



Date: April 21, 2015

To: Chair Stacy Mungo and Members of the Economic Development and Finance Committee

From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services *KC*

Subject: Veterans Affairs Commission Fiscal Impact Analysis Report

Discussion

At its November 11, 2014 meeting, the City Council requested the City Manager to prepare a fiscal impact analysis report pertaining to the creation of a Veterans Affairs Commission for review and comment by the Economic Development and Finance Committee of the City Council. This report responds to that request.

Proposed Commission

As proposed in Agenda Item #14 (attached), the purpose of the proposed Veterans Affairs Commission is to serve as an advisory body to the City Council concerning the well-being of military veterans in Long Beach. Commissioners would provide recommendations on matters pertaining to the affairs of veterans residing within the City. The Commission could evaluate and recommend programs, policies, and practices designed to assist veterans in multiple capacities, and act as a central clearing house for information, programs and services relating to veterans in the Long Beach community. A commission dedicated to the needs of veterans in the City of Long Beach is a way to not only honor their service, but to highlight the many achievements of those who have dedicated a portion of their lives to protecting our country.

The Commission would be made up of nine members, one from each Council District; a minimum of four commissioners must be veterans. All appointments would be made by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The Commission would meet quarterly.

Current Veterans Assistance Programs

As the agenda item points out, Long Beach not only has a rich naval history, but a deep history of residents who are veterans from all U.S. military branches. According to the U.S. Census, Long Beach is home to 21,936 veterans, approximately 5% of our population. The following is a brief summary of some of the many organizations and services currently available to veterans in the Long Beach area and that the commission would interface with:

- **Long Beach VA Healthcare System** – Long Beach is home to a general medical and surgical hospital dedicated to the medical needs of veterans. With 356 beds, this hospital had 7,300 admissions last year; its physicians performed 1,549 inpatient and 2,320 outpatient surgeries. The Long Beach VA Healthcare system also provides substance abuse counseling at the Villages at Cabrillo.

- **US Veterans Initiative** – The United States Veterans Initiative manages 500 housing units at the Villages at Cabrillo, a 27-acre complex, providing affordable housing and social services for homeless veterans. Supportive services include outreach, vocational training, and specialized woman's veteran programs.
- **Homeless Veterans Initiative** (ends June 2016) – This initiative provides mental health outreach, coordination and case management for homeless veterans. It is administered through the City's Homeless Services Division with funding provided through the Los Angeles County Homeless Prevention Initiative.
- **American Gold Star Manor** – Established after WWII to provide housing to mothers who lost their sons to war, it currently serves 430 Gold Star mothers, fathers, veterans and other eligible seniors who reside at this Long Beach facility, one of only ten Gold Star facilities in the country.
- **Employment Development Department (EDD)** – The State EDD, in cooperation with the City's Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network (PGWIN), provides a wide variety of grant-funded programs to veterans, including employment services, job training, vocational education, and supportive services including participation in community college programs. Veterans also receive priority for services offered directly by PGWIN.
- **Civil Service Department** – The City's Civil Service Department provides veterans preference points to all eligible veterans who successfully qualify on any open competitive examinations. Qualifying veterans receive an additional credit of ten (10) points added to their original passing score; fifteen (15) points are added to the scores of qualifying disabled veterans.
- **Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)** – The Long Beach Housing Authority administers 616 Housing Choice Vouchers designated specifically for qualifying veterans to provide permanent housing. Supportive services are provided by the Long Beach Veterans Administration.

Staffing Needs for the Proposed Veterans Commission

While the breadth and scope of the issues the Veterans Affairs Commission will address is not currently known, additional staff resources will be required to support the Commission and act as a clearing house for resources. Staff will need to conduct research and evaluate programs, perform outreach, prepare informational materials and report their findings. No support is currently dedicated to providing this level of service to the veteran community. Current staffing levels and available funding within the Health and Human Services Department are insufficient to provide the time required to support the Commission.

To effectively support the Commission, the Health and Human Services Department will require, at a minimum, a half-time Community Program Specialist III. This Community Program Specialist will conduct high-level research and analyses to make recommendations, prepare thorough reports (written and oral), and coordinate with other City staff members and other outside agencies that have responsibilities in areas of interest or relevance to Commission agenda items.

Fiscal Impact

The additional cost of staff support for the proposed Veterans Affairs Commission is approximately \$48,000 annually for the half-time Community Program Specialist III position. The funding for this position was not included in the Adopted FY 15 Budget; therefore, funding would need to be identified and brought forth to the City Council as a budget adjustment.

Attachment

APPROVED:



PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER



~~R-14~~

Rex Richardson
Long Beach City Councilmember, 8th District

Date: November 11, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rex Richardson, Ninth District *R*
Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District *SP*

Subject: Creation of Veterans Affairs Commission

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending the Long Beach Municipal Code to establish a citywide Veterans Affairs Commission. The ordinance should include the following criteria:

- Representation from all nine Council Districts
- A minimum of four Commissioners must be veterans

DISCUSSION

The City of Long Beach not only has a rich naval history, but a deep history of residents who are veterans from all U.S. military branches. According to the U.S. Census, Long Beach is home to 21,936 veterans, approximately 5% of our population. A commission dedicated to the needs of veterans in the City of Long Beach is a way to not only honor their service, but to highlight the many achievements of those who have dedicated a portion of their lives to protecting our country.

This proposed Veterans Affairs Commission would serve as an advisory body to the City Council concerning the well-being of military veterans in Long Beach. Commissioners would provide recommendations on all matters pertaining to the affairs of veterans residing within the city. The Commission could evaluate and recommend programs, policies, and practices designed to assist veterans in multiple capacities, and act as a central clearinghouse for information, programs and services relating to veterans in the Long Beach community.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no anticipated fiscal impact.