

# 2017 NEW YORK CITY VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT



NEW YORK CITY VETERANS ACHIEVEMENTS  
AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

*“With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, **to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan**, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”*  
– **Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, March, 4, 1865**

Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, press 1)

The Crisis Line, mandated by the Joshua Omvig Veteran Suicide Prevention Act of 2007, provides immediate support to veterans, service members and their families.

December 31, 2017

Mayor Bill de Blasio and Council Speaker Corey Johnson:

**The Veterans Advisory Board's vision for New York City is to have the most effective local policies in the United States that support veterans and their families.** These policies benefit all New Yorkers by attracting state and federal resources to the City, supporting commerce and most importantly supporting the needs and strengths of veterans and their families, which add to New York City's great melting pot. In 2016 we worked with the Department of Veteran Services (DVS) to establish a guiding principle by which we would evaluate policies and initiatives and allocate resources: **to support veterans' continued service as citizens.** Since its adoption over the past year we are confident in its timeless value.

2017 built upon the foundation of success for Veterans in New York City. DVS has further defined its objectives and program requirements and opportunities. We are particularly proud of how DVS has continued to deploy resources effectively and judiciously. Despite a budget of only \$4 million, it has had a significant impact on all New Yorkers including attracting significant State and Federal funding and resources to New York City.

The Department's growth over the past year has also identified some critical needs for the agency to become even more effective. The most pressing opportunities are summarized below:

- End veteran homelessness by achieving functional zero.
- Expand Minority and Women Owned Business status to veteran business owners.
- Invest in more capacity to support the Veterans on Campus initiative.
- Establish contracting capability and further investment in communications processes and infrastructure.
- Support the VAB with resources and the timely appointment of members.
- Quantify the State and Federal resources that veterans and our veteran programs have attracted to New York City.
- Support to Staten Island in their effort to increase the GI Bill housing allowance.

We thank you and your staffs for your continued leadership and support as we build upon these nationally recognized programs and continue to develop and implement policies that support all New Yorkers.

Very truly yours,



Todd Haskins  
Chairman

## NEW YORK CITY VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

At the September 2017 VAB Board meeting, It was agreed upon by the members in Executive Committee that with the majority of VAB members three-year terms coming to an end early next year, the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary would stay in place until the end of this year and the board asks the Mayor and City Council to appoint or re-appoint members to the VAB as soon as possible.

| <b>Board Member</b>              | <b>Borough</b> | <b>Email (@gmail.com)</b> | <b>Term Expires</b>           | <b>Appointment</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Joe Bello<br>Secretary           | Bronx          | JBelloVABNYC              | June 30, 2018                 | Council            |
| Patrick Devine                   | Bronx          | PDevineVABNYC             | November 19, 2017             | Council            |
| Charles Greinsky                 | Staten Island  | CGreinskyVABNYC           | August 23, 2017               | Mayor              |
| Todd Haskins<br>Chairman         | Manhattan      | THaskinsVABNYC            | February 17, 2018             | Mayor              |
| Charles Hernandez                | Bronx          | CHernandezVABNYC          | March 31, 2018                | Council            |
| Samuel Innocent<br>Vice Chairman | Brooklyn       | SInnocentVABNYC           | August 23, 2017               | Mayor              |
| Mariel Juarez                    | Brooklyn       | MJuarezVABNYC             | February 17, 2018             | Mayor              |
| Jules Martin                     | Manhattan      | JMartin1VABNYC            | February 17, 2018<br>Resigned | Mayor              |
| Wendy McClinton                  | Brooklyn       | WMcClintonVABNYC          | June 4, 2018                  | Council            |
| Anthony Odierno                  | Manhattan      | AOdiernoVABNYC            | August 23, 2017               | Mayor              |
| John Rowan                       | Queens         | JRowanVABNYC              | November 19, 2017             | Council            |

## RATIONALE FOR LOCAL VETERAN POLICIES AND RESOURCES

On Halloween Day 2017, in the shadow of the Freedom Tower a man killed 8 and injured 11. This horrific event was the most recent reminder of the importance of national security and by extension, the importance of supporting our veterans. Bearing this in mind, we believe in the importance of local governments maintaining strong veteran policies and reprise below the original basis of this support.

### Why Should the City Support its Veterans?

Some have suggested that the burden of caring for our veterans should be born only by the Federal Government. We do not agree and believe that New York City has both the moral and economic imperatives to support our veterans.

- **Freedom and Security – the Moral Imperative:** All of our citizens benefit from the freedom and security provided by our armed forces. Our first President, George Washington reminds us that *“the willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by our nation.”* In our order to ensure our continued success it is critical that we ALL support those who have served.
- **Federal Spending and Tourism – the Short-term Economic Imperative:** New York City benefits disproportionately from federal spending and tourism. Activities and venues such as Fleet Week, the July Fourth Celebration, *“America’s Parade”*, the Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, and the Canyon of Heroes to name a few are all connected to our nation’s military veterans and produce significant commerce. Additionally, many of New York City’s programs qualify for federal funding which makes them more effective and economically efficient for the City. Lastly, as the economic capital of the world, many Veteran Service Organizations (VSO’s) and veteran-focused non-profits have either chosen to call New York City their home, which adds to the commerce and culture of the city. All of this provides a compelling rationale to support strong local veteran policies.
- **Veterans Make Great Citizens – the Long-Term Economic Imperative:** Veterans and their families are truly this country’s greatest renewable resources and attracting them to New York City supports our continued success. Veterans tend to have higher earnings and lower unemployment than non-veterans once their transition is complete. Veterans also tend to be more civically active, achieve higher education and have lower incarceration rates than non-veterans. Increasing our veteran population will continue to add to the vibrant fabric of the culture of the city.

These moral and economic imperatives provide a sound rationale for investment in local veteran policies and programs particularly since many of these provide a direct and measurable positive economic return for New York City.

## **THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE: SUPPORT VETERANS' CONTINUED SERVICE AS CITIZENS**

To provide discipline in prioritizing resources, the VAB has worked with DVS to establish a guiding principle through which all potential investments are prioritized: how they **support veterans' continued service as citizens**. This aligns with the long-term economic imperative that veterans make good citizens and that the City benefits by attracting them to the city and supporting their success.

