretary's Report: Steve Jarrett**

Secretary's report accepted.

**Treasurer's Report:**

No report

**Reports:**

**VHA:** Jim Doherty

- The VA construction budget was approved so the 3 projects have started:
  - Portland Super CBOC this is a 60K ft2 facility that is in partnership with the Maine Medical Center
    - First year is planning and design
    - Construction starts within 1 ½ years
  - A 12K ft2 special care facility unit that will be located near building 200 at Togus
    - First year is planning and design
    - Construction starts within 1 ½ years
  - A new CLC (community living center) facility will start in the Gazebo area of the Togus hospital.
    - 3/ 24 bed units
    - 1 year planning and design
    - 1 unit to be built per year
- The Kennebunk CBOC will expand while the SACO CBOC will move. The planning here is not complete and more info will follow.

- The Choice program was discussed along with what will happen with ARCH. The bottom line is that it is all in discussions now; some has been articulated in as a “New Choice” and presented to Congress by the Secretary of the DVA. But, in essence, what is being discussed is:
  - All non-VA provider care will be brought into one program New Choice.
  - The VA will bring the management of the program back into the VA., the lack of Healthnet responsiveness was discussed
  - They are not responsive to VHA leadership communications
  - They are not responsive to VH communication that was a congressional inquiry
  - Healthnet never visited Togus
  - The Healthnet Contract is under the DVA and not Togus. It is a 3 year contract and we are one year into it.
  - Most present have experience problems with Healthnet and how Choice is being managed at all levels.
  - Many delays in the system as the VA has 30 days to determine if they can provide the care in house and if it goes to Healthnet, they get 30 days and if they can't find services it goes back to the VA for another 30 days. Frustrating for all
- The Cabin in the Woods project is projected to start in June.

**VHA:** Jim Doherty

Briefed everyone about the Eagle Cane project (note, there are two, one is more “national” but the one being addressed is a project of Mr. George Gunning, a Maine veteran from Windsor). Mr. Gunning provides these canes and does not solicit money for them. But, they cost him about \$25 each. Mr. Gunning is of limited means but dedicated to provide the canes to eligible veterans. As a veteran community, we should support his efforts. Some VSO's already do. He donated \$100 to this effort and challenged each individual or organization to do the same. The MVCC is asking each member organization to pass along this request and this challenge.

**VBA:** Phil Black

- EJ McQuade is still in Philadelphia but will return.
- The VA has now decided that 15 medical conditions can be presumed to have come from Camp Lejeune contaminated water from 1954 to 1987. Reserve and National Guard who spent 30 days at Camp Lejeune during that time will be eligible. The details on how this will be managed are being developed and the official position is that it will take up to 2 years before it actually will go into effect.

**MVS:** Lorna Hatch

- The “wish list” was provided. She highlighted;-
  - Millionth Vet Program Volunteer
  - Comfort items (nail clippers, denture crèmes/cleaner, small body wash, toothbrush covers, deodorant, disposable razors, powders, etc.), are items normally provided by civilian hospitals but not by the VA.

- The Newspaper Fund spends up to \$17K a year on newspapers.

The Togus 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be happening this year. Because the anniversary is near Veterans Day in November, they plan to have the celebration on September 17 while the weather can support outdoor events. This is being planned as a huge event and all VSO's are requested to be involved in the event.

**MVH:** Kelly Kash

VH has a new web site and Facebook page

**Peter Ogden:**

The Vietnam Moving Wall;

It will be located at the Knox Museum in Thomaston during Memorial Day weekend.

There are many events planned starting Thursday, May 26 going through Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.

Sunday will have a Gold Star family ceremony.

All hands should try to identify Gold Star families who have not received their certificates.

- The Moving Wall planning committee meets every two weeks, 5 January/19 Jan/2 Feb etc.
- This will be a huge undertaking and all VSO's will be asked to participate. They are developing the requirements list now.

**Sen Collins Staff:** Chuck Mahaleris

Reported his temporary extra responsibility job as supervisor has ended. A new staff supervisor has been hired, and henceforth he has more time to work cases. He encouraged everyone to use his services.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander:** David Patch/

- Stated that our congressional delegation is working on our issue papers. Some feedback has been provided but more discussions are needed before progress can be made. Two more issue papers in development and will be available at the next meeting. They will have to be staffed by each member VSO before the MVCC can move forward with them.
- The current status of the second session of the 127 legislative was provided. LD 1280 (Casino issue) remains the hot issue. There is no consensus of the member VSOs so the MVCC will not take an official position on it. The tracking of veteran LDs will be updated weekly.
- The legislative calendar will be updated weekly.

- 11 January the Commission to Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to Maine Veterans will meet in the Veteran & Legal Affairs room 437 from 9 to 5PM. This is a public meeting and all interested parties should attend.

**MVCC: Secretary:** Steve Jarrett

All member VSO's need to provide their contact information. The By-Laws require each organization provide their delegate names and contact information each year or when the information changes

**The next meeting will be 1 February 2016**

**Salute to colors.** Closing prayer given'

**Meeting adjourned:** 2030

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Stephen M Jarrett Sr.**

**MVCC Secretary**