



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, November 8, 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 members of the public will be prohibited.

Legal Action Report

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

Virtual online meeting called to order by Terry Byron at 6:05 p.m. Those present and absent were:

Present:

Bruce Hayes
Gary Smith
James "Tub-Bee" Louis
Lorraine Obregon

Terry Byron
Marlon Ruiz
Martin Belden

Absent:

Ann Hollis
Henry Johnson

Kassie Diaz
Georgia Wise
Melvin Morgan
Minou De La Rosa
Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Staff Members Present:

Robert Hunter
Amari Leon

Representing:

American Legion Post 109
American Legion Department of Arizona
Arizona Department of Veterans Services
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
Cactus Unit 2
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Military Order of the World Wars, Region XIII
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 106

Representing:

Military Officers Association of America
Tucson Chapter
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72, and
Post 81 Scottish American Military Society of
Southern Arizona
Women Marine Association
VFW Post 549
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 106
TAA, Non-voting Advisory
Women in Military Service for America Memorial
Foundation

City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary
City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary

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2. Invocation

The invocation was provided by Committee Member Byron.

3. Introduction of Guests

- a. Jennifer Gutowski, Director – (SAVAHCS)
- b. Suzanne Bonds/Jabari Davis - Esperanza en Escalante

4. Welcoming of New Members:

William Burks, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 26, and Bruce Hayes, American Legion Post 109

5. Approval of Legal Action Report for October 11, 2023

It was moved by Committee Member Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0, **(Committee Members Burks, Diaz, Johnson, Kary, Morgan, and Wise) absent**, to approve the Legal Action Report from the October 11, 2023, meeting.

6. Treasurer's Report

Committee Member Belden stated the beginning balance at the start of the month of October 2023 was \$3,540.44. He reported no expenses, leaving a current balance of \$3,540.44.

It was moved by Committee Member Smith, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0, **(Committee Members Burks, Diaz, Johnson, Kary, Morgan, and Wise) absent**, to approve the financial report as presented.

7. Committee Reports

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

Jennifer Gutowski, Director of SAVAHCS provided a report on behalf of SAVAHCS. She had a special guest, Jocelyn Muzzin, LCSW who provided a presentation regarding the Southern Arizona VA Homeless Programs.

No discussion was held, and no action was taken.

(This item was taken out of order.)

b. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery

Committee Member Louis reported 13 interments last month. He also noted there would be flag placements at the cemetery.

c. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Committee Member Louis stated there were 377 claims submitted from the South and all of his updates are for the South at this time. They now have 7 itinerary sites and 3 of them are in Tucson. He explained the itinerary sites allow veterans in-person appointments with counselors. He reported they are also looking to employ Counselors and asked the Committee to direct interested persons to the Arizona State Jobs website.

8. Esperanza en Escalante – Suzanne Bonds / Jabari Davis

No report was given.

9. Memorial for Vietnam Veteran Memorial Park – Update/Discussion

Committee Member Byron gave a brief update. She noted they would be reaching out to the Parks and Recreation Department for permission to install a commemorative plaque for Vietnam Veterans at the Veterans Memorial Park. No discussion was held; no action was taken.

10. Standing questions: COT assistance with printing and Operation Exodus, Eligibility for the VAC to apply for COT and other grants – Update/Discussion

City Clerk's Office staff noted the questions raised at the previous meeting were put to the City Clerk and responses would be provided to the Committee as soon as they were received.

11. Military Lounge – Update/Discussion

Committee Member Byron stated the representative of the Tucson Airport Authority (TAA) has not been attending the VAC meetings. She stated she has reached out to the TAA for an update on their representative and will report to the Committee on Operation Exodus when she has received a return response.

Committee Member Belden stated he was contacted by the TAA warehouse who requested another pallet of water from the VAC for the Military Lounge.

It was moved by Committee Member Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0, (**Committee Members Burks, Diaz, Johnson, Kary, Morgan, and Wise**) **absent**, to approve the purchase of a pallet of water for the Military Lounge.

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12. Veteran's Day Parade

Committee Member Byron stated the Tucson Veteran's Day Parade Foundation was very grateful for the donation from the VAC. She noted the City of Tucson – Veterans Affairs Committee Logo would appear in the Veteran's Day Parade program.

13. Four Chaplains Ceremony – 2024

Committee Member Byron stated the date was set for use of Kino Veteran Memorial Park for the Four Chaplains Ceremony scheduled for February 4, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. She stated the VAC should have received the informational flyer on the event, however, she would resend it to the City Clerk's Office for distribution again. She noted they would be looking for individuals to do wreath-laying.

14. Outreach to Mayor and Council – Update/Discussion

Discussion ensued related to engaging with the Mayor and Council. Committee Member Obregon stated she produced and sent letters of invitation to the Mayor and Council and has received responses from three of the Ward offices. She noted she will reach out to those who have not yet responded.

15. VAC Future Events - Discussion

Committee Member Obregon asked if the VAC would consider taking an active role in coordinating the Wreaths Across America at the South Lawn Cemetery.

Committee Member Bryon stated the Women Marines Association was in the process of getting registered with Wreaths Across America. She noted due to the lack of senior staff members able to coordinate the event, she had signed up to serve as the coordinator for the services. She additionally noted there are other groups involved in the Wreaths Across America ceremonies. She stated South Lawn Cemetery is short of wreaths for the ceremony and encouraged the Committee to get the word out on the need to purchase wreaths, which could be done through the Wreaths Across America website.

Committee Member Obregon noted for those who wished their wreaths be placed at particular cemeteries the importance of selecting specific cemeteries on the website.

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

Reports on upcoming current events were provided by Committee Members Byron, Louis, Johnson, Ruiz, and Smith.

17. Future Agenda Items

50th Anniversary Vietnam War – Vietnam Veterans

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VAC Nomination and Election of Officers – Chair, Senior Vice Chair, Junior Vice Chair,
and Treasurer

VAC Chair's Appointments – Chaplain and Secretary

Recruitment of VAC Members

Military Lounge and Operation Exodus

Four Chaplains Ceremony

Memorial for Vietnam Veteran Memorial Park

Wreaths Across America

Outreach to Mayor and Council – Update/Discussion

Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW) - 2025 National Convention

18. Benediction

Committee Member Byron provided the benediction.

19. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2023