Some veterans will face unique challenges, related directly or indirectly to their service. However, particularly in the era of the all-volunteer force, veterans are not victims. They actively chose to serve, and providing support to allow them to continue their service as citizens is an important investment. Prioritizing based upon this principle reinforces the fact that **all New Yorkers benefit from these programs, regardless of veteran status**.

Wherever possible we should seek programming that reinforces and supports this principle. For example, we should partner with non-profits and VSOs where this is a central tenet of their mission. Further, we should invest in programs and resources which help veterans improve such as education, employment support and programs which support personal self-improvement.

## SUMMARY OF VAB ACTIONS OF IN 2017 AND PLANS FOR 2018

Below is a summary of the key activities for 2017:

- **Advised the Commissioner on the Development and Staffing of DVS:** The VAB was actively involved in discussions around key legislative, organizational, and policy initiatives. We also advised on hiring strategy which was a critical focus for 2017.
- **Conducted 4 Meetings:** This past year we failed to achieve our objective of hosting one meeting in every Borough. We did not hold a meeting in Brooklyn because of a number of items, including confusion around the conclusion of the three (3) year terms of many of our members who have not been replaced or extended, miscommunication with DVS, and conflicts with existing events hosted by DVS on targeted dates for meetings. Next year we plan to address this with two key actions:

- **Pre-scheduled Meetings:** First we have pre-scheduled all 5 meetings for 2018. While some of these may be rescheduled, the tentatively planned dates are listed below:

| <u>Date</u>      | <u>Borough</u> |
|------------------|----------------|
| Tue January 23   | Brooklyn       |
| Wed April 11     | Staten Island  |
| Tue June 12      | Queens         |
| Wed September 26 | Bronx          |
| Thu November 29  | Manhattan      |

- **Additional Coordination with DVS:** We have agreed with DVS to enhance coordination and communications in accordance with last year's recommendation. To underscore its importance, this will be the topic of the executive session of the first VAB meeting in 2018.
- **Convened Government and other Leaders to Connect Veterans with Services:** At each of the VAB meetings members of the DVS, VA and representatives of other government and non-government organizations were present which created an opportunity to connect veterans directly with the services they offer.
- **Engaged with DVS, the City Council and the Veteran Community on Strategic Priorities and Policies Relating to Veterans:** The VAB actively engaged with all three of its key stakeholders to help prioritize resources and raise issues. This included testifying at various hearings, engaging with the Council's Finance committee on behalf of the DVS's budget proposals, and engaging with DVS on priorities relevant to the veteran community. Specific focus and attention was placed on the Veteran Homeowners Expanded Property Tax Exemption.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF EVENTS AND MILESTONES IMPACTING VETERANS IN NEW YORK CITY IN 2017**

2017 continued to be an important growth year for veterans in New York City. We have asked the Department of Veteran Services to provide a summary of their activities and accomplishments for the year in order to provide more transparency to the community. The summary is included on the following pages.



# 2017: Veteran Advisory Board Update

Loree Sutton, MD

COMMISSIONER

Jeffrey Roth

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

December 19, 2017

To the Chair of the Veterans Advisory Board,

The New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) extends its heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for the tremendous work you and your colleagues on the Veterans Advisory Board do throughout the year advocating for and supporting this City's veterans and their families. We especially appreciate the insightful and information year-end report that we understand you are in the process of drafting at this time. To that end, DVS would like to provide you with some information that may be of use to you in assessing the achievements from this past year both at the Department of Veterans' Services and within the New York City veterans' community.

## Overview of DVS accomplishments

As you are aware, DVS is organized according to three programmatic "Lines of Action." We would like to take this opportunity to share with you highlights from the past year according to their scope of work.

### *#1: Housing & Support Services*

According the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's [2017 report](#), New York State has seen the largest decrease in the number of homeless veterans in the country from 2011-2017. While veteran homelessness has increased slightly nation-wide – up 2% -- in New York City, the rate of veteran homelessness continues to decrease: by 4% this past year.

DVS is proud to report that by using three innovative approaches to veteran homelessness, we have made tremendous gains on the Mission Home initiative:

1. **Peer support:** An innovative peer-to-peer, housing-only and housing-first approach -- with only 4 Veteran Peer Coordinators on staff -- we successfully housed between 200-250 homeless veterans in the past calendar year.

2. **Aftercare:** Our Aftercare Coordinator then ensures that the veterans we house stay housed, providing post-housing support for 182 veterans this past year and preventing imminent eviction for 18 of them.
3. **Landlord coordination:** Finally, our Housing Coordination Center – a one-stop placement service for affordable housing owners – ensures quality placements and expedited rent-ups.

While even one homeless veteran is too many, DVS firmly believes that the systems we've created to help get homeless veterans in New York City from shelter to permanent housing will continue to reduce the rate of homelessness as we move forward.

## ***#2 Whole Health & Community Resilience***

As part of the First Lady of New York Chirlaine McCray's ThriveNYC initiative, DVS has launched its veteran and family-member focused program, *VetsThriveNYC*. This program consists of two components: 1. the Whole Health & Community Resilience (WHCR) Outreach Team, and 2. The Core4 Whole Health Model.<sup>TM</sup>

In 2017, DVS moved *VetsThriveNYC* from conceptualization to implementation, in three key ways:

1. **Peer support:** The WHCR Outreach Team worked across the five boroughs with an initial goal to engage with 2,000 veterans and family members in its first year of operation. We are proud to report that WHCR's Outreach Team far exceeded that goal, engaging with over 7,100 veterans and family members to increase help-seeking behaviors in the context of a peer-support model
2. **Mental Health First Aid:** DVS certified 6 of its staff members to be trainers for a veteran-focused Mental Health First Aid Training program. In 2017, our staff have conducted veteran-focused Mental Health First Aid Training for 160 members of the New York City community who work with veterans and their families.
3. **Culture & Community:** Through DVS's Public Artist in Residence, Bryan Doerries, and his Theater of War project, DVS has staffed and provided mental health resources at 16 free performances and community discussions across the five boroughs, reaching over 2,200 veterans, family members and civilian allies.

