

ODVS Advisory Committee Meeting May 21, 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Vice Chairperson Ed Zackary convened the meeting at 10:30 AM virtually via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting opened with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance led by Ed Zackary, followed by a moment of silence.

Chairperson Victor Wilson was on deployment and was able to attend the meeting but did not have reliable service. Vice Chair Ed Zackary ran the meeting.

Roll Call

Committee Members:

Susan Green, Suzette Heller, Victor Wilson, Ted Mosure, Carl Price, Paul Wilson, Chris Mabe, Paul Haller, Bill Radcliffe, Ed Zackary, Jon Warmeling, Matt Raymond, Jared Smith, Neil Polk, Randy Gasser

Absent:

Don Youngblood, Mike Stith, Saul Laub, Ed Zoretic, Don Perry, Eric Sowers, Matt Jalandoni, Joy Bourassa,

ODVS / Guests:

Dale Vitale, OAG
Sean McCarthy, Assistant Director, ODVS
Ross Matlack, Superintendent, ODVS
Lucas Denney, Chief Legislative Officer, ODVS
Nate Mealy, Chief Legal Officer, ODVS
Jared Nyhart, Secretary, ODVS
Jeff Rapp, ODVS
Scott Palider – Ohio Legion

Approval of the March 2021 minutes – Bill Radcliff motioned to accept minutes; Suzette Heller seconded. Minutes approved.

Make correction to Bill Radcliffe being absent from March 19 meeting – he was present. Make corrections of OSACVSC to OSACVSO. Jared Nyhart made corrections to the March 2021 minutes.

Approval of the May 21 Agenda – Chris Mabe motioned; Jon Warmeling seconded. Agenda approved.

Vice Chairperson Opening Comments- Reported that the Honor and Remember Flag was being passed through State Legislature at this time. Lucas Denney added that he will cover that in his legislative update.

Director's Opening Comments- Director Ashenhurst welcomed the committee. Director Ashenhurst reported that OVH Superintendent Terry Prince left OVH to become the Director of Veterans Services in Illinois. Ross Matlack is now the superintendent and previously was the Incident Commander and did a great job with navigating COVID-19 through both homes.

New Business

Director Ashenhurst reported that she just testified before the House and the Senate in regards for upcoming budget and ODVS is just waiting on approval from joint sessions but sees no reason to worry about not being passed.

Jon Fields who currently ran the State Approving Agency for the Department has accepted a new position at the Ohio Department of Commerce, which means ODVS will be hiring new person to fill that position, which is federally funded. The position is very important because it brings millions of dollars into the state because of the G.I. Bill.

ODVS continues to provide outreach in Ohio's workforce and remains a very active department despite the challenges the COVID-19 Pandemic brought.

Ross Matlack introduced himself and provided a quick update regarding OVH. Both homes currently are doing great reporting zero positive COVID cases as of May 21 and the last COVID-19 case was reported on May 3. Currently, both Veteran homes are working on getting the homes full again and are taking admissions. This is the main goal of 2021, to return back to capacity.

Ross Matlack also provided a short recap of 2020 and some of the challenges. OVH-Sandusky went from 74 ingress/egress doors to only two. The Veteran Homes were two of the first sites in Ohio to get vaccinated. Almost 100 percent of residents are now vaccinated. This is allowing visitation and new admissions to both campus. Had 7 cases in April where residents tested positive for COVID-19 even though they were vaccinated. OVH still remains very cautious regardless of the vaccination.

Paul Haller and Ross Matlack discussed the difference in testing and general types of COVID-19.

Ted Mosure reported that he was notified by the State Commander that there was going to be a name change to the VAVS and that there would be some subsequent role changes as well. The committee decided to keep a look out on the topic and if something arises from it, they'll address it at a later date.

Legislative/Budget updates-

Budget

-Senate will release their version of the bill next week

- No major changes expected to DVS portion
- June Conference Committee
- On pace for June 30th passage

SB 109

- Signed by the Governor
- \$3 million for OVH operations in federal money

HB 23

- Passed House last week
- Would require Alzheimer's and Dementia training for 1st responders
- OVH Police force has significant on the job training with this, likely the most of any OPATA trained officers in the state
- Looking to ensure their expertise is shared across the state.

SB 160 Vets Information in Healthcare Locations

- Would require Healthcare locations that know they are caring for a veteran to provide information about CVSO and/or Congressionally chartered veteran service organizations about how they can help them connect to federal benefits.
- Constituent driven bill by a long term healthcare provider that saw too many veterans spending down to qualify for Medicaid benefits instead of applying for VA benefits.
- This long term care provider has a relationship with her local DAV and she makes sure every veteran referred to her has a conversation with their service officer before any spenddown happens.
- Worked with Senator Hoagland and Senator O'Brien on this bill.

Naming/Designation Bills.

- All passed House
- HB 24 Eugene Kranz Day. Ohio Vets Hall of Fame member
- HB 137 Tuskegee Airman Day. Rickenbacker Connection
- HB 213 Honor and Remember Flag.

Vice Chairpersons Closing Comments- Changes involving Agent Orange will be finalized by June 30 which includes widows – a key demographic that veteran communities miss. This change would allow widows to connect to benefits.

Chairperson Victor Wilson thanked Vice Chair and the Committee for everything they are doing while he is deployed and for everything that ODVS is doing to take care of veterans.

Directors Closing Comments- Director Ashenurst again thanked the committee for all that they do for the veterans in the state. Things are opening up but still be careful.

Susan Green added that there is a Central Ohio celebration of the Army's 246th birthday on Sunday, June 13th, 1400 hours, at the Gahanna Veterans Memorial Park located at 75 West Johnstown Road, Gahanna, Ohio, 43230.

Motion to adjourn-Jon Warmeling motioned; Suzette Heller seconded, motion to adjourn at 11:15 am.