



MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE BOARD

Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2011

I. Call to Order – Secretary Lane Carson, Chairman

The Military Family Assistance Board (MFAB) Meeting was called to order by Secretary Carson, Chairman, at 10:05 a.m. on February 11, 2011, at the Galvez State Office Building, 602 N. Fifth Street, Baton Rouge.

II. Pledge/Opening Prayer

The pledge of allegiance was led by Rep. Chris Hazel and prayer by Mrs. Precilla Wilkewitz.

III. Roll Call

Mrs. Charmagne Scott conducted the roll of members. MFAB Members present were: Secretary Lane Carson, Mr. Michael McNaughton, Mr. Gary Hall, Colonel Evans Spiceland, Mr. Marshall Hevron, Mr. Brian Jakes, Mrs. Precilla Wilkewitz, Representative Chris Hazel, and LTC Scott Adams. MFAB Members absent were Senator Robert Adley and Mr. Sammy Guillory. A quorum was present. LDVA Staff in attendance was David LaCerte, Richard Blackwell, Robin Keller, Amy Burris, and Charmagne Scott.

IV. Remarks

Secretary Carson introduced new MFAB Member, LTC Scott Adams. LTC Adams is the designee of the Louisiana National Guard, replacing Colonel Patti Woods.

V. Approval of December 10, 2010, Minutes

The minutes of the above referenced meeting was distributed to the members for review prior to the February 11th meeting. It was motioned by Mr. Jakes, seconded by Mrs. Wilkewitz, to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion passed unanimously, with Senator Adley and Mr. Guillory absent for the vote.

VI. MFA Fund Administrative Rule-Making

Mr. LaCerte briefed on handouts of proposed rule changes affecting the MFAB/MFAF as a result of Act 151 (2005), Act 676 (2008), and Act 256 (2010). The proposed rules, previously provided to the Members for review, will reflect the following changes:

- The transfer of the MFA Board/Fund from Department of Social Services to the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA)
- The transfer of third party administrator duties from the Louisiana Attorney General to the Benefits Section of LDVA
- Allowance for awards covering transportation costs of activated personnel
- Third party administrator costs capped at 5% of the total amount deposited into the fund in the previous fiscal year
- Program administration costs capped at 5% of the total amount deposited into the fund in the previous fiscal year
- Expenditures on “Veterans Outreach” capped at 10% of the total amount deposited into the fund in the previous fiscal year, and a definition of “Veterans Outreach”

If approved, the proposed rules will be submitted to the Louisiana Register for publication. It was motioned by Mr. Jakes, seconded by Colonel Spiceland, to approve the proposed MFAB/MFAF rule changes for publication in the Louisiana Register, as presented. The motion passed unanimously, with Senator Adley and Mr. Guillory absent for the vote.

VII. Executive Session—Need-Based Claim Considerations

It was motioned by Mrs. Wilkewitz, seconded by Mr. Jakes, to move from Regular Business discussion to Executive Session to consider two need-based claims requiring board consideration. The motion passed unanimously, with Senator Adley and Mr. Guillory absent for the vote.

It was motioned by Mrs. Wilkewitz, seconded by Colonel Spiceland, to adjourn from Executive Session and resume regular business discussion. The motion passed unanimously, with Senator Adley and Mr. Guillory absent for the vote.

The following action was taken on Case #1:

It was motioned by Mrs. Wilkewitz, seconded by Mr. McNaughton, to approve applicant’s request of up to \$10,000, pending receipt of the following documents to the Third Party Administrator: verification of financing, copy of military orders, copy of original medical records, and verification via the Jefferson Davis Parish Veterans Assistance Counselor of contractor selection. By statute, the decision of the MFAB on this claim is final. The motion passed unanimously, with Senator Adley and Mr. Guillory absent for the vote.

The following action was taken on Case #2:

It was motioned by Mr. Jakes, seconded by Colonel Spiceland, to issue an award of \$10,000 as requested by the applicant. By statute, the decision of the MFAB on this claim is final. The motion passed unanimously, with Senator Adley and Mr. Guillory absent for the vote.

VIII. Fund Report

Mr. Blackwell, Third Party Administrator point of contact, reviewed the current fund balance via handout. Donations to date for FY 2010/2011 totaled \$31,216.08; expenditures to date totaled \$91,809.18; and the fund balance as of February 10, 2011, was \$400,490.85. He noted that sufficient funds were available to pay the need-based claims approved during this meeting.

IX. Media Report

Via handout, Ms. Keller, Press Secretary, briefed on the current goals to promote the MFAF for the 2011 tax season, primarily marketing the check-box donation option on the income tax return. Also, to increase awareness of the fund to potential donors and applicants, fliers will be provided to Louisiana CPAs and all Parish Veterans Service Offices; an e-blast to the veterans' service organizations, the Veterans Affairs Commission Members, and LDVA's other contact lists; and Governor Jindal's public service announcement mass distributed to LA broadcast media. The total projected cost of these outreach efforts (i.e., fliers, postage, supplies, etc.) is \$997.48.

Ms. Keller also announced that the "Support Our Veterans" license plate will be available for sale on Monday, February 14, at all OMV locations. The one-time royalty fee of \$25 for each license plate purchased will go to the MFAF.

X. Other Business

- Mr. Jakes announced the next Governor's Military Advisory Board Meeting will be held on June 7, 2011.
- Ms. Wilkewitz commented that the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Department of Louisiana recently hosted its 80th Mid-Winter Conference in Alexandria.
- Mr. Hevron noted his appointment by former Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu to the MFAB since its inception, and expressed his willingness to continue to serve if Lieutenant Governor Jay Dardenne wishes to retain him. He also requested the Members be provided a breakdown of the fund's administrative costs (i.e., Third Party Administrator, program administration, and veterans' outreach) so they will be informed of how much is expended in each area.
- Colonel Spiceland suggested the MFAB, in the future, consider supporting legislative action to amend the current law concerning the disability/death benefit for National Guardsmen (Act 260 of 2007), removing restrictions so that all veterans would be eligible.
- Mr. McNaughton commented on his recent departure from the LDVA and is now working with Ride 2 Recovery (wounded veterans).

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business to be brought before the Military Family Assistance Board, a motion was made by Colonel Spiceland, seconded by Mr. Jakes, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, with Senator Adley and Mr. Guillory absent for the vote.

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Charmagne Scott, AA6

18-May-11