## ***#3 City Employment, Education, Entrepreneurship, Engagement & Events***

When DVS was established in 2016, we committed to establishing outreach sites in each of the five boroughs. Working in partnership with the Borough Presidents, DVS is proud to report that we now have satellite sites in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, and two sites in Staten Island (one at the Borough President's office and one at the College of Staten Island).

The addresses for each of the satellite sites can be found in our monthly newsletter (which you can subscribe to [here](#)) or on our website at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/veterans/outreach/satellite-offices.page>.

In addition to holding regular office hours at the satellite sites, CE5 staff attend events in the community across the City to provide information and resources to veterans and their families. In 2017, the CE5 team participated in over 300 community events, and provided one-on-one assistance to over 2,300 veterans and family members.

### **Select Highlights & Milestones Impacting Veterans in NYC in 2017**

#### **January**

- Building relationships with legislators: DVS started off the New Year by hosting a Meet and Greet with New York City Committee on Veterans' Council Members
- Housing vulnerable veterans: DVS signed an MOU with NYCHA to help house homeless veterans with less than honorable discharge status, creating opportunities for a whole new cohort of veterans to find permanent housing

#### **February**

- DVS as a national model: Commissioner Sutton engaged in a discussion with Mayor's Offices of Veteran's Affairs from 8 other cities who sought to learn from New York City's example and to share best practices and common concerns
- Honoring the team: Three members of Team DVS – Commissioner Loree Sutton, Ines Adan and Latisha Russaw – were honored by Bronx Community Board 7 for their tireless efforts on behalf of New York City veterans and their families

#### **March**

- Healing through the arts: DVS officially launched its two-year Public Artist in Residence (PAIR) Bryan Doerries and his Theater of War project as part of its *VetsThriveNYC* mental health initiative. The PAIR includes 65 free performances / community discussions geared toward addressing the challenges of war and mental health issues for veterans and civilian community members
- Sharing updates with the community: DVS presented testimony at the New York City Committee on Veterans on the Preliminary Fiscal Year 2018 budget

#### **April**

- Honoring World War I veterans: Commissioner Sutton represented New York City at the French Institute / Alliance Française for the commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US entry into WWI

- Establishing City-wide presence: DVS officially established satellite sites in each of the five boroughs, ensuring access to veteran outreach staff close to home for hundreds of thousands of NYC veterans and family members
- Establishing mentoring consortium: DVS gathered over together over 25 veteran mentoring organizations based in New York City to share best practices and consolidate efforts in ensuring any veteran in New York City who wants access to a mentor is matched with an appropriate mentor

## May

- Honoring military families: DVS celebrated “Military Family Appreciation Month” with a film screening and panel discussion of “American Veteran” at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, as part of the Senator Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s “Hidden Heroes” Initiative
- Engaging with student veterans: Fleet Week celebrations included a Mayor’s Breakfast for Fleet Week Leadership at which he announced two new DVS initiatives, *Veterans on Campus* and *Mentor a Vet NYC*.
- Recognizing DVS achievements: *The New York Times* wrote profiles on two DVS initiatives: its final funeral honors program in “For Forgotten Veterans, a Dignified End” and PAIR Bryan Doerries’ *Theater of War* program in “US Veterans Use Greek Tragedy to Tell Us About War”

## June

- Promoting tax breaks for veterans: New York City veterans became eligible for the “Veteran Homeowners Expanded Property Tax Exemption”
- Informing New Yorkers about GI Bill and housing: DVS and the NYC Commission on Human Rights co-drafted a fact sheet for landlords and renters detailing how the GI Bill must be accepted as income for housing
- Highlighting veterans employment opportunities: DVS presented testimony at the New York City Council hearing on outreach strategies for veterans employment in conjunction with Small Business Services

## July

- Celebrating veterans as protected class: New York City veterans celebrated the passage of Int. 1259, adding veterans and uniformed service members as a protected class to the City’s human rights law

- Honoring World War I and World War II veterans: Commissioner Sutton represented the City at a French Legion of Honor ceremony posthumously honoring a WWI American veteran and several American WWII veterans
- Recognizing women veterans: DVS held its first major event honoring women veterans in partnership with Women Veterans Interactive, an organization that aims to empower female veterans through advocacy, education, and wellness programs

## August

- Celebrating military families: DVS joined the Blue Star Mothers of America at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum to honor the service and sacrifice of military families
- Promoting peer support: DVS participated in the New York City delegation for SAMSHA’s “Suicide Prevention Through Peer Intervention” Academy
- Tackling treatment of veterans in the justice system: Commissioner Sutton participated in a discussion at the annual American Bar Association conference to discuss “Veterans in the Court System”
- “Sacred work” luncheon: DVS hosts luncheon celebrating our funeral honors partners including funeral homes, VSOs, and other organizations dedicated to ensuring NYC’s most vulnerable veterans receive the final honors they earned

## September

- Launching Veterans on Campus initiative: Columbia University hosted a *Veterans on Campus* kick-off luncheon for over 30 New York City colleges and universities to discuss the ramifications of the Forever GI bill
- Promoting culture as policy tool: DVS became one of a dozen agencies to participate in the City’s inaugural Culture Cabinet meeting, discussing ways to leverage arts and culture to achieve agency missions
- Building a strong foundation: DVS engaged with Gartner Consultants to strengthen its operational foundation and establish business capabilities models

## October

- Inviting community engagement: DVS kicked off its new “Office Hours” initiative at Civic Hall to hear the thoughts and concerns of the veteran community in New York City
- Seeking feedback from student veterans: DVS representatives (Commissioner) kicked off a months-long “Listening Tour,” visiting the 40 NYC colleges and universities with the

highest population of student veterans in order to learn about best practices and identify challenges.

