

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
VETERANS COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 26, 2011

The Veterans Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26, 2011, in the Trustees' Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, Vice President Myatt presiding.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vice President Myatt, Chair, Trustee Bashford, Trustee Davis, Trustee Stafford;

Absent: Trustee Pelosi;

Staff Present: Elizabeth Murray, Managing Director
Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director

Hearing on feasibility of, and operational, administrative procedural requirements associated with, permitting the American Legion War Memorial Commission to establish a Veterans Resource Center in Veterans Building space currently allocated for use by the San Francisco Posts of the American Legion:

Vice President Myatt, Chair of the Veterans Committee, stated that at the full Board meeting earlier this month, Trustees denied the request of the American Legion War Memorial Commission to use Veterans Building room 336 for a Veterans Resource Center. At that time, President Shultz and Trustee Pelosi suggested the Veterans Committee meet to further review some of the issues discussed concerning the Veterans Resource Center and investigate the potential for establishing resource center activities in Veterans Building space currently allocated for use by the San Francisco American Legion Posts.

Vice President Myatt began the discussion by posing a series of questions to representatives of the American Legion War Memorial Commission, specifically to Commission Chair Roger Dong.

- Can the Commission elaborate further on their targeted "customer base" as opposed to those veterans being served by existing organizations and services, and explain how the Commission would reach out to its customer base?
- How many different organizations does the Commission expect would use the room? What are the names of those organizations? How often would these organizations use the room?
- What is a typical weekly use schedule of the Veterans Resource Center room?
- What percentage of room use would be for computer training? Computer training requires expenditures to bring electric and data cabling to the 2nd floor. If it is uncertain that there is a realistic customer base for computer training, or if computer training is not absolutely essential to the Resource Center, this makes a significant difference to the discussion.
- What would be the duties of the part-time manager of the room? Would this person be making cold calls to organizations to invite them to use the room?
- What would happen to the desks, furnishings and computer equipment when the Veterans Building closes next fall for a two-year period?

Mr. Dong stated that their goal is to train veterans. He acknowledged there are already many veterans service organizations doing this work. He said the Commission has heard from some of those organizations including the State EDD, local Veterans Training Center and Swords to Plowshares, that they would be interested in

having a larger room to conduct trainings for larger groups of veterans. Mr. Dong stated that the Commission would offer the Veterans Resource Center room free of charge to these and other veterans service organizations for blocks of several hours for training programs. He said the room would probably be used on weekdays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mr. Dong stated the Commission has been promised \$47,000 to fund a manager for the room and they expect an imminent donation of office furnishings. He said the Veterans Resource Center manager's duties would be to verify that those using the room are veterans and to maintain the room's computer consoles. Mr. Dong stated that while they have not yet secured computer equipment, computers are essential to training programs, and would be used only for training, not for drop-in use by veterans. Mr. Dong stated that when the building closes for renovation, it would be their hope to either find a place to store the resource center equipment or find an alternative location to continue operating.

Trustee Stafford asked if the Commission, as part of its business plan, had investigated the need for the proposed resource center, and he asked whether there are veterans who are not currently receiving training due to lack of such a resource. In response to an inquiry from Vice President Myatt, Paul Cox of American Legion Post 315 and current chairman of Swords to Plowshares, stated that while Swords' mission would be helped by having a large computer classroom, Swords is not turning veterans away from their training programs.

Vice President Myatt asked Managing Director Beth Murray to speak about the cost and other challenges involved in using a second floor meeting room for the proposed Veterans Resource Center.

Ms. Murray stated that while any of the second floor meeting rooms in their current condition could be used for a variety of training programs, because these rooms have limited electric service and no data cabling, work would be necessary to support the 20-25 computer stations proposed by the Commission. She stated an estimated cost of \$4-7,000 to add sufficient electric service to meeting room #212. She stated that as War Memorial does not run data cable, the Commission would need to contact and arrange with a service provider to run necessary data cable and provide necessary service. In discussion, it was suggested that meeting room #205 would be a more suitable location for the proposed resource center as this room does not have raised platforms around the outer walls of the room.

Ms. Murray reiterated to the Committee and the Commission that any outside organization using Veterans Building space—including any organization invited by the Commission to use space allocated to the American Legion Posts—must enter into a short term license agreement with the War Memorial, which agreement sets forth certain use conditions, rules and regulations, indemnification and insurance requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

During public comment, the Trustees heard from Charles Kendrick, Commander of American Legion Post 333; Wallace Levin, past president of the Veterans Affairs Commission; LeRue Grim, former chair of the American Legion War Memorial Commission; and Fred Merrick; all of whom spoke about the importance of serving veterans in whatever way possible.

Following public comment, Vice President Myatt stated that this matter will remain in Committee. He asked War Memorial staff to continue working with the War Memorial Commission to investigate possible use of room 205 for a Veterans Resource Center; and he asked the Commission to provide statistical data on those veterans not being served at this time. Vice President Myatt stated that at such time as more information is available, the Veterans Committee will reconvene.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 3:15 p.m.

Jennifer E. Norris
Executive Secretary