



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
BOROUGH OF THE BRONX  
COMMUNITY BOARD 7**



HON. VANESSA L. GIBSON, BOROUGH PRESIDENT

YAJAIRA ARIAS, CHAIRPERSON

VACANT, DISTRICT MANAGER

**VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Chad Y. Royer</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>February 15, 2023</b>
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Via Zoom Video/Teleconference</b>
<b>Meeting Recording:</b>	<a href="https://youtu.be/10MiNSJq31Q">https://youtu.be/10MiNSJq31Q</a>
<b>Members In Attendance:</b>	<b>✓ Chad Royer   ✓ Emmanuel Asamoah   ✓ Hugo Gonzalez ✓ Jean Hill   ✓ Helene Redd</b>
<b>Minutes done by:</b>	<b>Chad Y. Royer</b>

**Minutes:**

I) Introduction

II) Review Of Previous Minutes

III) Follow-Ups

1) New York City Department of Veterans' Services

a) Andre Cherigo From NYC DVS introduced himself to the committee and mentioned that NYC DVS has a goal of connecting with the community boards and city council offices borough-wide in an effort to connect to other partners. If there are any events that are taking place, NYC DVS wants to be there to provide support for Veterans and partners. The main office is One Centre Street, New York City, New York, near the Brooklyn Bridge. They are now an official city agency within the five boroughs instead of being part of the mayor's office.

IV) New Business

1) Mental Health Research Study: Terra Osterberg, Clinical Research Coordinator

a) The VA is conducting a research study on mental health research, education and clinical care (MIRECC), where Veterans who may or may not be involved in the VA system for clinical care are invited to participate in research studies. The study looks at the relationship with brain function and mental health with the goal of investigating suicide. There has been an

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E-MAIL: [KCABRERACARRERA@CB.NYC.GOV](mailto:KCABRERACARRERA@CB.NYC.GOV) ♦ WEBSITE: [WWW.NYC.GOV/BRONXCB7](http://WWW.NYC.GOV/BRONXCB7)



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increase in the rate of mild traumatic brain injury incurred during service or outside their service time.

b) The VA is looking for Veterans between the ages of 18 to 65 who may or may not have a history of mild head injury, suffered from depression, PTSD, or other bipolar disorders so that they can give a perspective of what Veterans are experiencing.

c) Compensation offered can range from \$300-\$875, and some of the procedures include interviews, blood draw, and MRIs. Transportation can be provided if a Veteran is undergoing an MRI as part of the study. Additional information will be shared with the Community Board Office.

#### 2) Lehman College Veterans Program: Luis E. Soltero-Rodriguez, Director of Office Of Veterans and Military Affairs

a) Lehman College Veterans Program identifies as the VA community which includes Veterans and dependents. Luis E Soltero-Rodriguez (director) and Rene Cabrera Gonzalez (office manager) work together to advise and mentor Veterans and maximize VA benefits if using the GI Bill (which gives 36 months of assistance), tuition assistance and others.

b) The Lehman College Veterans Club aims to integrate Veterans with civilian life. This provides help to Veterans so that they do not feel like they are by themselves without support they can foster networking opportunities. They also do game nights and movie nights, and they work on resource fairs, job fairs, and preparation for Veterans who prospect for employment.

c) They are currently working with the alumni relations department so that they can keep in touch with Veterans after they graduate.

d) The office can be reached at [veterans.affairs@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:veterans.affairs@lehman.cuny.edu) or 718-960-7188/7369

#### 3) Archiving and Documenting Our Bronx Heroes: Pastor Crespo Jr., Research Librarian/Archivist of Bronx Historical Society

a) Bronx Historical Society is co-hosting with Fordham University a documentary film screening of AJASS, the pioneers of "black is beautiful



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movement" at the Bronx Learning Center at 310 East Kingsbridge Road on Saturday, February 18, 2023.

b) Bronx Historical Society is launching a Veterans archival and oral history project sometime in September. The purpose is to capture information on Bronxites who have served our nation, including Veterans, the Veterans' family members, and those who have participated and are not Veterans. Oral interviews will be conducted with participants about their journey prior to and during military service as well as their sacrifices. Various items of military service or significance of the Veterans like pictures, service records, awards, donated or on loan, will also be collected.

c) There are not a lot of military archives of Bronxites at the Bronx Historical Society. One of the main purposes is to collect and preserve content so that future students and researchers can learn about the history. Everyone is welcome to spread the word and reach out to folks who would be interested in doing any interviews regarding their stories.

d) There are three current archival projects going on: Bronx African American History Project with Fordham University, Bronx Latino History Project with Lehman College, and Bronx Aerosol Arts Graffiti Arts Project. Bronx Historical Society is open to collaboration with different universities and other Veterans-based offices regarding the collection of Veteran content.

e) Pastor Crespo can be reached at [pcrespo@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:pcrespo@bronxhistoricalsociety.org) or at 718-881-8900 ext 105

#### 4) Project Welcome Home Troops- Shenaz Kapasi, Volunteer at International Association For Human Values

a) Project Welcome Home Troops is a research based program that has been around for over three decades. They have approximately 2 million volunteers worldwide in about 198 countries. They do five-day workshops on stress reduction at over 13 1/2 hours where they use physiological effects of breath and cognitive effects of awareness.

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- b) The workshops are online and are free to Veterans and their families. They operate on five different time zones. Approximately 2 million volunteers worldwide in about 198 countries.
- c) Some of the results of the program include folks who came into the program with the ideation of suicidal thoughts now want to continue living.
- d) Additional information can be found at PWHT.org

#### 5) Other Business

- a) Martin Krongold, Chief Operating Officer of Black Veterans For Social Justice introduced himself to the committee. BVSJ has been a Veterans Service Organization since the 1970s and they conduct outreach, help Veterans find housing and employment, and connect Veterans to the VA or any medical or mental health entity. The main office is 665 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11206. Martin Krongold can be reached at [martinkrongold@msn.com](mailto:martinkrongold@msn.com)
- b) A suggestion for an event where the committee can invite Veterans from the area to do a roundtable or a meet and speak so that information can be shared in a relaxed party-like atmosphere. Areas of consideration could include St. James Park, Poe Park or Monroe College, and the event could be targeted to the community-at-large, but also include reaching out to families of Veterans. The committee will discuss the possibilities offline and present further at the February meeting.

#### V) Adjournment

- 1) The next meeting for the Veterans Committee will be on March 15, 2023.
- 2) Motion to adjourn meeting by Jean Hill, seconded by Hugo Gonzalez.