- Honoring military caregivers: Commissioner Sutton participated in the inaugural meeting of the Secretary of the VA's Veterans' Family, Caregiver, and Survivor Advisory Committee in Washington, DC

## **November**

- Honoring CUNY student veterans: Commissioner Sutton presented awards to academically-high achieving student veterans at CUNY's Fifth Annual Veteran Academic Awards Breakfast
- Fighting the stigma of mental illness: DVS hosted a major event to combat the stigma of mental illness with a film screening, hosted by Lifetime A&E Networks, and panel discussion
- Capturing award-winning data: CIO Venkat Motupalli won the "Best of New York City Award in Data Analytics" for his work in determining the origin of incoming veterans to New York City and their dispersion throughout the boroughs
- Celebrating Veterans Day: DVS honored Veterans Day with a Mayor's Breakfast at Gracie Mansion, by leading the UWVC's America's Parade, and participating in commemorative events throughout the city

## **December**

- Mapping NYC's veterans: DVS rolled out interactive visualizations of the New York City veterans population on its website, enabling users to find veterans by district according to age, gender, era of service and several other variables

### **Staffing of the Department of Veterans' Services**

Year 2 at DVS continued to focus on building the operational capacity to fully function as a stand-alone City agency. We spent much of the year identifying and hiring top talent, investing in strategic assessments of our business capabilities, and developing organizational capacity.

In December 2016, DVS had 28 full time employees. By December 2017, we have 34, and have been budgeted to hire an additional 6, bringing the total staff count in 2018 to 40. We anticipate completing the hiring of the additional 6 employees by the spring of 2018. More information on individual staff roles and biographies can be found at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/veterans/about/meet-our-team.page>.

In closing, DVS reiterates its gratitude for the tireless efforts of the members of the Veterans' Advisory Board in 2017. We look forward to even greater collaboration in serving New York City's veterans and their loved ones in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Loree Sutton, MD

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are organized in two parts: (1) Policy and Legislative Recommendations for the Mayor and/or the City Council to take action and (2) Strategy and Program Recommendations for DVS.

### Recommendations for the Mayor and/or City Council

**Attract Transitioning Veterans to Study at New York City's World-Class Colleges and Universities:** New York City is the nation's largest exporter of post-secondary education in the nation, with 110 colleges and nearly 600,000 students. Under the Veterans on Campus initiative great progress was made over the past year to bring together the city's post-secondary educational institutions and lay the groundwork to support veterans who choose to study in the city. Most transitioning veterans possess GI Bill benefits which would attract federal resources to the city, and many of them will choose to stay in New York City once they complete their education. This program will have the added benefit of branding New York City as a "veteran-friendly city." We recommend that the Administration and City Council fund a campaign to encourage transitioning veterans nationwide to pursue their college degrees in New York City.

**Extend the Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Program to Veteran-Owned Businesses:** The single lowest cost / highest return opportunity is to extend the MWBE status to veteran owned businesses. The MWBE program has proven itself extremely effective and this can be leveraged to support veteran entrepreneurship by simply adding veteran owned businesses to the criteria of qualifying for the program.

**Add Resources for Contracting Capability for DVS:** This recommendation was made last year, and its importance is increasingly evident. One of the most fundamental aspects of a City Agency is having direct control over contracting. We believe that lacking this ability has hampered DVS's ability to control its priorities and impacts the ability to achieve the mission. VetConnectNYC is behind schedule in part due to the lack of contracting authority. DVS is not currently funded or staffed to allow for this capability and contracts to local Veteran Service Organizations or non-for-profits that provide direct service to veterans are currently executed through the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). In addition to prioritization, there are unique contracting attributes that VSOs often carry, such as not being a 501(c)(3), which confuse and slow down the completion of contracts and disbursement of funds when centralized through DCAS. This should be rectified in the budget process this year.

**VAB Support and Resources:** Many of our members' three (3) year terms are expiring or have expired and we have no visibility into the timing of their re-appointments or replacements. This has made activities such as selecting officers, coordinating meetings, finalizing the annual report and encouraging participation difficult. We ask that the Mayor and City Council make these appointments in a timely fashion so that we can effectively carry out our duties. Furthermore, some form of part

time operational resource support from either the DVS or another City organization would aid in record keeping and continuity.

**Advocate for the Consistent Application of Policies for Veteran Treatment Courts:**

Work with the five District Attorney's Offices and the Office of Courts Administration to create consistency throughout the boroughs for the use of Veterans Treatment Courts. This would provide equal treatment to veterans in all five boroughs, reduce costs to the criminal justice system, and also reduce crime given the favorable recidivism statistics experienced through these programs.

**Evaluate and Document the Impact of Our Programs:** Our vision statement includes reference to the *most effective* local veteran policies. These words were chosen carefully, and we are committed to recommending policies and programs focused on veterans that benefit all New Yorkers. In order to accomplish this, DVS must be provided with the appropriate resources.

We call upon the Administration and the City Council to provide additional funding specifically dedicated to evaluating and documenting our programs including:

- Document benefits and efficiency: New York City has created extremely effective veteran programs and that are a model for the country. Documentation will allow us to prove that we have been good stewards of resources and attract additional State and Federal resources. Further, the documentation hereof will highlight the value that these programs provide to all New Yorkers.
- Document lessons learned: The veteran population in New York City is a relatively small one compared to many other constituencies. Documenting the lessons learned from our programs could allow us to scale them to larger populations, which will benefit all New Yorkers. This model is already being applied to our veteran homeless and treatment court programs and we are encouraged by the opportunity to share our successes with other populations in the City.
- Conduct a Veteran Census: In order to create thoughtful policy we must understand our veteran population. Towards that end, we recommend that a Veteran Census or other form of population study be conducted in the near-intermediate future. This is in addition to resources focused on evaluating our programs.

## DVS Strategy and Program Recommendations

**Develop a Comprehensive Communications Plan:** While there has been success in many areas, the most notable area for growth is in DVS' communications and outreach capabilities. This was highlighted in last year's annual report as well as in the oversight hearings hosted by the Committee on Veterans, but we do not believe that enough progress has been made in this area. We would like to work more collaboratively with DVS to see more meaningful and tangible improvement in this area.

**Expand the Veterans on Campus Initiative:** The Veterans on Campus initiative has been widely celebrated but remains in its infancy. Further, some of our institutions face some pressing challenges highlighting the importance of this program. For example, in 2017 CUNY lost its overall designation of Military Friendly from Victory Media and LaGuardia lost both the US Dept. of Education's Veterans Upward Bound program and their Military Friendly designation from Victory Media. As one of the largest funding sources for these organizations, the City must work with them to redouble their efforts to implement veteran programs. Other institutions were recognized for their successes, such as the College of Staten Island (CSI) was named the #1 Military Friendly College by Victory Media and we applaud the efforts by their team. We should work with these institutions to support the Veterans on Campus initiative create efficient pathways to attract veterans to our city and support their success while in school. This supports both the positive migration of educated citizens to the city and has the added benefit of attracting Federal resources to the City primarily through the GI Bill program.

