



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, April 9, 2025 - 6:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via TEAMS

Minutes

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

The Veteran's Affairs Committee meeting was called to order by Rocio "Rosie" Kary at 6:00 p.m. Those present and absent were:

Present:

Alicia Fuller
Ann Hollis

Bruce Hayes
Lorraine Obregon

Marcia Wohlhueter
Marlon Ruiz

Rocio "Rosie" Kary

Terry Byron
Tom Tunks
William Burks

Representing:

Tucson Veterans Serving Veterans
Military Officers Association of America
Tucson Chapter - **Arrived at 6:05 P.M.**
American Legion McCulloch-Wagner, Post 109 -
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Cactus Unit
2
American Legion Auxiliary Oro Valley Unit 132
Military Order of the World Wars, National Senior
Vice Commander-In-Chief
Women in Military Service for America Memorial
Foundation
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72 -
Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 26 -

Absent:

Staff Members Present:

Amari Leon
Francisco Denogean

Representing:

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

2. Invocation

The invocation was given by Commissioner Bruce Hayes.

3. Introduction of Guests – Update/Discussion

- a. Jennifer Gutowski, Southern Arizona Veterans Health Care System - Maria Nguyen, The Associate Director and Chief Operating Officer at the Southern Arizona Veterans Medical Center, was in for Ms. Gutowski. Ms. Nguyen provided an update to the committee on the events the VA held starting with. Tuesday, March 18, 2025, SAVAHCS honored 28 outstanding social workers. SAVAHCS also reopened its "Patriot Pantry," which provides veterans with shelf-stable food and supplies, available to any veteran enrolled in VA healthcare. More information can be provided by calling or emailing the VA.

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For the month of April, the VA will be celebrating what they call the “Veteran’s Patient Experience Month” which will have various themes, but the overall theme is to “Own the Experience” and “You matter here” there will be various resources highlighted all of which will be posted on their social media page. Also on April 8th, 2025, the VA held a “Mental Health” Open House. Ms. Nguyen also spoke about the “Adaptive Recreation Clinic,” that was happening during the VAC meeting which was open to all veterans with amputations, spinal cord injuries, or traumatic brain injuries, which was being held at the VA Sports Park for veterans to try out adaptive equipment for sports. Ms. Nguyen ended by reminding the committee that the old beneficiary travel vouchers are now officially expired, and they have now transitioned to new travel claims.

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

- b. Matthew Langseth - City of Tucson Veterans Coordinator – Mr. Langseth provided an update on 2 programs that were approved by the City of Tucson, “The Military Spouse Employment Partnership” and “The Army Pays Partner for Your Success Program” to continue to support transitioning service members through the DoD skill bridge program. On April 23, 2025, there will be a Veteran’s ERG called “City Vets” with 2 guest speakers scheduled that will be sharing resources, if you want to start your own business and how to transfer military skills into civilian terms, as well as military spouse support.

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

- 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

No update was given.

4. Approval of Legal Action Report for March 12, 2025

It was moved by Commissioner Hayes, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0 to approve the Legal Action Report from the March 12, 2025, meeting.

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5. Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Byron stated the beginning of March 2025 was \$1,221.72; there were no current expenses or donations for the moment, leaving a current balance of \$1,221.72. Commissioner Byron informed the Committee that they will have an upcoming expense for the band for the Four Chaplain's ceremony coming up.

It was moved by Commissioner Tunk's, duly seconded, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0, to approve the financial report as presented.

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

6. Committee Reports

a. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery

Commissioner Hollis informed the Committee that there are currently 5,223 interred. For March 2026, they are finalizing a plaque to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the cemetery.

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

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

No update was given

c. Military Lounge and Operation Exodus

Commissioner Byron informed the Committee she was unable to get a count of how many military personnel used the military lounge but was able to inform the lounge did receive a pellet of water donated from Costco.

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

d. Memorial for Vietnam Veteran Memorial Park

Commissioner Byron informed the committee the ceremony was low in attendance but still went very well. They had a few speakers able to make speeches at the event.

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

e. Four Chaplains Ceremony 2026

Commissioner Byron gave a brief update on the Four Chaplains Ceremony for 2026, informing the ceremony will be held at Kino Park and she will be booking and paying the band for the event soon.

No update was given.

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7. Nighthawk 72 Events/Memorial – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron informed the committee on the 25th Annual Nighthawk 72 Memorial Service that was held on April 5th, 2025, to honor the 19 Marines who lost their lives at the Marana Regional Airport. The event went without a hitch, and after a candlelight ceremony was held at 8 P.M. to honor the 19 Marines.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

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

No update was given.

9. VAC Social Media Presence

Chair Kary reminded the committee not to forget to share VAC events on their social media pages and to share with City Clerk staff to be distributed.

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

10. Outreach to Mayor and Council – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Obregon would like to send a follow-up request to the Mayor and Council for them or one of their representatives to possibly join one of the VAC meetings.

Commissioner Ruiz would like to follow up on his invitation to the mayor or one of her representatives for the MOWW 2025 National Convention Banquet.

11. VAC Fundraising Strategies

Commissioner Hayes turned in a donation request to American Legion 109 and the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 28. Commissioner Ruiz will send out another donation request. Commissioner Byron will also send out fundraising letters and propose the idea of a possible wine t+asting paired with charcuterie boards, and they can sell tickets to raise money.

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

Commissioner Byron informed the committee that the Veterans Day Parade will be on November 11th, 2025, for the 250th anniversary and the parade will be on the same route as last year (2024) due to ongoing construction in the downtown area.

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

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

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14. Future Agenda Items

The committee will be preparing to go dark for June, July, and August 2025.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

15. Benediction

Commissioner Bruce Hayes provided the benediction.

16. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 14, 2025