Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 - 6:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting

Minutes

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

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

Present:	**Representing:**
Alan Young	American Legion Department of Arizona
Bruce Hayes	American Legion McCulloch-Wagner, Post 109Tucson Chapter
Lorraine Obregon	Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Cactus Unit 2 – **Arrived at 6:05 p.m.**
Marcia Wohlhueter	American Legion Auxiliary Oro Valley Unit 132
Marlon Ruiz	Military Order of the World Wars, National Senior Vice Commander-In-Chief
Rocio "Rosie" Kary	Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation
Terry Byron	Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Tom Tunks	Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72 – **Arrived at 6:27 p.m.**
William Burks	Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 26 –

Absent:	**Representing:**
John Curtis	Fort Lowell – Apache Chapter (0222)

Staff Members Present:	
Amari Leon	City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary
Francisco Denogean	City Clerk's Office, Recording Secretary

2. Invocation

The invocation was given by Commissioner Hayes.

3. Introduction of Guests – Update/Discussion

a. Maria Nguyen, Southern Arizona Veterans Health Care System

Ms. Nguyen briefed the committee on some of the activities from the SAVAHCS February 2026 Directors Report. Ms. Nguyen started her report with the National Salute to Veteran Patients Week and thanked the committee for all they do every day. She also touched on the Groundbreaking for the new Yuma VA outpatient Clinic scheduled to open in 2027, they also had a grand opening for the SAVAHCS Chapel at the Tucson campus. Ms. Nguyen talked about the upcoming SAVAHCS Mental Open House scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 10 in the morning and provided the committee with the location and a phone number to RSVP. She reported they are still looking for volunteer drivers for their Sierra Vista and Yuma offices. Ms. Nguyen concluded by advising the committee about an email and text scam they have been alerted to and provided tips and steps if the commissioners or anyone they know receive any suspicious messages asking for personal information.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

b. Matthew Langseth - City of Tucson Veterans Coordinator

No update was given.

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

c. Margo Susco, Tucson Police Department

No update was given.

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

d. Sarah Horvath, Kino Memorial Park

No update was given.

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

e. Arlethe Rios, Office of Arizona Senator Mark Kelly

No update was given.

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

f Floyd Celestine, Veteran Service Advisory Commission

Mr. Celestine provided an introduction about himself and the organization he represents, he briefed the committee on what his organization does to help veterans and their families in southern Arizona. Mr. Celestine's information was provided to the committee if they would like to reach out to him.

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

4. Approval of Legal Action Report for January 14, 2026

The motion was moved by Commissioner Hayes, duly seconded by Commissioner Young, and passed by a roll call vote of 10 to 0 to approve the Legal Action Report.

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

5. Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Byron reported the committee's beginning balance for January 2026 was $1,669.13 with no activity leaving a remaining balance of $1.669.13 in the account.

The motion was moved by Commissioner Young, duly seconded by Commissioner Hayes, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0 to approve the Treasurers Report.

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

6. VAC Savings and Checking Account – Update/ Discussion

Commissioner Byron informed the committee Wells Fargo will be updating their policies and begin charging a $15 fee for any accounts that don't maintain a $2,000+ balance. The committee voted to replace the checking account with a savings account, the motion was moved by Commissioner Byron, duly seconded by Commissioner Burks, and passed by a roll call vote of 8 to 0 to approve the transfer to a Wells Fargo savings account.

Discussion was held, and formal action was taken.

7. Committee Reports

a. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery

Commissioner Byron reported the cemetery administration has 69 internments, 43 Veterans, 1 Guardsman, 25 Dependents, 9 Burial urns, 9 Casketed and 51 Columbarium's and a total of 5,178 total interred. She also informed the "Missing in America Project" is scheduled for April 18th at 10 a.m. and a Construction Kickoff is scheduled for January 14th with additional information to follow.

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

b. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

No update to provide

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

c. Military Lounge and Operation Exodus

Commissioner Byron reported they have approximately 1000 soldiers for Project Exodus, and no issues to report.

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

d. Four Chaplains Ceremony 2026

Commissioner Byron provided an update for this year's Four Chaplains 2026 Ceremony reporting the event went well they had a lot of participation and attendees, and she thanked the committee for all the support to make the event a success, next year's Four Chaplains Ceremony will be February 2027.

Discussion was held, and formal action was taken.

8. VAC Social Media Presence – Update/Discussion

Chair Rocio reminded the committee to utilize their Facebook page to share their events.

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

9. Outreach to Mayor and Council – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Obregon had questions about if the Mayor or her team have confirmed when they will be able to sit in at one of the Veterans' Affairs Committee meetings.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

10. VAC Fundraising Strategies – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron reminded the committee about their upcoming Night of Wine fundraising event scheduled for February 15, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. at the St. Philip's Plaza.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

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

Commissioner Byron informed the committee there are no updates for the parade yet, but it is scheduled for November 11, 2026, at 11 a.m. with the parade route staying the same due to construction. Commissioner Young reported the memorial project is moving faster than anticipated and they will be meeting with the CEO and Vice CEO on February 25, 2026, to review concepts for the memorial.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

12. Election of Officers - Update/Discussion

The committee voted to leave the Junior Vice Chair seat open to confirm with former Commissioner Ann Hollis if she will be looking to be reappointed to the committee before appointing someone else, the motion was made by Commissioner Byron and duly seconded by Commissioner Ruiz.

Discussion was held; no formal action was taken.

13. Consideration/Approval of Member – Update/Discussion

The committee voted to move forward with the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Brenda S. Hughey from the Tucson Military Officers of America (MOAA) chapter, the motion was made by Commissioner Byron and duly seconded by Commissioner Wohlhueter. Lieutenant Colonel Brenda Hughey appointment will be added to the March 3, 2026, Mayor and Council meeting for final approval.

Discussion was held; no formal action was taken.

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

Chair Kary, Commissioners Byron, Wohlhueter, Ruiz, Tunks and Young provided reports on current events

15. Future Agenda Items

Moving forward, the Veterans Day Parade and Memorials will be their own numbered items on the Veterans Affairs Commission agenda.

16. Benediction

Commissioner Hayes provided the benediction.

17. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Next Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting:
Wednesday, March 11, 2026