**Build upon the Success of Mission Home, New York City's Fight against Veteran Homelessness:** New York City is the clear leader throughout all large cities in the United States in its fight against veteran homelessness. For example, this year DVS partnered with the New York City Housing Authority to extend the Section 8 / HUD-VASH vouchers to veterans with other than honorable discharges which expanded the traditional eligible pool of veterans who qualify for the subsidy. We must seize the opportunity to champion this success to both garner more resources for New York City in its continued fight against veteran homelessness as well as help other populations and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) in the broader war against homelessness which continues to be a challenge for New York City.

Specific recommendations include:

- Achieve Functional Zero in 2018: We commend the DVS, HRA and all New York City agencies and partners involved in the fight against veteran homelessness and call upon them to continue the bold objective of reaching functional zero. As of December 2017, New York City's official Point in Time count of homeless veterans was 535. This represents a 4% decrease from the official count in 2016 and a 10% increase over the daily census at the end of 2016 which is not yet available for 2017. The homeless veteran population has been stable for approximately two years and we call upon all stakeholders to achieve functional zero in 2018.

- Build a Comprehensive Prevention Plan: Activities to prevent veterans from becoming homeless are already underway, but these should be expanded and the lessons-learned captured and tracked to share best-practices. Prevention is less expensive than the cost of someone becoming homeless.
- Document the Economic Impact: Collaborate with the Mayor's Office of Budget and Management, New York City Independent Budget Office, or other relevant independent econometrists to conduct an economic impact study of the programs and include this in the report. It will also be critical to highlight the aggregate state and federal dollars we have attracted to the city, as well as costs avoided so that the public better understands the benefits that our veteran programs bring to New York City.
- Share Lessons Learned Across the City: As a relatively small population in the City with access to federal and state resources, we have been able to find new pathways to success in our fight to eliminate veteran homelessness. For example, in 2016 on average an individual in the New York City shelter system was homeless for 355 days versus a median of 79 days for veterans. We can use these lessons learned to help the broader system and benefit all New Yorkers. DVS should spearhead an inter-agency effort to document the success of Mission Home. The report should include details on how city and private resources were used to leverage federal funding, and programs employed to maintain this success for the long term.
- Share Lessons Learned Across the Nation: According to HUD, New York City has realized an approximately 90% drop in veteran homelessness since 2011, which compares to the 47% drop nationwide since 2010. DVS should meet with federal and state officials to highlight the successes New York City has had and ask for more resources to advance this worthy cause. It will also be important to demonstrate to state and federal authorities that we have been effective stewards of their capital.

**Successfully Launch VetConnectNYC**: VetConnectNYC is intended to link New York City veterans and their families to a range of City, State, Federal and non-profit service-providers. During the 3-year privately funded pilot study, the program (NY Serves) engaged with over 2,000 veterans. Last year we noted that the city was on the verge of launching this important program, however its roll-out has been delayed. This delay is in part driven by DVS not possessing its own contracting capability and has caused resources to be underutilized which impacts the coordination of services for our veterans. We urge DVS to prioritize the implementation of VetConnectNYC and ensure that the program includes funding to educate the veteran population on the platform.

**Encourage and Support Veteran Engagement in the Political Process**: Since 1958 the Pew Research Center has been tracking Americans' trust in government and it has been at or near a low for the last decade with only 18% of Americans today believing they can trust government in Washington to do what is right most of the time versus 73% in 1958. Pew also found in a 2016 survey that 79% of Americans have a fair

amount or a great deal of trust in the military versus only 27% for elected officials. Consistent with our guiding principle of supporting veterans' continued service as citizens, the DVS should invest in programs that support veteran engagement in the political process. They should do so by partnering with existing organizations supporting this mission such as New Politics, Veterans Campaign and the NYC Veteran Alliance which has hosted a Get Ready to Run Program training veterans on how to get involved.

**Build-Out VetsThriveNYC:** As part of the pioneering ThriveNYC mental health initiative, last year's landmark legislation created funding to provide support for specific mental health initiatives for veterans in need. DVS' ThriveNYC team successfully implemented the VetsThriveNYC Whole Health and Community Resilience Program which includes citywide targeted outreach to engage veterans, military families and caregivers through education, connection to services, and resources tailored to the specific needs of the individual. We expect these programs to expand and become more effective with more awareness and the implementation of VetConnectNYC.

**Celebrate Veterans' Impact on Society:** A critical part of the mission of the DVS is celebrating veterans and what they have brought to our nation and to New York City. The next five years will mark a series of landmark anniversaries including the centennial of both the end of World War I, the first Veterans Day Parade (now "*America's Parade*") and the fifty-year anniversary of various milestones of the Vietnam War.

We recommend the following:

- Provide Direct Support for the Centennial of the Veterans' Day Parade: DVS should assess the benefit of investing more in the 2019 "*America's Parade*" so as to showcase the rich and proud history that New York has in celebrating its veterans and to increase the economic impact of the parade. We recommend a committee be formed to investigate with representation from the military, hospitality and media industries, large employers, local non-profits, state and federal representatives and other interested parties.
- Utilize Fleet Week to Convene Other Leaders and Showcase the City: Fleet Week is a time-honored New York tradition and should be utilized as an opportunity to convene leaders from across the nation to discuss veteran policy. This will allow New York City to continue to showcase leadership and aid in the veteran friendly branding of the city. Specific funding should be provided to support this convening.

**Employment and Entrepreneurship:** Stable employment is a critical element of supporting veterans continued service as citizens. Whether something as simple as paying taxes or more significant such as volunteering actively or engaging in the political process, stable employment is required.

Towards the end of ensuring that our veterans remain employed in well-paid jobs, we recommend the following:

- **City Employment:** Not all of New York City and government agencies prioritize veteran status in their hiring processes. The government is the largest employer in the city and it simply must lead by example. Additionally, many City and State agencies, such as the MTA face potentially acute labor shortages and transitioning service members could be a cost-effective pipeline for talent. We must develop citywide veteran employment programs to help bridge the transition from the military. We should seek collaborative commercial and non-profit leaders to develop programs to such as those run by the Home Builders Institute which trains transitioning veterans for careers in the homebuilding industry.
  
