



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, January 12, 2022 - 6:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via TEAMS

MEETING NOTE: Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have prompted declarations of a public health emergency at the local, state and federal levels, this meeting will be conducted using measures to protect public health. This meeting will be held remotely through technological means, as permitted under Arizona law. In-person attendance by member of the public will be prohibited.

Summary Minutes

Approved on February 9, 2022

1. **Call to Order / Establish a Quorum**

Virtual online meeting called to order by Bruce Hamilton at 6:00 p.m. Those present and absent were:

Present:

Steve W. Aguirre
James Louis (arrived at 6:04 pm)
Carol Rundell

William Burks
Gaeton Briseno
Terry Byron
Henry Johnson

William Wojciechowski

Marlon Ruiz

Mark Levine (arrived at 6:05 pm)
Bruce Hamilton
Martin Belden
Melvin Morgan
Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Luke Johnson

Absent:

Michael St. Ores

Representing:

American Legion Department of Arizona
Arizona Department of Veterans Services
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, Cactus Chapter 2
Disabled American Veterans Chapter 26
Korean War Veterans Association, Pima Chapter
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72 and Post 81
Scottish American Military Society of Southern Arizona
Military Officers Association of America, Tucson Chapter
Military Order of World Wars, Department of Arizona
Tucson Jewish War Veterans Post 201
Tucson Veterans Serving Veterans
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 106
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 106
Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation

Non-voting Advisory

Representing:

Esperanza En Escalante

**Summary Minutes
Veterans' Affairs Committee
January 12, 2022**

Staff Members Present:

Delma Sanchez	City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary
Jaime Corrales	City Clerk's Office, Office Supervisor
Ana Marrufo	City Clerk's Office, Management Assistant

2. Ratification of Election of Officers from the December 8, 2021, meeting

It was moved by Committee Member H. Johnson, duly seconded. A roll call vote of 13 to 0 (Committee Members S. Aguirre and W. Burks absent) was taken at the December 8, 2021, meeting, electing Committee Member B. Hamilton as Chair, Committee Member R. Kary as Senior Vice Chair, Committee Member H. Johnson as Junior Vice Chair, Committee Member M. Belden as Treasurer.

3. Ratification of Chair's Appointments from the December 8, 2021, meeting

It was moved by Committee Member M. Belden, duly seconded. A roll call vote of 13 to 0 (Committee Members S. Aguirre and W. Burks absent) was taken at the December 8, 2021, meeting, approving the Chairs appointments of Committee Member C. Rundell as Secretary and Committee Member H. Johnson as Chaplain.

4. Invocation

Invocation was provided by Committee Member H. Johnson

5. Introduction of Guests

- a. Jennifer Gutowski and Patrick Powers-Lake - (SAVAHCS)
- b. Craig Reck and Jessie Allen - TIA Military Lounge

6. Approval of Legal Action Report of December 8, 2021

It was moved by Committee Member H. Johnson, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 14-0, (Committee Member M. St. Ores absent), to approve the Legal Action Report from the December 8, 2021, meeting.

7. Treasurer's Report

Committee Member M. Beldon reported the current balance of funds were \$4953.36.

It was moved by Committee Member H. Johnson, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 14-0, (Committee Member M. St. Ores absent), to approve the financial report as presented.

8. Committee Reports

a. Southern Arizona Veteran's Affairs Health Care System (SAVAHCS)

A presentation was provided by Jennifer Gutowski, Director of SAVAHCS and Patrick Powers-Lake, Patient Safety Manager. The presentation consisted of their goals to being a High Reliability Organization and Journey to High Reliability; focusing on "Zero Harm"; Leadership Commitment; Culture of Safety; Continuous Process Improvement; and Commitment to Veterans and Employees.

**Summary Minutes
Veterans' Affairs Committee
January 12, 2022**

Discussion followed.

Ms. Gutowski stated because of the surge in COVID numbers, there has been a pause on elected surgeries and virtual appointments are taking place again. She said when the numbers are less, they will go back to face-to-face appointments. In the meantime, she reiterated how important it was to get vaccinated and boosted.

b. Tucson Veterans Cemetery

Committee Member T. Byron said she attended the foundation's meeting and stated that in 2021 there had been 712 interments and a total to date was 3,228 entered in the cemetery. She said the Foundation's goal was to help beautify the cemetery with a tree project, but it was placed on hold due to a 3.3 million expansion project that would be begin in August.

Committee Member J. Louis said the Missing in America Project was to be held on April 23rd and again in October. He stated the Missing in America Project was to honor the remains of Veterans that had been unclaimed. He said they also were making plans for Memorial Day.

c. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Committee Member J. Louis stated they continued to assist Veterans virtually and telephonically and they also were dealing with the surge of COVID. He said December 2021, they submitted 691 claims, which 256 came from the Southern Region and Direct Services for that time period was 11,720, so they have been actively supporting the Veteran communities and their family members.

Discussion took place. No formal action was taken.

**9. Military Lounge/Operation Exodus Update/Discussion
Craig Reck and Jessie Allen**

There was no representation present from the Tucson Airport Authority.

A discussion took place on the importance of the Veterans' Affairs Committee being involved in Operation Exodus, which did not take place in 2021.

Chair Hamilton stated on behalf of the committee, he would send a letter to Tucson Airport Authority asking to meet in the near future to discuss representation at future meetings and involvement with Operation Exodus. No further action was taken.

10. Stand Down Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton stated the event would only be a 1-day event instead of the normal 2-day, taking place on March 16, 2022.

**Summary Minutes
Veterans' Affairs Committee
January 12, 2022**

11. Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony Update/Discussion

Committee Member T. Byron said the event would take place on February 6, 2021, at the Kino Veteran's Memorial Park and live streamed on Facebook.com/FunerariaDelAngelSouthLawn.

12. Review and direction of the Committee's By-Laws Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton stated discussions took place at last month meeting whether changes needed to be made to the By-Laws. He indicated changes may need to be made to Section 5.6 – Military Service Lounge and Tucson Airport Authority Representatives, stating the Committee should have better representation from the Tucson Airport Authority.

Ana Marrufo, City Clerk's Office, Management Assistant, addressed the Committee on their concerns of having Mayor Romero attend future meetings. She recommended to the Committee they send an invite to Council Member Nikki Lee, who happens to be a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Discussion took place. No formal action was taken.

13. Pima County Information on the number of Homeless Veterans in the HMIS System Update/Discussion

Chair B. Hamilton stated 70 chronic homeless veterans and 200 homeless veterans were in the HMIS System. He stated he would reach out to a representative from the HMIS System and provide the committee with a presentation at a future meeting.

14. Consideration for membership application to the "Unified Arizona Veterans Organization" Update/Discussion

Committee Member Wojciechowski provided information on the "Unified Arizona Veterans" and the benefits to the committee of becoming a member of the organization. He stated there were sixty-two organizations currently as members.

Discussion took place about whether the application fee of \$25.00 could be paid out of the committee's budget and concerns of whether the committee needed to become a member, since several of the Committee Member's organizations were already members of the Unified Arizona Veterans.

It was moved by Committee Member H. Johnson, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 14 to 0, (Committee Member M. St. Ores absent), to bring the item back to the February meeting.

15. Election of Judge Advocate Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton stated he was still looking to fill the Judge Advocate vacancy and expressed the importance of the vacancy to be filled. He asked if there was anyone interested, to please contact him.

**Summary Minutes
Veterans' Affairs Committee
January 12, 2022**

Committee Member C. Rundell nominated Committee Member W. Wojciechowski to fill the Judge Advocate vacancy.

Committee Member W. Wojciechowski kindly declined, stating he was involved in several other organizations with limited time on his hands.

16. Report on Current Events: For the Good of the Order

Reports on upcoming events were provided by Committee Members T. Byron, M. Ruiz, and W. Wojciechowski.

17. Future Agenda Items:

Judge Advocate Vacancy

Pima County HMIS Presentation

Stand Down Update/Discussion

Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony Update/Discussion

Consideration for membership application to the "United Arizona Veterans" organization

18. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Next Meeting: February 9, 2022