



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, January 11, 2023 - 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 8, 2023

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

Virtual online meeting called to order by Rocio (Rosie) Kary at 6:02 p.m. Those present and absent were:

Present:

Michael St. Ores
Terry Byron
Henry Johnson

Ann Hollis

Marlon Ruiz

Martin Belden
Melvin Morgan
Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Luke Johnson

Absent:

Gary Smith
James Louis
Gaeton Briseno
Georgia Wise
Jessie Allen

Staff Members Present:

Robert Hunter
Delma Sanchez

Representing:

Esperanza En Escalante
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
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:

American Legion Department of Arizona
Arizona Department of Veterans Services
Korean War Veterans Association, Pima Chapter
VFW Post 549
TAA, Non-voting Advisory

City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary
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2. Invocation

Invocation was provided by Committee Member Johnson

3. Introduction of Guests

- a. Jennifer Wasielewski - (SAVAHCS)
- b. Kama Garcia - Center for Life Skills Development
- c. Keith Hamblin - Veteran's Center Presentation

4. Approval of Legal Action Report of December 14, 2022

It was moved by Committee Member Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0, **(Committee Members Briseno, Louis, Smith, and Wise absent)**, to approve the Legal Action Report from the December 14, 2022, meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report

Committee Member Belden stated the beginning balance at the start of the month for January 2023 was \$4,190.13. He reported this was the interim report and there was no income and no donations. He noted expenses of \$1,926.85 for Operation Exodus, leaving a current balance of \$2,663.28.

It was moved by Committee Member Johnson, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0, **(Committee Members Briseno, Louis, Smith, and Wise absent)**, to approve the financial report as presented.

6. Committee Reports

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

Jennifer Wasielewski, Assistant Director of SAVAHCS provided a report on behalf of SAVAHCS. She provided an update on the Yuma Community Clinic, noting their contract extension allowed them to continue providing services there.

Ms. Wasielewski encouraged the Committee to visit the link in the Director's Report, to an article on their volunteers and veterans. She noted the previous month included participation in the Wreaths Across America at the Marana Cemetery and in a full-scale exercise at Davis Monthan Air Force Base for the National Disaster Medical System. She stated as a federal coordinating center, they were part of a network of hospitals that would be engaged in the case of emergencies and the exercise involved discussions on the coordination and transport of patients to the area hospitals.

Ms. Wasielewski noted they had been doing a lot of work to get their staff ready for the PACT Act screenings. She stated the hospitals were full with COVID 19 and flu patients, and encouraged everyone to get their flu shots or COVID boosters.

Ms. Wasielewski outlined forthcoming projects at the campus, which included exterior painting and modernization of private rooms and private bathrooms. She also noted they would be expanding the mental health clinic and renovating the interior clinic area and

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one of the inpatient medical surgical units. She stated they were dealing with buildings that were 100 years old and so they needed constant attention.

Ms. Wasielewski stated they hosted Department of Defense partners, including representatives from Davis Monthan and Fort Huachuca, to discuss mutual support and joint initiatives, in areas of medical support, education, and other potential partnership areas.

b. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery

No report was given.

Committee Member Hollis noted the Cemetery Foundation would be hosting a golf tournament on Saturday, May 13, 2023, at the Tucson Omni and the flyer would be forwarded to the VAC when it was available. She also noted that the columbarium project may have already started and the demand for niches is such that cremations may be ground burials or set aside until columbarium niches are available, depending on the wishes of families.

c. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

No report was given.

7. Center for Life Skill Development Update/Discussion – Kama Garcia

Ms. Kama Garcia, Behavioral Health Provider for Center for Life Skills and Tucson City Veterans Court, provided a synopsis of the Center for Life Skill Development's programs.

Ms. Garcia noted they were a specialty referral agency, specializing in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Trauma therapy, traumatic brain injury, psychotherapy treatment, psychic psychoeducational based curriculum and neuro counseling. She stated they specialized in writing mental health reports for family court and in revocation packets and offered individual, couples, marriage and family therapy and the plethora of court ordered treatment, including anger management, adult responsibility, domestic violence, and parenting.