- **Private Employment:** Critical to supporting veterans continued service as citizens is supporting their stable employment. New York City does not control private employers; however, it can act to facilitate private companies which want to hire veterans. These programs can also attract federal spending to the city through Federal government employment programs for veterans, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) program, which can provide businesses up to \$9,600 in tax credits per eligible veteran hired.
  - Create a Private Employment Support Program: Create a comprehensive private employment support program to educate and support private employers in New York City in establishing veteran hiring initiatives. This could include actions such as creating a veteran employment program handbook highlighting the benefits of a veteran hiring program, as well as actions required and resources available to execute such a program, hosting training sessions and promoting the benefits of hiring veterans. Many of the country's leading experts on veteran employment programs are active in New York City, such as the Arcadia Group and Miligistix and we should seek to collaborate with them and others.
  
  - Track Outcomes: Establish policies to track outcomes for long-term unemployed veterans who have obtained employment, WOTC credits for employers, and other key performance indicators.
  
- **Entrepreneurship:** Entrepreneurship is the lifeblood of the America. According to the Small Business Administration, veterans own 9% of small businesses, while only comprising 6.7% of the population. State and Federal government provide a great deal of support to small businesses in the forms of training, contract support, financing and other benefits. As such, New York City should support its veterans who seek to become entrepreneurs through a comprehensive program. The program should include the following:
  - Outreach Program to Educate Veteran Business Owners: Once the Administration or City Council act to include veteran-owned businesses under the MWBE Program, execute an outreach plan to ensure that veteran entrepreneurs are aware of the change.

- Connect Veteran Entrepreneurs to Resources: To support and encourage entrepreneurship, programs should be created to connect veteran entrepreneurs to resources.
- Support the Tradition of Veteran Vendors: For over a century, New York City has supported veterans interested in operating as street vendors. To ensure that veterans who choose to vend excel, the DVS should develop a training program to educate veterans on regulations and processes to start these businesses. DVS should also partner with private industry to create programs for veterans to finance and acquire equipment which will support their success.

**Veteran Treatment Courts:** We are proud that Veteran Treatment Courts (VTCs) have now been established in each of the five Boroughs and we believe that these are tremendous programs for both veterans and taxpayers. According to the Vera Institute of Justice the average cost to incarcerate a prisoner in the State of New York is \$60,076, the most expensive state in the country nearly twice the national average of \$31,286. Further, as of the first three years of existence, the Buffalo Veteran Treatment court has a 0% recidivism rate. We recommend the following actions:

- Consistent Application across the Boroughs: For the City to benefit most from the program, the policies must be applied consistently throughout New York City. Veterans should have equal protection and application of the law throughout all of New York City's Criminal Courts. We urge the five NYC District Attorney's Offices work with the Office of Courts Administration to create guidelines for which offenses should be referred to treatment courts.
- Measure Outcomes: To ensure that the City gets the maximum benefit from these programs, outcomes must be measured and publicized. Each of the VTCs have a standard set of reporting data so that best practices can be established and the operations can be improved. A working group should be convened to determine which data should be collected, but it should include at least number of cases referred, outcomes, recidivism rates, costs, and key lessons learned in the application of the program, so we can ensure that it continually improves.
- Share Lessons Learned: Evidence suggests that VTCs have had more favorable outcomes as measured by recidivism rates than the other treatment courts, potentially due to the peer support model employed. Lessons learned in the success of the VTCs should be shared with the other treatment courts so that all New Yorkers benefit from these investments in programs for veterans.

**Establish and Publish a Three to Five Year Strategic Plan:** DVS should establish and publish a three to five-year strategic plan to provide a roadmap of what we can accomplish. Key attributes would include a time-phased plan to achieve various milestones, including the Department's city-wide campaign to connect veterans and their families with employment opportunities, educational resources, financial services, and business opportunities.

**Create Innovative Funding Strategies:** Most of the resources and funding for the services that DVS provides will be provided by the government. However, there are times that the most innovative public policy requires outside funding. New York City as the financial capital of the world should be at the forefront of innovation in funding and establishing public / private partnerships. DVS should actively investigate the following potential funding strategies:

- 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) Funding: New York City has been at the forefront of establishing opportunities for government collaboration with private citizens via 501(c)(3) non-profit funding mechanisms. DVS may also qualify for the establishment of a Veteran Service Organization under 501(c)(19) which could allow it to access different funding sources for veteran focused programs.
- Social Impact Funding: Social Impact funding is at the forefront of finance innovation and could have many applications for veterans given the opportunity for clear observable outcomes. DVS should evaluate opportunities to apply this technology to create innovative funding solutions for the veteran space.
- Real Estate: The availability of long-term affordable housing is a clear choke-point in the fight to end veteran homelessness. New York City is home to many of the most powerful real estate firms in the world, and we should seek opportunities to collaborate with the real estate community to create long-term housing solutions.

# MINUTES FROM 2017 VETERAN ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

The minutes for each of the meetings hosted by the NYC Veterans Advisory Board:

## New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for February 22, 2017 meeting held at:

### Staten Island Borough President's Office

10 Richmond Terrace, #120

Staten Island, NY 10301

#### Members

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#### Present:

Todd Haskins (Manhattan)

Samuel Innocent (Bronx)

Charles Greinsky (Staten Island) Joe Bello (Bronx)

Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)

#### Absent:

Pat Devine (Bronx)

Anthony "Tony" Odierno (Manhattan)

John Rowan (Queens)

Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)

Charles Hernandez (Bronx)

Jules Martin (Manhattan)

# Minutes

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- Todd Haskins (Chair) commenced the meeting. (6:10 PM)
- All VAB members introduced themselves to the audience.

## Public Session

Staten Island Borough President James Oddo gave greetings to the board and the audience.

Board chairman Haskins announced new rules for all those who sign up to speak at the public comments portion of the meeting. Moving forward all speakers will be given three minutes to provide their testimony.

Chairman Haskins introduced Tony Davis from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Davis talked about the VA Experience office and the new Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB). Mr. Davis also introduced VHA and VBA representatives who would answer any questions for veterans to make sure that they are not falling through the cracks. Mr. Davis introduced Dan McSweeney, who is one of the co-chairs of the new CVEB.

