



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, January 8, 2025 - 6:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via TEAMS

Legal Action Report

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:

Alicia Fuller
Ann Hollis

Bruce Hayes
Lorraine Obregon

Terry Byron
Marcia Wohlhueter
Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Tom Tunks
William Burks

Absent:

Marlon Ruiz

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
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
Cactus Unit 2
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk
American Legion Auxiliary Oro Valley Unit 132
Women in Military Service for America Memorial
Foundation
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 26

Representing:

Military Order of the World Wars, Region XIII

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

2. Invocation

The invocation was provided by Commissioner Hayes.

3. Introduction of Guests – Update/Discussion

- a. Jennifer Gutowski, Southern Arizona Veterans Affairs Health Care System

Ms. Wasielewski informed the Committee that her boss Steven Braverman, The Vision 22 Network Director, has been selected for the position of Chief Operating Officer, and his temporary replacement will be Miss Steph Young for 120 days as acting network director. She is the director at Asheville VA. Ms. Wasielewski also shared the current associate director for patient care services. Doctor Cassandra Valdez has been selected for the chief nursing position at the network level effective February 9th so they will be searching for her replacement.

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Ms. Wasielewski also informed the VAC committee they would have an MLK remembrance walk at the main facility on Tuesday, January 14th, 2025. If additional information is needed advised to reach out to Orlando Ford. She informed the VAC Committee they have their quarterly mental health open house on Thursday, January 30th, 2025, from 10 am to 12 pm in building 4 conference rooms A and B to provide Veterans with mental health information. Also, on January 30th, 2025, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., they will be hosting their Quarterly Congressional VSO and Stakeholder meeting in building A4 conference room which will be a hybrid meeting. Ms. Wasielewski ended by asking the Committee to please continue to share opportunities for outreach in the community.

Ms. Wasielewski introduced the new chief of Community Development and Engagement (CDCE) Monica Oxford.

Ms. Oxford introduced herself to the VAC committee and gave a brief introduction about herself.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

b. Matthew Langseth, City of Tucson Veterans Coordinator

No update was given.

c. Margo Susco, Tucson Police Department

No update was given.

d. Sarah Horvath, Kino Memorial Park

No update was given.

e. Arlethe Rios, Office of Arizona Senator Mark Kelly

Senator Kelly is in DC for the next 2 months. They have been very busy getting ready for votes. MDA coming up and focusing on outreach to veterans.

4. Approval of Legal Action Report for December 11, 2024

It was moved by Commissioner Byron, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0 (Commissioner Ruiz absent), to approve the Legal Action Report from the December 11, 2024, meeting.

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5. Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Byron informed the beginning balance at the start of December 1, 2024, was \$2,590.29 expenses included \$1,177.05 for Operation Exodus and \$191.52 for pallets of water for Military Lounge with a remaining balance of \$1,221.72.

It was moved by Commissioner Hayes, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0 (Commissioner Ruiz absent), to approve the financial report as presented.

6. Committee Reports

a. Arizona Veteran's Memorial Cemetery

No update was given.

b. Arizona Department of Veteran's Services

No update was given.

c. Military Lounge and Operation Exodus

Commissioner Byron gave a brief update on the water pellets and delivery for the military lounge.

d. Memorial for Vietnam Veteran Memorial Park / 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

Jim Barnhart with the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 106 is going to dedicate a black granite memorial to the 107 Pima County who lost their lives in action in Vietnam and will be dedicated on March 29th, 2025 at 9 a.m. at the Kino Veterans Memorial Park also a free luncheon will be provided to the first 200 Vietnam Veterans at the Desert Diamond Casino.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

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.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

f. Four Chaplains Ceremony 2025

Commissioner Byron informed the Committee the Four Chaplains Ceremony is in the works. and mentioned that they are still looking for volunteer Wreath layers.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

7. Nighthawk 72 Events/Memorial – Update/Discussion

The 25th Annual Nighthawk 72 Memorial Service for the 19 Marines who lost their lives at the Marana Regional Airport. The ceremony is scheduled for April 5th, 2025, at 10 a.m. with a candlelight ceremony to follow at 8 p.m. The Committee is still looking for volunteer wreath layers for the ceremony.

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

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

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 with Francisco to be distributed.

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

10. Outreach to Mayor and Council – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron asked about the committee possibly attending a Mayor and Council meeting to discuss VAC issues. Commissioner Byron also asked about possibly getting VAC events added to the City of Tucson newsletter. Commissioner Obregon would like to see if the City Clerk's Office can provide Mayor Romero with a copy of the VAC meetings for the year to try to get the mayor or one of her representatives to join in on one of the meetings for the opportunity to inform of some VAC issues. Also, Commissioner Obregon agreed on getting the VAC event onto the City of Tucson newsletter for the opportunity to get more engagement from the community.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

11. VAC Fundraising Strategies

Chair Kary asked the committee about possible fundraising ideas. Commissioner Byron informed them they do have an annual letter that gets sent out that can go out to possible donors.

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

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

Commissioner Byron informed the committee the Tucson Veterans Day Parade Foundation will be meeting at the end of the month to start the planning for the 2025 Veterans Day Parade and mentioned to the committee if anyone wants to join the Tucson Veterans Day Parade Foundation volunteers are welcomed.

13. Election of Chaplin - Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron made a motion for Commissioner Bruce Hayes as Chaplain duly seconded and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0 (Commissioner Ruiz absent) to approve the election of the Chaplain.

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

Chair Kary, and Commissioners Byron, and Obregon provided reports on current events.

15. Future Agenda Items

Chair Kary will work on getting more Veteran representatives to join the VAC Commission. Commissioner Byron suggested possibly holding the VAC in person rather than virtual, Chair Kary would like to possibly switch to hybrid VAC meetings in the future.

16. Benediction

Commissioner Hayes provided the Benediction.

17. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 12, 2025.