Ms. Garcia noted they facilitated traumatic brain injury groups, seeking safety groups, and have specialized veteran groups.

Ms. Garcia stated as a behavioral health provider on the treatment team for Veterans Court, this has allowed them to provide services to veterans who may or may not be eligible for the Veterans Administration (VA) benefits. She stated that the VA is able to refer defendants to them. She said they had also partnered with Dr. Carol Hendricks, the owner of a hyperbaric oxygen chamber facility and currently had two veterans going through her program.

Discussion followed.

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8. Veteran's Center Presentation Update/Discussion – Keith Hamblin

No presentation was given.

9. Military Lounge – Update/Discussion

No Report was given.

10. Operation Exodus – Update/Discussion

Committee Member Byron noted she worked for a short period of time at the airport, acknowledging Committee Member Hollis who was also there. She said she saw many young soldiers passing through and partaking of the food, noting flight delays resulted in some troops remaining at the airport beyond the end of the day and volunteers and sergeants made sure to let them know food was available.

11. Veterans' Parade – Update/Discussion

No report was given.

12. Four Chaplains – Update/Discussion

Committee Member Byron reported they were finalizing last minute notes on the program and while the draft was sent to the Committee, she had not included the band and candlelight ceremony. She said they were working on coordinating help for the parade of colors and that Committee Member Ruiz had secured the Sahuarita Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corp (ROTC).

Ms. Byron stated the American Legion Post 132 and the Tucson Detachment Marine Corps League would be participating. She invited organizations who would like to participate with colors to reach out to her to ensure they were included in the program. She noted that last minute entries would also be perfectly fine, and wreaths were available for borrowing in case organizations needed one.

Committee Member Johnson confirmed he would be able to do the invocation.

Ms. Byron noted Murray Baker would provide the Jewish war veterans prayer and that a member of the Military Order of Purple Hearts would be reading the Purple Heart recognition and Dignity Memorial would be live streaming the event and providing refreshments. She said she would get the link out to everyone and noted the insurance certificate was secured.

Ms. Byron noted expenses requested of the VAC included the porta-potty, estimated at \$165 for the day, and a band stipend of \$150. She stated the cemeteries could provide the chairs and if weather required, also canopies. She said she had the candles in storage.

Ms. Byron stated she reached out to the park regarding the repainting of the memorial wall, which was currently dark blue and showed very bad calcification from hard water. She said she was trying to get them to repaint it or permit her to repaint it but had not heard back yet. She noted she had cleaned up the bronze markers and would be bringing

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her solar lights, as well as organize flood lights, light towers, and other lighting. She noted VA 106 offered a generator.

Ms. Byron stated she was hoping that with the participation of the JROTC, they would have more younger people present.

Discussion followed.

It was moved by Committee Member Byron, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0, (**Committee Members Briseno, Louis, Smith, and Wise absent**), to approve the VAC expenditure of \$165.00 for the Porta-potty and \$150.00 for the band for the 80th Anniversary of the Four Chaplains Ceremony.

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

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

14. Nominations and Election for Position of Judge Advocate – Update/Discussion

Discussion was held.

Nominations were made for and accepted by Committee Member Byron for Judge Advocate

It was moved by Committee Member Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0, (**Committee Members Briseno, Louis, Smith, and Wise absent**), to approve the election of Committee Member Byron for Judge Advocate.

15. Chair's reappointment of Secretary – Update/Discussion

Discussion was held.

It was decided by consensus to table the appointment of Secretary until the VAC acquired new members.

16. Future Agenda Items

Recruitment of new members and review of recruitment process
Fundraising
Costco Membership
Veteran's Day Parade
Veteran's Center Presentation – Keith Hamblin
Operation Resource Arizona

17. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Next Meeting: February 8, 2023