



MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE BOARD

Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2016

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

A meeting of the Military Family Assistance Board (MFAB) was called to order by Secretary Joey Strickland, Chairman, on December 15, 2016, at 1:00pm. The meeting was held at the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) Administrative Office, 602 N. 5th Street, Baton Rouge, LA. After the pledge of allegiance was recited in unison, roll call was conducted by Charmagne Scott, Confidential Assistant. Nine of eleven members were present, establishing a quorum.

MFAB Members present: Secretary Joey Strickland, Representative Chris Hazel, Mr. Sammy Guillory, Mr. Dennis Andras, Colonel Jona Hughes, Mr. Thomas Enright, (Ms.) Alex Juan, Mr. Billy Robbins, and Mr. Matt Farlow

LDVA Staff present: Charlie Dirks, Executive Counsel; Holly Talley, Executive Management Officer; Alfred Leger, MFA Third Party Administrator; English Josey, Internal Auditor; and Charmagne Scott, Confidential Assistant

Secretary Strickland formally introduced Ms. Holly Talley. In addition to her role as Executive Management Officer, she will serve as the department's outreach director. Ms. Talley previously served as LA Local Director of Concerned Veterans for America.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the November 10, 2016, board meeting was presented for review and approval. It was motioned by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mr. Enright, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

Minutes of the December 2, 2016, fund committee meeting was presented for review and approval. It was motioned by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mr. Guillory, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

3. Fund Balance Update

Via handout, Mr. Leger briefed on the current status of the MFA Fund account. As of December 15, 2015, the fund balance is \$457,893.35. The pending payment of \$45,375.79, to the Army National Guard 1023rd Vertical Engineer Company for

reimbursement of travel funds had been sent and received. This request was approved by the MFA Board at its August 28, 2015, meeting. Mr. Leger also noted that \$344,700 had been paid to date for flood assistance claims and 5 need-based claims had been paid, totaling \$13,992.48.

4. Board Consideration/Actions Taken on Applications Received in Excess of \$2500; Applications Considered by the Fund Committee; and Applications Following the Flood of 2016

Due to numerous applications being submitted with no specific amount requested, the board took the following action for all future applications submitted for consideration.

It was motioned by Mr. Andras, seconded by Ms. Juan, that all future applications submitted for assistance from the MFA Fund must show a specific amount in order to be considered. The motion passed.

The Members then considered and took action on the following applications:

Case #1. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting; no specific monetary amount or supporting documentation for request was submitted; to date, submission of a specific monetary amount and supporting documentation is still pending. **It was motioned by Mr. Andras, seconded by Ms. Juan, to table this request. The motion passed.**

Case #2. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting; no specific monetary amount or supporting documentation for request was submitted; to date, submission of a specific monetary amount and supporting documentation is still pending. **It was motioned by Mr. Andras, seconded by Ms. Juan, to table this request. The motion passed.**

Case #3. Applicant lost everything in flood of 2016 and requested the maximum amount of \$10,000, to assist with an estimated \$60,000 to repair home. Mr. Leger spoke with the contractor to verify this amount. **It was motioned by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mr. Andras, to approve the requested amount of \$10,000. The motion passed.**

Case #4. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting. Applicant requested assistance for miscellaneous household expenses totaling \$5,412.39, but did not submit supporting documentation to verify each expense. To date, submission of supporting documentation is still pending. **It was motioned by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mr. Enright, to table this request until supporting documentation is submitted. The motion passed.**

Case #5. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting. Applicant had previously received \$350 in flood relief assistance and requested an additional \$350, for a total of \$700, for a house payment. To date, submission of documentation to

verify request is still pending. **It was motioned by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mr. Enright, to table this request until supporting documentation is submitted. The motion passed.**

Case #6. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting. Applicant requested a total of \$9,250 in assistance due to flooding that completely destroyed home. Applicant had previously received \$1,100 in flood relief assistance. Submission of supporting documentation to verify request is still pending. **It was motioned by Mr. Andras, seconded by Ms. Juan, to table this request until supporting documentation is submitted. The motion passed.**

Case #7. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting. Applicant requested \$2,500-\$3,000 to catch up on rent, car, and utilities payments. After review by the National Guard, Colonel Hughes stated the applicant was discharged in 2009 and therefore does not qualify for NG assistance. Application will be deferred to the Fund Committee for review after submission of supporting documentation.

Case #8. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting and the maximum payment of \$350 for flood assistance had been approved. Applicant requested a total of \$15,000 to convert bathroom to handicap accessible and complete other home repairs as a result of flood damage. FEMA had provided some assistance and the federal VA denied assistance to applicant. **It was motioned by Mr. Andras, seconded by Representative Hazel, to conditionally approve the maximum payment of \$10,000, pending a personal visit to the applicant by LDVA staff to gather more supporting documentation to verify the request. The motion passed.**

Case #9. Applicant requested assistance, totaling \$1432.02, to catch up on car insurance, utilities, and phone due to VA check being withheld for the past two months. Supporting documentation was submitted to verify amounts requested. **It was motioned by Ms. Juan, seconded by Representative Hazel, to approve the request with payments being made directly to each vendor. The motion passed.**

Case #10. Application was considered at the last MFA meeting and the maximum payment of \$350 for flood assistance had been approved. Applicant requested a total of \$8,000 for assistance with repairs to home due to flood damage. To date, no supporting documentation has been submitted to verify the requested amount. **It was motioned by Ms. Juan, seconded by Representative Hazel, to table this request until supporting documentation is submitted. The motion passed.**

Case #11. Applicant requested assistance for roof repairs at home due to damage in August. No specific amount was requested and no documentation was submitted to support request. **It was motioned by Mr. Andras, seconded by Ms. Juan, to table this request until a specific amount is requested and supporting documentation is submitted. The motion passed.**

Case #12. Applicant requested the maximum payment of \$10,000 to assist with bills due to being out of work since September 2016. Documentation submitted only showed expenses totaling \$1,425.17. **It was motioned by Colonel Hughes, seconded by Representative Hazel, to approve the amount of \$1,425.17 to be paid directly to the vendors owed; and consideration for additional assistance would be made pending submission of supporting documentation. The motion passed.**

Case #13. Applicant requested \$3,367.48 to bring mortgage payments up to date. Supporting documentation was submitted to verify the requested amount. It was noted on the application that the home is currently in foreclosure and not in the applicant's name; therefore if assistance is approved, it would not benefit the applicant. **It was motioned by Mr. Andras, seconded by Ms. Juan, to table consideration of this request pending follow up contact by LDVA staff and submission of more information to support the request. The motion passed.**

Case #14. Applicant requested \$1,437.94 to bring second mortgage payment up to date. Supporting documentation was submitted to verify the requested amount. **It was motioned by Colonel Hughes, seconded by Mr. Andras, to approve the application for the amount requested. The motion passed.**

5. Proposed Rule Change to MFA Fund Language

On behalf of Secretary Strickland, Mr. Dirks presented a proposed change in language in the LA Administrative Code, Section 965, relative to the definition of "Third Party Administrator." It is proposed the language be changed from "the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Division" to ***"an employee of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs designated by the Secretary."*** This change would allow any LDVA employee to be designated as the Third Party Administrator, and not be limited to someone within the Benefits Division. **It was motioned by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mr. Guillory, to approve the proposed change as presented. The motion passed.**

6. Adjournment

There being no further business to be brought before the MFA Board, the meeting adjourned at 2:40pm.

Minutes submitted by: Charmagne Scott, Confidential Assistant

**Copies of all handouts referenced in the minutes are available upon request.*