



# Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, May 10, 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 September 13, 2023

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

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

#### **Present:**

James Louis

Lorraine Obregon

Terry Byron

Henry Johnson (Arrived 6:06 p.m.)

Ann Hollis (Arrived 6:24 p.m.)

Martin Belden

Melvin Morgan

Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Luke Johnson

#### **Absent:**

Gary Smith

Marlon Ruiz

Georgia Wise

Minou De La Rosa

#### **Staff Members Present:**

Robert Hunter

Delma Sanchez

#### **Representing:**

Arizona Department of Veterans Services

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary

Cactus Unit 2

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

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

Military Order of World Wars, Department of

Arizona

VFW Post 549

TAA, Non-voting Advisory

City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary

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**2. Invocation**

The invocation was provided by Committee Chair Rosie Kary

**3. Introduction of Guests**

- a. Jennifer Wasielewski - (SAVAHCS)
- b. Marcella Samuel - Grants 9

**4. Approval of Legal Action Report for April 12, 2023**

It was moved by Committee Member Morgan, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0, (**Committee Members Hollis, Ruiz, Smith and Wise absent**), to approve the Legal Action Report from the April 12, 2023, meeting.

**5. Treasurer's Report**

Committee Member Belden stated the beginning balance at the start of the month for April 2023 was \$2,440.44. He reported there was no income and no expenses, leaving a current balance of \$2,440.44.

It was moved by Committee Member Johnson, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0, (**Committee Members Hollis, Ruiz, 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, Deputy Director of SAVAHCS provided a report on behalf of SAVAHCS. She reported they continued to get the word out about the PACT Act, the COMPACT Act, and the SERVICE Act benefits and associated enrollment periods.

Ms. Wasielewski stated they recognized dedicated volunteers during their National Volunteer Week activity, participated in the Arizona Be Connected Statewide Symposium, where they provided information on Veterans Affairs resources to attendees, and were visited by the 2023 Team Red, White and Blue Old Glory relay runners. She noted they were preparing for their upcoming Veteran Resource Town Hall and fair, scheduled for June and their PACT Act Outreach Event scheduled for July.

**b. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery**

Committee Member Louis reported as part of the Missing in America Project, there were 19 interments in April.

**c. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services**

Committee Member Louis reported they administered 4900 direct services, and 93 claims were petitioned to the Department of Veterans Affairs. He noted their focus on the presumptive conditions of rhinitis and hypertension and expounded on the detrimental effects of hypertension to long-term health.

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He stated they were working on filling vacant positions, including the Tohono O'odham and Pasqua Yaqui Nations.

**7. Grants 9 – Presentation by Marcella Samuels**

Marcella Samuel, Director for Grants 9, provided a synopsis of the organization.

Ms. Samuel explained the differences between the 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) non-profit organizational statuses. She noted 501(c)(3) status exempted an organization from federal, state, and local taxes, however, this would also prevent the organization from lobbying, providing organizational support to political candidates, or receiving support from primarily political organizations.

Ms. Samuel stated 501(c)(6) organizations were exempt from federal taxes, but not necessarily state and local taxes. She noted 501(c)(6) organizations could engage in political campaigns, support political candidates, and receive support from political organizations, so long as this was not their primary activity.

Ms. Samuel stated she would need to study the Veterans Affairs Committee bylaws, mission statement, finances, and other relevant information in order to be able to recommend a particular direction for the Committee. She noted there were fees associated with the application and filing a 1023 or 1023-EZ form with the IRS.

Discussion was held and Ms. Samuel responded to questions.

**8. Proposed Amendments to VAC Bylaws – Discussion/Action**

It was moved by Committee Member Johnson, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0, (**Committee Members Ruiz, Smith and Wise absent**), to approve the amendments to the Veterans Affairs Committee Bylaws as presented.

**9. Committee Finances - Discussion**

a. VAC Checking Account - Update/Discussion

Committee Member Byron stated she had met with Wells Fargo Bank regarding the documentation needed to keep the VAC account active. She noted the bank requested a copy of the VAC Bylaws that included specificity on the Committee Members authorized to access the account. She stated she would arrange a meeting between Committee Members Kary, Belden and Wells Fargo Bank for the delivery a copy of the amended Bylaws and meeting minutes and provide any identification requirements. It was agreed that Committee Member Belden's address would continue to be utilized for the account.

b. 501(c)(3) Non-profit Status - Update/Discussion

The Committee decided to continue further discussion on seeking the Mayor and Council's approval to apply for 501(c)(3) non-profit status until after their summer break.

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- 10. Consideration/Approval of Member(s)  
Appointment of Kassie Diaz as recommended by the AZ-2 Saguaro Chapter of the Women Marines Association**

It was moved by Committee Member Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0, (**Committee Members Ruiz, Smith and Wise absent**), to approve the appointment of Kassie Diaz to the Veterans Affairs Committee.
- 11. Use of City of Tucson Logo – Creation of VAC Logo – Update/Discussion**

The City Clerk's staff reported on the approved uses of the COT logo by the VAC and the creation of a VAC-specific logo were forwarded to the City Clerk and the committee would be provided the response when this was received.
- 12. Military Lounge – Update/Discussion**

Committee Chair Kary informed the committee of Jessie Allen's resignation and the appointment of Ms. Minou De La Rosa by the Tucson Airport Authority.
- 13. Veteran's Day Parade**

Committee Member Byron said Lisette Eckman was still working on obtaining their 501(c)(3) status. She stated Ms. Eckman would be organizing planning meetings and reaching out for input over the coming weeks.
- 14. Four Chaplains Ceremony 2024**

The committee agreed to keep this on as a standing agenda item and continue discussion on the Four Chaplains Ceremony for 2024 upon the Committee's return from summer break.
- 15. Taxation for Veterans – Discussion**

Committee Member Obregon noted residential and other taxes was an issue that affected veterans, particularly those with lower incomes, and it was important for the Committee to consider exploring ideas to address this and include this when considering topics to bring to the Mayor and Council.
- 16. Outreach to Mayor and Council – Update/Discussion**

Committee Member Obregon stated housing for veterans was an important issue and the Committee should discuss it further and bring it to the Mayor and Council. Committee Members agreed it was important and further discussed the need to obtain data related to homelessness and other issues affecting veterans.

Committee Member Johnson suggested committee members use their summer break to make a real effort to meet with their respective Ward Council Members to discuss veteran's issues and report back to the committee.
- 17. VAC Future Events – Discussion**

Committee Member Belden noted their current available funds were not adequate to accommodate additional events. He stated fundraising efforts may be more successful

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if non-profit status was achieved. He noted their current funds were just enough to cover Operation Exodus activities.

Committee Members discussed the Committee's participation in the Memorial Day ceremonies.

**18. Report on Current Events: For the Good of the Order**

Reports on upcoming current events were provided by Committee Members Byron, Hollis, Johnson, Morgan and Obregon.

**19. Future Agenda Items**

City of Tucson Logo use and VAC logo  
501(c)(3) Non-Profit Status - Discussion  
Outreach to Mayor and Council - Update/Discussion

**20. Benediction**

The benediction was provided by Committee Member Johnson

**21. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.**

Next Meeting: September 13, 2023