



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, December 11, 2024 - 6:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via TEAMS

Minutes

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

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

Present:

Alicia Fuller
Ann Hollis

Bruce Hayes
James "Tub-Bee" Louis
Lorraine Obregon

Terry Byron

Marcia Wohlhueter

Marlon Ruiz

Martin Belden
Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Tom Tunks
William Burks

Absent:

Henry Johnson

James (Jim) Barnhart
Suzanne Bond

Staff Members Present:

Amari Leon
Francisco Denogean

Representing:

Tucson Veterans Serving Veterans
Military Officers Association of America
Tucson Chapter
American Legion McCulloch-Wagner, Post 109
Arizona Department of Veterans Services
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
Cactus Unit 2
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72 –
Arrived at 6:05 p.m.

American Legion Auxiliary Oro Valley Unit 132 -
Arrived at 6:08 p.m.
Military Order of the World Wars, Region XIII –
Arrived at 6:26 p.m.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 106
Women in Military Service for America Memorial
Foundation
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 26

Representing:

Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72, and
Post 81 Scottish American Military Society of
Southern Arizona
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 106
Esperanza En Escalante

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

2. Invocation

The invocation was provided by Commissioner Hayes.

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3. Introduction of Guests – Update/Discussion

- a. Matthew Langseth - City of Tucson Veterans Coordinator

No update was given.

- b. Margo Susco, Tucson Police Department

No update was given.

- c. Sarah Horvath, Kino Memorial Park

No update was given.

- d. Arlethe Rios, Office of Arizona Senator Mark Kelly

Chair Rocio noticed that Arlethe Rios was present and let her introduce herself as an added item towards the end of the meeting.

No discussion held, and no formal action was taken.

4. Approval of Legal Action Report for November 13, 2024

It was moved by Commissioner Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0 (Commissioners, Barnhart, Bond, Byron, Johnson, Ruiz, and Wohlhueter absent), to approve the Legal Action Report from the November 13, 2024 meeting.

Commissioner Byron arrived at 6:05 p.m.

5. Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Belden informed the beginning balance at the start of November 1, 2024, was \$2,590.29 there were no donations or expenses, leaving a current balance of \$2,590.29.

It was moved by Commissioner Hayes, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0 (Commissioners, Barnhart, Bond, Johnson, Ruiz, and Wohlhueter absent), to approve the financial report as presented.

Commissioner Wohlhueter arrived at 6:08 p.m.

6. Committee Reports

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

Jennifer K. Wasielewski, SAVAHCS, provided a report.

Ms. Wasielewski informed the construction for the expansion of the emergency room at the VA Hospital has started and will be ongoing for the next few years and mentioned this will double the size of their ER. The courtyard next to the ER between 80 south has been fenced off for construction. Ms. Wasielewski also informed VAC that this week is The VA Spectacular Staff Week, and it has been going great. With the new year starting they are trying to get more Veteran's enrolled into the VA even if they have other health insurance this is just to make sure that all Veterans are receiving the care and the resources they need.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

b. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery

Commissioner Louis informed the committee there were 58 internments last month at the Marana Cemetery. This week will be Wreaths Across America and there are approximately 5,020 wreaths that will be dispersed. The commissioner also mentioned to the committee they could pre-register for burial there.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

c. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Commissioner Louis informed the committee that there were 4,900 direct services, which is any type of communication made with the public and or their partners. There were also 369 disability compensation and pension claims the number is a little lower than usual and was expected due to the holidays. Commissioner Louis also mentioned to the committee they will be focusing more on outreach especially working to get into assisted living facilities.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

d. Military Lounge and Operation Exodus

Commissioner Byron provided an update to the committee on Operation Exodus. She informed the committee that a Costco order costing approximately \$1,200 is ready for pick-up on Monday, December 16, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Byron will reach out to the new owners of Kalil to see if they will still honor the donation the previous owners of Kalil have made to the Committee in the past. Commissioner Byron also informed the Committee that they will need to purchase a pallet of water for Operation Exodus and the Military Lounge.

No discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

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e. Memorial for Vietnam Veteran Memorial Park

Commissioner Byron briefed the committee on the memorial for the 107 Pima County residents who were killed in action in Vietnam. The plaques are planned to be installed before March 29, 2025. A dedication ceremony will be held at Kino Veteran Memorial Park and a free luncheon will be provided to Vietnam Veterans.

No discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

f. Four Chaplains

Commissioner Byron informed the Committee the Four Chaplains Ceremony is scheduled for February 2, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. and mentioned they are still looking for Wreath layers.

No discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

7. Nighthawk 72 Events/Memorial – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron informed the Committee this will be the 25th Annual Nighthawk 72 Memorial Service and is scheduled for April 5, 2025, the Ceremony will be at 10:00 a.m., and there will possibly be a candlelight ceremony held. More information to follow.

No discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

8. 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron mentioned they discussed this item already and the Committee agreed to combine this item with the Memorial for Vietnam Memorial Park.

No discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

9. VAC Social Media Presence

Chair Kary reminded the committee not to forget to share VAC events on their social media pages on Facebook and to remember to send events to Francisco to be distributed.

No discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

10. Outreach to Mayor and Council – Update/Discussion

No update was given.

11. VAC Fundraising Strategies

No update was given

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12. Veteran's Day Parade/Memorials – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron informed the committee there are no updates on the Veteran's Day Parade but there will be a meeting in January 2025 for a recap. Memorials are being worked on and receiving bids from various companies. Commissioner Byron will reach out to Pima County to see if someone can attend next month's meeting to provide an update.

Commissioner Ruiz arrived at 6:26 p.m.

13. Nominations and Election of Officers - Update/Discussion

- Chair

It was moved by Commissioner Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0, (Commissioners Barnhart, Bond, and Johnson absent, Commissioner Ruiz Technical/Audio Issues) to approve the Election of Chairperson Rocio "Rosie" Kary.

- Senior Vice Chair

It was moved by Commissioner Hayes, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0, (Commissioners Barnhart, Bond, and Johnson absent, Commissioner Ruiz Technical/Audio Issues) to approve the Election of Senior Vice Chair Henry Johnson

- Junior Vice Chair

It was moved by Commissioner Byron, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0, (Commissioners Barnhart, Bond, and Johnson absent, Commissioner Ruiz Technical/Audio Issues) to approve the Election of Junior Vice Chair Ann Hollis

- Treasurer

It was moved by Commissioner Tunks, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0, (Commissioners Barnhart, Bond, and Johnson absent) to approve the Election of Treasurer Terry Bryron

- Judge Advocate

It was moved by Commissioner Belden, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0, (Commissioners Barnhart, Bond, and Johnson absent) to approve the Election of Judge Advocate Bruce Hayes.

- Secretary

It was moved by Commissioner Hayes, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0, (Commissioners Barnhart, Bond, and Johnson absent) to approve the Election of Secretary of Lorriane Obregon.

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

Chair Kary, Commissioners Byron, Fuller, Hayes Louis Tub-Bee, Wohlhueter, Obregon, and Tunks provided reports on current events.

15. Future Agenda Items

None as of right now.

16. Benediction

Commissioner Hayes provided the Benediction.

17. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 8, 2025