

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS  
BOARD ACTION SUMMARY

DEPT: Chief Executive Office

BOARD AGENDA #: \*B-13

AGENDA DATE: August 30, 2016

**SUBJECT:**

Authorize the Veterans Services Office to provide the Veterans Transportation Program and Accept the Dedicated Vehicles for this Program from the Veterans Administration

**BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:**

No. 2016-460

On motion of Supervisor Withrow, Seconded by Supervisor O'Brien  
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: O'Brien, Chiesa, Withrow, DeMartini, and Chairman Monteith

Noes: Supervisors: None

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1)  Approved as recommended

2)  Denied

3)  Approved as amended

4)  Other:

MOTION:

ATTEST: Elizabeth A. King  
ELIZABETH A. KING, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

File No.

**THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS  
AGENDA ITEM**

DEPT: Chief Executive Office  
Urgent  Routine

BOARD AGENDA #: \*B-13

AGENDA DATE: August 30, 2016

CEO CONCURRENCE: *phx*

4/5 Vote Required: Yes  No

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**SUBJECT:**

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Authorize the Veterans Services Office to provide the Veterans Transportation Program and Accept the Dedicated Vehicles for this Program from the Veterans Administration.

**DISCUSSION:**

There are many veterans in our community, who are homebound and have no transportation to important medical appointments. In 2013 a group of volunteer individuals led by Veterans Advisory Commission's Transportation Committee, and Commissioner Joe Madden collaborated in securing the use of two seven passenger vans from the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide transportation for eligible home-bound Veterans to medical appointments throughout Northern California. Initially seven volunteer drivers were certified by the VA to transport veterans in need of assistance. Over the past few years the volunteer base for this program has declined. The Transportation Committee continues to recruit volunteers; however, has had limited success in large part to the very cumbersome and lengthy process the VA requires for volunteers to be approved. In the past year the program had to deny transport to 71 medical appointments for Veterans due to a lack of volunteer drivers.

The Transportation Committee along with the County's Veterans Service Office (VSO) and MOVE, a local non-profit whose mission is to provide transportation for eligible Senior Citizens, have been working together to recruit more volunteers for the program. In a recent recruitment effort 26 citizens expressed interest in volunteering for the program; however, only two completed the VA process. One challenge to recruit volunteers is the stringent certification process by the VA and that interested individuals must to travel to the VA Clinic in Livermore to be certified. Individuals interested in volunteering to be drivers must drive to Livermore, Palo Alto and Menlo Park, several different times to get a physical, fingerprinting, blood testing, etc. This results in a minimum of 2-3 months to become a volunteer.

With the continued challenges of recruiting and retaining volunteer drivers, the Transportation Committee and team suggested a possible transfer of this program to the County's Veterans Services Office. In anticipation of this possible program change, the VA has been approached to determine if they would allow the transfer of the vehicles to the County program for this purpose, subject to the consideration and approval by the Board of Supervisors. By transferring the program volunteers will be screened through the County process and will be

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able to be certified locally. MOVE has received a grant to hire a Volunteer Coordinator who will assist with recruiting volunteer drivers for the Veterans Transportation Program. MOVE has also agreed to pay for fuel costs, bridge/road tolls and to provide cell phones for all volunteer drivers. One added advantage of this local collaboration is the MOVE program will be relocating this fall into the new Stanislaus Veterans Center.

There are several benefits to this recommended program change, including a reduction of time to qualify volunteers, more streamlined approach to encourage volunteerism, and integration of transportation services locally, bolstered by the one-stop vision of the Stanislaus Veterans Center.

On July 12, 2016, a recommendation was presented to the Board of Supervisors Health Executive Committee to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to request the VA transfer the vans to the County, for direct provision of the volunteer driver program through the County's Area Agency on Aging/Veterans Service Office.

Some concern was expressed about the County taking on responsibility for future funding for the program should the VA not continue to support this effort by providing the vans in the future. Support for the VA to continue to provide vehicles will continue to be sought in the future. The VSO and MOVE are already collaborating with the Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCog) to apply for a Federal Transportation Administration 5130 grant through the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program for future replacement vehicles. It is also understood that the fleet maintenance costs for the existing vans can be accommodated in the approved budget for the VSO.

Upon approval of this item by the Board of Supervisors the VA will notify Paratransit Inc., the parent company of MOVE who originally donated one of the vans, that the VA will no longer administer the program. The VA and the County are also working with Congressman Jeff Denham's Office to transfer the second van to the VSO. The Congressman's office was instrumental in securing a vehicle donation to the VA through a grant from the Welcome Home Heroes. Both Paratransit Inc. and Congressman Denham's Office support the program and transfer of vehicles to the VSO.

The need for this program is also identified in the Fourth Annual Report from the Veterans Advisory Commission also being presented to the Board of Supervisors on August 30, 2016.

**POLICY ISSUE:**

The Veterans Advisory Commission was established by the Board of Supervisors to advise the Board of Supervisors and County staff on all matters important to our Veterans' community. Transportation for the County's Veterans to medical appointments is considered a top priority for the Veterans Advisory Commission.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Veterans Transportation program will continue to be a volunteer program with support from the VSO and MOVE. Staff is estimating the cost to accept and maintain the vehicles from the VA to be \$6,000 and to be paid from existing appropriations in the Department of Aging and Veterans budget. The County will assume liability for the existing vehicles.

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<b>Cost of recommended action:</b>		\$	6,000
<b>Source(s) of Funding:</b>			
Exsiting Appropriations in the Department of Aging and Veterans Budget			
	6,000		
<b>Funding Total:</b>		\$	6,000
<b>Net Cost to County General Fund</b>		\$	-

**Fiscal Year:**

<b>NO</b>

**Budget Adjustment/Appropriations needed:**

**Fund Balance as of**

N/A

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' PRIORITY:**

Approval of this item supports the Board's priorities of Effective Partnerships, a Healthy Community and the Efficient Delivery of Public Services by partnering with the VA and MOVE to provide transportation for Veterans to much needed medical services.

**STAFFING IMPACT:**

Existing staff from the Chief Executive Office and Department of Aging and Veterans will provide support to the Veterans Advisory Commission.

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Patricia Hill Thomas, Chief Operations Officer, (209) 525-6333

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

None