Chairman Haskins reminded the board that the minutes for November's meeting were approved in December for inclusion into the board's annual report.

Chairman Haskins reviewed the board's annual report to the Mayor and Speaker of the City Council and discussed what the report does in terms of informing and giving recommendations. He reviewed the last 18 months (from MOVA to DVS), and how veterans add value to the New York City community as a whole. He also discussed recognition of veterans as great citizens (second service).

Mr. Oswaldo Pereira from DVS briefly talked about Staten Island and what DVS is doing in the Borough. He introduced Matthew Basile, DVS' outreach coordinator for Staten Island. He also talked about where DVS is in terms of hires.

**Public Comments:** Board member Charles Greinsky (Staten Island) hosted this part of the meeting. The following individuals gave public comments to the board:

**Adrienne Brammer:** Ms. Brammer is the Program Manager for the NYC Veterans Alliance. She briefly discussed their website and how it provides a year round listing of public events in the New York City metropolitan area, including Long Island, Westchester, North Jersey and Hudson Valley. She stated that all individuals and organizations are welcome to submit their events, which will be posted on their calendar for free.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** Bronx, April 20, 2017

Submitted by VAB Secretary Joe Bello.

# New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for April 20, 2017 meeting held at:

**Lincoln Hospital**  
234 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, New York, 10451

## Members

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### Present:

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Todd Haskins (Manhattan)  | Pat Devine (Bronx)       |
| Charles Hernandez (Bronx) | Jules Martin (Manhattan) |

### Absent:

|                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Charles Greinsky (Staten Island) | Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)         |
| Joe Bello (Bronx)                | Anthony “Tony” Odierno (Manhattan) |
| John Rowan (Queens)              | Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)           |
| Samuel Innocent (Bronx)          |                                    |

## Minutes

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- Todd Haskins (Chair) commenced the meeting at 6:15 PM.
- All VAB members introduced themselves to the audience. Quorum was not attained.

### Welcomes:

- Tracy McDermott gave greetings on behalf of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
- James Carr, Director of MIS & Network Security Officer (Marine Corps) gave greetings on behalf of Lincoln Hospital.

**Old Business:** As there was no quorum, all old business was set aside for the next meeting.

### New Business:

Oswaldo Pereira from DVS briefly updated the board on what DVS is doing in the Bronx. Mr. Pereira talked about several program getting started, including VetsThriveNYC. Mr. Pereira also talked about the outreach coordinators in each Borough.

Board member Pat Devine gave a brief presentation regarding the groundbreaking of the Fisher Houses that will be built at the Bronx VA Medical Center. The groundbreaking is scheduled to

take place on May 25, 2017 at 1 PM. The 14,000 square foot residences will have an elevator and will be ADA compliant. The homes are scheduled to be completed by late 2017, early 2018.

**Public Comments:** Board member \_\_\_\_\_ hosted this part of the meeting. The following individuals gave public comments to the board:

**Daniel Weednen:**

**Francis Chapman:**

**Mujaahid Amjad:**

**Matt Butler:**

There were no more speakers.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** May 2017

Submitted by: Joe Bello, Secretary

# New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for April 20, 2017 meeting held at:

**Lincoln Hospital**  
234 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, New York, 10451

## Members

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### Present:

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Todd Haskins (Manhattan)  | Pat Devine (Bronx)       |
| Charles Hernandez (Bronx) | Jules Martin (Manhattan) |

### Absent:

|                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Charles Greinsky (Staten Island) | Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)         |
| Joe Bello (Bronx)                | Anthony “Tony” Odierno (Manhattan) |
| John Rowan (Queens)              | Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)           |
| Samuel Innocent (Bronx)          |                                    |

## Minutes

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**Public Comments:** Board member \_\_\_\_\_ hosted this part of the meeting. The following individuals gave public comments to the board:

**Daniel Weednen:**

**Francis Chapman:**

**Mujaahid Amjad:**

**Matt Butler:**

There were no more speakers.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** May 2017

Submitted by: Joe Bello, Secretary

# New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for July 13, 2017 meeting held at:

David N. Dinkins Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, Mezzanine Floor  
New York, NY 10007

## Members

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### Present:

Todd Haskins (Manhattan)  
Charles Hernandez (Bronx)  
John Rowan (Queens)

Joe Bello (Bronx)  
Jules Martin (Manhattan)  
Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)

### Absent:

Charles Greinsky (Staten Island)  
Samuel Innocent (Bronx)  
Pat Devine (Queens)

Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)  
Anthony “Tony” Odierno (Manhattan)

## Minutes

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- Todd Haskins (Chair) commenced the meeting at 6:15 PM.
- All VAB members introduced themselves to the audience.

**Old Business:** Updated VAB by-laws were approved. Minutes from the April VAB meeting were approved.

### Presentations:

**DVS:** Eric Henry welcomed everyone in attendance on behalf of the NYC Department of Veterans Services and Commissioner Sutton. Mr. Henry talked about the Human Rights law recently passed by the NYC Council. He also discussed BAH benefits, as part of the Post 9/11 GI Bill for students attending colleges in Staten Island. Lastly, Mr. Henry talked about DVS hosting a meeting for veteran street vendors.

**Dept. of Finance:** Representatives from the NYC Department of Finance discussed Veterans Property Tax Exemption and the new law that will take effect at the end of the month. They stated that if anyone had further questions, they would be around to answer them.

**Marie Roker-Jones:** Ms. Roker-Jones, the VP of Engagement and Co-founder of OweYaa gave a presentation on what OweYaa is and what they do. Ms. Roker-Jones stated that OweYaa tailors military and veteran talent for companies looking to expand their team and business. OweYaa matches the veteran not to a company, but to a project. The company is able to remain productive while learning more about that candidate and helping him/her grow and develop their own skill sets. Ms. Roker-Jones was also asked how they got their name. She said in the Midwest they say “I Owe Ya One.” They put that together to come up with the name to help those who served our nation.

**Public Comments:** Board member Jules Martin (Manhattan) hosted this part of the meeting. The following individuals gave comments to the board:

**Peter Leibman:** Mr. Leibman talked about the Troops to Teachers program and how there is a need for veterans to become teachers. He discussed the workshop and admissions fair that will take place at St. Francis College on July 26. If anyone had any questions, please come see him.

