



CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
VETERANS TASK FORCE TEAM (VTF)

April 13th, 2013 Minutes

640 N. Mesa Dr. Mesa
9am-11am

In attendance: Rory Gilbert, Chair of the Human Relations Advisory Board
Denise Heap, Vice Chair of the Human Relations Advisory Board
Barbara Allison
Rosario Beltran
Billy Cooper
Doug Dau
Tom Gussie
Shirley Kosisky
David Lucier
Heather McAlister
Joseph Panagakis
Claudia Walters
Andrea Arenas, Mesa City Staff
Ruth Giese, Mesa City Staff

1. Greeting and Welcoming remarks from Rory Gilbert, Chair of the Human Relations Advisory Board.

Ms. Gilbert welcomed those present and reintroduced herself to the participants.

2. Approval of minutes from the March 2nd, 2013 VTF meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Dau to approve the March 2nd, 2013 minutes, Mr. Lucier seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Hear update and discuss:

- Preferential hiring for veterans

Staff from the Diversity Office will collect the information needed to report HRAB. HRAB will then vote through the recommendations to the city council.

- Mesa Public Schools connection

Ms. Allison provided an update on research from Luke Air Force Base where they have resources listed on their website. She has a call placed to speak with a representative about the program they provide for their youth and is awaiting a reply. Ms. Allison also provided several other resources such as a guide for teachers helping students from military families cope, support for health care providers for military families which could apply to school nurses, and information on possible grant foundations. Ms. Walter advised that the Child Crisis Center has Operation Family Support for military families. Ms. McAlister reported that Ms. Berumen, a VTF member not present, will be contacting them for further information on that program.

Ms. McAlister stated that she researched programs in place in other districts in which they could model. She found an effective program in California which offers special training for school counselors when dealing with children of deployed students. Ms. McAlister also plans to schedule a meeting with the head counselor of Mesa Public Schools to begin the discussion on possible assistance that can be offered to students.

- Central Campus/ Center

Ms. Walters provided background information on some of the requirements for starting a central campus or center. Ms. Walters suggested working with services already in place, try to inherit donated space and look at alternative staffing models as the physical building and workforce will have the biggest associated cost. Possible facility connections could come through the City of Mesa, East Valley Education Center or a private property owner with space on MacDonald. Ms. Gilbert stated that the task force would have to move into a partnership either with an already existing non-profit or develop their own 501(3)(c) in order to operate a facility since a source of funding will need to be involved. Ms. Walters confirmed that the best way to grow an organization is to start off small first and develop organically. The team clarified that the purpose of the central location is to provide resources that already exist rather than offering the service directly at the facility. For example, if a veteran needs housing assistance, the appropriate agencies and contacts will be provided. The center is intended to be a "call, click and come in" resource. Mr. Cooper reminded the group that there many categories of veterans such as retired, disabled, active duty, recently returned. The group agreed that the first step in assisting veterans is through profiling and determining which categories of resources will apply.

- Matrix of resources and contacts

Mr. Lucier provided a matrix of resources currently known. The task force determined that regional contact information, local resource links and affiliations will be researched on the following resources:

- Disabled American Veterans
- American Legion
- VFW
- Mesa Vet Center
- East Valley Veterans Education Center
- Veterans Affairs Medical
- AZ Department of Veterans Services
- Department of Economic Security- Veterans Rep
- Mesa Police Department Veterans Advisory Board
- City of Mesa Housing for Veterans
- Mesa Community College Veterans Center

The resources will be added to the City of Mesa webpage and can be used for future planning of the central campus. Mr. Gussie stated that he has contacts at the Arizona Coalition for Military Families who can provide beneficial resources. Mr. Gussie will arrange a presentation for the next VTF meeting from one of their representatives in order to provide information and guidance for future planning.

4. Discuss the ongoing structure of VTF and next meeting date.

Ms. Gilbert reminded the task force members that her term in HRAB will be ending in June. Ms. Gilbert recommended that members consider how to proceed with the ongoing structure as she is removed as the facilitator. Ms. Heap suggested implementing a co-chair model, with one HRAB member and one non-HRAB member.

5. Closing remarks.

The task force agreed to meet again. The proposed date is Saturday, May 11th or 18th, 2013. With assistance from city staff, the date will be confirmed and task force members will be notified.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator