



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, April 13, 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 May 11, 2022

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

Virtual online meeting called to order by Bruce Hamilton at 6:01 p.m. Those present and absent were:

Present:

Steve W. Aguirre
(Arrived at 6:28 p.m.)
James Louis
Carol Rundell

Michael St. Ores
Gaeton Briseno
Terry Byron
Henry Johnson

William Wojciechowski

Marlon Ruiz

Mark Levine
Bruce Hamilton
Martin Belden
Melvin Morgan
Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Luke Johnson

Absent:

Jessie Allen

Representing:

American Legion Department of Arizona

Arizona Department of Veterans Services
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, Cactus
Chapter 2

Esperanza En Escalante
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

SAVAHCS, Non-voting Advisory

Representing:

TAA, Non-voting Advisory

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Staff Members Present:

Delma Sanchez

City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary

2. Invocation

Invocation was provided by Committee Member Johnson

3. Introduction of Guests

- a. Jennifer Gutowski - (SAVAHCS)

4. Approval of Legal Action Report of March 9, 2022

It was moved by Committee Member Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 13-0, (**Committee Member Aguirre absent**), to approve the Legal Action Report from the March 9, 2022, meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report

Committee Member Belden stated they had received a \$100.00 donation and there were no payables for the month, so the ending balance was \$5553.36.

It was moved by Committee Member Morgan, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 13-0, (**Committee Member Aguirre absent**), to approve the financial report.

6. Consideration/Approval of Member(s)

Appointment of Georgia Wise, as recommended by Tucson Post 549 VFW

Chair Hamilton asked for a motion in recommending the appointment of Georgia Wise to the Veterans Affairs Committee.

It was moved by Committee Member Johnson, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 13-0, (**Committee Member Aguirre absent**), to approve the appointment of Georgia Wise, as recommended by the Tucson Post 549 VFW.

7. Committee Reports

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

Jennifer Wasielewski, Assistant Director of SAVAHCS filled in for Jennifer Gutowski, Director of SAVAHCS.

Ms. Wasielewski reported on leadership changes; SAVAHCS Community Living Center receiving a Five Star Rating for quality healthcare from the Medicare & Medical Aid Services (CMS) Care Compare as well as earning the designation of "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Top Performer" in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 15th anniversary edition of the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI). She said they were happy to be doing more outreach now that the COVID numbers were down, but they still had requirements in the healthcare settings, so within the VA healthcare facilities, masking was still a requirement.

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b. Tucson Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Committee Member Byron stated she attended the foundations meeting last night and the Director announced there was a total of 3,871 interments. Ms. Byron reminded everyone of the upcoming Missing in America Project that is scheduled for April 23, 2022.

Ms. Byron also stated they were seeking volunteers to help clean headstones or do gravel projects, which would help beautify the cemetery. She said this would take place the first Wednesday of the month, so anyone interested could show up or call-in advance to let them know you are interested. The summer hours are from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm.

c. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Committee Member Louis stated they continued to provide services to the veteran population in Arizona and globally. Mr. Louis said last month they had just over 4,000 calls into their administrative assistance office which they entertained in scheduling appointments or answering questions regarding VA benefits.

Mr. Louis stated another four itinerary sites had opened and reported eight were in the southern region, which consisted of American Legion Post 66 in Green Valley and as of today, Tucson veterans were being provided with a walk-in basis from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

8. Fundraising Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton asked if anyone had any ideas on how to improve the fundraising efforts.

Committee Member Byron suggested the Committee Members reach out to their individual organizations and ask them for a donation, which was what she did.

9. Military Lounge/Operation Exodus Update/Discussion – Jessie Allen

Chair Hamilton asked if a representative on the Military Lounge was present.

Committee Member Byron stated there had been past conversations about scheduling a meeting to discuss the Military Lounge and Operation Exodus, but she had not been contacted by Ms. Allen. Ms. Byron said she was aware of Ms. Allen's appointment as a non-voting advisory member, so she was not sure why Ms. Allen or someone from Tucson Airport Authority (TAA) was not in attendance.

Chair Hamilton stated they would keep this as a recurring item on future agendas.

10. Stand Down Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton stated there was 180 attendees at the event, with 155 being veterans and out of the 155 veterans, 31 were identified as being homeless. He said they did enter 10 of the homeless veterans into the HIMS system.

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Mr. Hamilton said they had around 47 providers tables that day and lunch meals were provided by Texas Roadhouse.

Committee Member Byron asked how many female veterans attended and if there was a pet section at the event.

Mr. Hamilton stated he did not have that information at hand but would get that information out to them.

Committee Member Kary said she had heard about a female veteran that went to the event to possibly get some clothing and was informed it was being given to Sister Jose's.

Mr. Hamilton said it could have been after the event, because he does remember some clothing was donated to Sister Jose's.

Discussion followed. No further action taken.

11. Veterans' Parade Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton said it may still be a little early in discussing the parade, but they were still looking at sending an invite to Mayor Romero for her participation in it.

Committee Member Aguirre stated he was working with one of the Council Members about a different route for the parade because in the past the route was only 4 or 5 blocks, which was unacceptable. He said the issues to extend the route were the train and Sun Link tracks and as soon as he had more information, he would share with the committee.

12. Four Chaplains Update/Discussion

Committee Member Byron reported it would be the 80th Anniversary of the Four Chaplains and they were asking for volunteers to help reach out to World War II Veterans and see if maybe they could get a story or some pictures of them to do a memorial part of it. Ms. Byron asked to please share any ideas that would help in making it a very special event.

13. By-laws Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton stated he reviewed the proposed bylaw changes and it seemed that the proposed changes were to titles or names.

Committee Member Byron stated the City Clerk's office provided her with a copy of Resolution 13647 that was approved back on June 19, 1986, which also included the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the United States Department of the Army (Fort Huachuca) and the Tucson Airport Authority and wanted the proposed changes to reflect with the names and titles on the Resolution and the IGA. She said she also cleaned up some of the formatting, but mostly it was making the name changes to the Military Services Lounge.

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Discussion followed and the item would be brought back to the next meeting for approval and voting.

14. Unified Arizona Veterans Organization Update/Discussion

Chair Hamilton stated his understanding was someone whose organization was a member of the Unified Arizona Veterans (UAV) organization would provide updates to the committee.

Committee Member Johnson stated he believed that was correct, so whoever's organizations were a member of the UAV could present updates to the committee.

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

Reports on upcoming current events were provided by Committee Members Byron, Kary, Ruiz, and Wojciechowski.

16. Future Agenda Items:

Bylaws
Veterans' Parade
Four Chaplains
Summer Recess

17. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Next Meeting: May 11, 2022