**Stanley Scriven:** Mr. Scriven is from Easter Seals and he talked about a grant they have to help women veterans (HVRP). He also stated they have Employment and housing services for veterans and anyone interested should come see him.

**Vince McGowan:** Mr. McGowan talked about 55 Water Street (site of the NYC Vietnam Veterans Memorial) and how Post Hurricane Sandy they have been in the process of rebuilding and working with the Parks Department. They are looking at ways to protect the memorial while keeping the space public.

**Cheryl Dupries:** Ms. Dupries represented the Native American Community. Ms. Dupries stated that veterans are not finding employment and having major issues with housing. She stated that one-shot deals are not working. She also discussed the possibility of moving the VA hospital or the VA Regional Office.

**Rosemary Hameed:** Ms. Hameed stated that she is running for NYC Mayor. She stated that we need to get rid of Mayor de Blasio and that NYCHA, Bank of America and Meryl Lynch were in bed with each other.

**Noah Angeles:** Mr. Angeles is a Principal at an Academy in Queens. He talked about the need to find funding for school flags and to advocate for veterans and children. He stated that unless they self identify, there is no way to know who is a child of a veteran.

**Olivia Meier:** Ms. Meier talked about the NYC Veterans Alliance and what they do. Ms. Meier discussed Intro. 1259.

**Helene Van Clief:** Ms. Van Clief talked about the need for more discussion on women issues. She stated that there is no mammogram for women at the Bronx VAMC. She also stated that all female veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejuene should get a mammogram because of the water issues at the base.

**Tyquin Campbell:** Mr. Campbell stated that he cannot find a job and that WorkForce1 has not been helpful.

**Herbert Sweat:** Mr. Sweat talked about Hart Island and how NPD runs it. He talked about the number of veterans who are buried at Hart Island and how families were unable to visit. He stated that he has been advocating for that to change and how no more veterans should be buried there. He further stated that before you could not memorialize veterans buried there but now you can.

**Sara Lowenburg:** Ms. Lowenburg represented the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum. She shared what programs they have and how veterans can visit the Museum for free. She also stated that they will be launching a veteran's video chat for vets who cannot visit the Intrepid.

**Ray Di Leo:** Mr. Di Leo stated that he is having employment issues and that for some jobs he is underemployed and too old. He asked who he could turn to for help.

**Boots Whitlock:** Mr. Whitlock talked about veteran vendors and handed the board information sheets. He stated that vendors do not like Intro. 614 and that he wanted to sue the city. Mr. Whitlock also talked about Vets4Vets and asked to make vendors a priority. He asked the board if anyone was a vendor. He also said that he could not get legal assistance.

There were no more speakers.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** September 2017

Submitted by: Joe Bello, Secretary

# New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for September 19, 2017 meeting held at:

Prince-Wynn VFW Post 260  
705 Shad Creek Road  
Broad Channel, Queens 11693

## Members

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### Present:

|                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Todd Haskins (Manhattan)   | Jules Martin (Manhattan)   |
| Samuel Innocent (Brooklyn) | Joe Bello (Bronx)          |
| John Rowan (Queens)        | Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn) |

### Absent:

|                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Charles Greinsky (Staten Island) | Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)           |
| Pat Devine (Queens)              | Anthony “Tony” Odierno (Manhattan) |
| Charles Hernandez (Bronx)        |                                    |

## Minutes

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- Todd Haskins (Chair) commenced the meeting at 6:45 PM.
- All VAB members introduced themselves to the audience.

**Old Business:** Minutes from the July VAB meeting were approved.

**New Business:** **Elections** were not held. It was agreed upon by the members in Executive Committee that with the majority of VAB members three-year terms coming to an end early next year, the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary would stay in place until the end of this year and the board would ask the Mayor and City Council Speaker to re-appoint or appoint new individuals as soon as possible.

### **Presentations:**

**DVS:** Assistant Commissioner Jamal Othman welcomed everyone in attendance on behalf of the NYC Department of Veterans Services and Commissioner Sutton. Mr. Othman talked about the current housing and homeless issues DVS is working on. Mr. Othman discussed the upcoming November events and announced that City Hall will once again be having a Flag Ceremony from November 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Othman also announced that the Mayor’s Veterans Breakfast would be held at Gracie Mansion this year. Lastly, Mr. Othman talked about the Satellite

Offices DVS has throughout the Borough. He said they were in the process of hiring an Outreach Coordinator for Manhattan.

Michael O’Kane from VVA Chapter 32 asked AC Othman about the Schedule C payments to veteran organizations from DYCD and having DVS taking it over. Mr. Othman stated that DVS was working on this and that they would like to see the City Council work on this in the coming year as well.

Dan McSweeney asked AC Othman about City contracting for Veteran small businesses and the recommendations created by SBS several years ago. AC Othman replied that SBS has been working on some of this and that there is now a self-identification portal for veterans. Chairman Haskins stated that the VAB was twice recommended in its annual report that Veterans be added to the M/WBE.

VAB Secretary Bello asked AC Othman at the status of NYServes. AC Othman replied that the City is in the process of finalizing procurement of it and that the name will change to VetConnectNYC. Secretary Bello also asked why DVS was not on this year’s MMR report. AC Othman stated they would be on the next one.

**Public Comments:** Board member John Rowan (Queens) hosted this part of the meeting. Mr. Rowan thanked the VFW for hosting this meeting at their Post. The following individual(s) gave public comments to the board:

**Dan McSweeney:** Mr. McSweeney talked about the UWVC and this year’s Veterans Day parade. This year’s service they are honoring is the Air Force and the Grand Marshall is Buzz Aldrin. Mr. McSweeney stated that Mark Otto is working to execute the parade and make it more smoothly for all. Mr. McSweeney also introduced Tony Davis from the VA and stated that the MyVA Community Veterans Engagement Board is having a town-hall meeting on October 12, 2017. The Keynote speaker will be VA Secretary David Shulkin. He also stated that both the State Division of Veterans Affairs and DVS would be participating.

There were no more speakers.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** November 2017

Submitted by: Joe Bello, Secretary