



Veterans’ Affairs Committee

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

Minutes

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

The Veterans’ Affairs Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Rocio “Rosie” Kary at 6:01 p.m. those present and absent were:

Present:

Alan Young

Representing:

American Legion Department of Arizona

Brenda Hughey	Military Officers Association of America, Tucson Chapter
John Curtis	Fort Lowell – Apache Chapter (0222)
Lorraine Obregon	Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Cactus Unit 2 – Arrived at 6:05p.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

Absent:

Bruce Hayes

Representing:

American Legion McCulloch-Wagner, Post 109 Tucson
Chapter

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 Chair Kary.

3. Introduction of Guests – Update/Discussion

a. **Maria Nguyen, Southern Arizona Veterans Health Care System**

Ms. Nguyen started by informing the committee her time as Interim Director with the Southern Arizona VA Health Care has come to an end due to VA policy and now Dr. John B. Kettele will take over the position. Ms. Nguyen highlighted some of the topics from the SAVAHCS March 2026 Director’s Report which included the Fisher House 10th

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Anniversary Car Show and Resource Fair, the Adaptive Recreation Clinic at the VA main campus and the Tucson Veteran Engagement and Resource Fair. Ms. Nguyen reminded the committee it is tax season and the VA does offer free tax preparation for veterans. Ms. Nguyen provided an update on the scam alert the VA issued a warning about last month, informing the committee fraudulent letters are also being mailed out to veterans requesting payment for future services, she advised the VA will never request payment for future services or appointments. Ms. Nguyen also informed the committee the VA is still looking for volunteer drivers to drive veterans from Yuma and Sierra Vista to and from medical appointments. Ms. Nguyen concluded by providing an update on the renovations and expansion of the emergency department at the Tucson VA.

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. Bernie Colonna, Honor Charity

Mr. Colonna provided an introduction about himself and the Honor Charity, which is a nonprofit organization in Tucson that serves veterans and their families in southern Arizona with financial and cash assistance.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

g. Michael Torres, HSI Military / Veteran Hiring

Mr. Torres will be rescheduled for a future VAC meeting.

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

h. Jonathan Kary, CBP Veteran Service Program

Mr. Kary spoke to the committee about the CBP Veteran Service Program which employs over 24,000 veterans. Mr. Kary also assists military members in transitioning from the military to federal civilian careers.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

i. Tanya Morrison, Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Ms. Morrison provided an introduction on herself and gave a brief description of the Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery and their locations, reporting they have interred 5,847 Veterans and eligible dependents in their facilities, with 71 of those interred being from February 2026. Ms. Morrison also shared the "Missing in America Project" is coming up on Saturday, April 18, 2026, starting at 10 a.m. Commissioner Ruiz shared it was the 10th Anniversary of the Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Marana.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

4. Approval of Legal Action Report for February 11, 2026

The motion was moved by Commissioner Byron, duly seconded by Commissioner Ruiz, and passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0 to approve the Legal Action Report.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

5. Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Byron started by informing the committee herself and Chair Kary did open the savings account with Wells Fargo for the committee, they did have a deposit of \$180 from the "Night of Wine" fundraising event bringing the committee's current balance to \$1,849.19

The motion was moved by Commissioner Wohlhueter, duly seconded by Commissioner Tunks, and passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0 to approve the Treasurers Report.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

6. Committee Reports

a. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery

An update on the Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery was provided by guest speaker Tanya Morrison during guest presentations, Commissioner Byron added additional comments about the events.

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 was not provided with a report from Nicole at the Tucson Airport for February 2026, but if supplies are needed someone from the airport will reach out to Commissioner Byron.

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

d. Four Chaplains Ceremony 2026

Commissioner Byron informed the committee that planning for the Four Chaplains 2027 Ceremony will start soon and will be on the first Saturday of February, additional information will follow

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

7. VAC Social Media Presence – Update/Discussion

Chair Rocio reminded the committee to continue to share their events with the City Clerk's office for disruption and to continue utilizing their Facebook page to post events.

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

8. Outreach to the Mayor and Council – Update / Discussion

The City Clerk's office will continue to send monthly invites to the Mayor and Council for the monthly Veterans' Affairs Committee meetings. Chair Kary also suggested for the Commissioners to reach out to their ward office to invite their council member to attend one of the meetings.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

9. VAC Fundraising Strategies – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron reported on their "Night of Wine" fundraising event which she informed the committee they raised \$220 and welcomed and new fundraising ideas for the future. Commissioner Byron explained to the new commissioners what the money raised goes to.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

10. Veteran's Day Parade – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Byron shared with the committee the first Veteran's Day Parade meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 24, 2026, at the American Legion Post 7 at 6 p.m., more information to follow.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

11. Memorials – Update/Discussion

Commissioner Young gave a brief report on the Mosaic Quarter and tour he took of the facility; he informed the committee that the Memorial Garden will be the center of the project and currently the design and layout are still being determined.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

12. Election of Officers - Update/Discussion

The committee did receive confirmation that the previous Senior Vice Chair will not be seeking reappointment; the committee will be looking for nominations or volunteers for the open seat.

Discussion was held, and no formal action was taken.

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

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

14. Future Agenda Items

- a. Senior Vice Chair
- b. Summer Break

15. Benediction

The benediction was provided by Chair Kary and Commissioner Tunks.

16. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

**Next Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting:
Wednesday, April 8, 2026**