



Veterans' Affairs Committee
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Veterans' Affairs Committee MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by C. Martin Stevens, Chairperson, on Wednesday, January 9, 2008, at 7:00 p.m., in the Mayor and Council Chambers, City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St., Tucson, Arizona.

1. Call to Order/Establish a Quorum

Members Present:

William Burks
William Stein
Norman Ross
J.L. "Pepe" Mendoza
Herbert Rogers
C. Martin Stevens, Chairperson
Paul R. Hetrick
E. Wendell Hague

Members Absent:

Donald Alff
Dr. Lester Potts
Bernard McCaffery
Joan Shadwick
Rose Anderson
Larry Byrd
Aaron Possien

Others Present:

Loretta Coleman
Jim Driscoll
Abel Moreno
Saul Stoltz (oath not yet taken)
George Bowens

Representing:

DAV Cactus Chapter #2
DAV Auxiliary Cactus #2
Korean War Veterans' Association
So. AZ. VA Health Care System
Spanish Trail Chapter NCOA
Veteran's Employment & Training
Vietnam Veterans of America, CH. 106
VFW Post #549

Representing:

American Legion Post #7
American Legion Post #36
American Legion Post #73
AZ Department of Veterans Services
Esperanza En Escalante
Esperanza En Escalante
The Order of the Silver Rose

Vets 4 Vets
Vets 4 Vets
Vets 4 Vets & American Legion Post #7
Tucson Jewish War Veterans
DAV Cactus Chapter #2

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by William Burks.

3. Invocation

The invocation was given by Wendell Hague.

4. Introduction of Guests

Jim Driscoll, Loretta Coleman, and Abel Moreno of Vets 4 Vets were introduced to the Committee. New member Saul Stoltz of the Tucson Jewish War Veterans was welcomed as well as potential new member George Bowens of the Disabled American Veterans Cactus Chapter #2.

5. Approval of New Members

It was moved, duly seconded and approved by a voice vote of 8 to 0 (Don Alff, Lester Potts, Bernard McCaffery, Joan Shadwick, Rose Anderson, Larry Byrd, and Aaron Possien, absent/excused) to approve George Bowens a representative of Disabled American Veterans Cactus Chapter #2, as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

6. Chairman's Report on Current Events

Chair Stevens reported that an Ad Hoc Grass Roots Group was forming to try to establish a state or national Veterans' Cemetery in the Tucson area. A location consisting of 80 to 100 acres near I-19 and I-10 was considered ideal but could be prohibitively expensive. The Pascua Yaqui and Tohono O'odham Nations would be approached for interest in providing tribal lands for a Veterans' Cemetery. Chair Stevens had recently visited the National Veterans' Cemetery in the Phoenix area and was impressed by what he saw. He said, given the number of Veterans in the Tucson area, a cemetery here was appropriate.

Chair Stevens announced, due to scheduling conflicts and comments from some committee members concerning the February 13, 2008 meeting date, the February 2008 meeting would be rescheduled to February 20th or 21st. Members were asked to let the City Clerk's Office or the Chair know which date would best meet their schedules.

7. Approval of Minutes – December 12, 2007

It was moved, duly seconded and passed by a voice vote of 8 to 0 (Don Alff, Lester Potts, Bernard McCaffery, Joan Shadwick, Rose Anderson, Larry Byrd, and Aaron Possien, absent/excused) to approve the minutes of December 12, 2007 as presented.

8. Recruitment of Organizations

Visitors from the organization Vets 4 Vets invited the Committee to an event at Davis Monthan Air Force Base to be held January 29, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Mirage Officers' Club.

9. Discussion/Action for Operation Exodus

Operation Exodus was declared a success. The committee had enough funds for a good start for the 2008 Exodus and hoped to do even more for the 2008 event. Treasurer Wendell Hague presented the reconciliation, of donations and expenses for Operation Exodus, to the committee. It was moved, duly seconded, and passed by a vote of 8 to 0 (Don Alff, Lester Potts, Bernard McCaffery, Joan Shadwick, Rose Anderson, Larry Byrd, and Aaron Possien, absent/excused) to accept the reconciliation as presented.

10. Discussion / Action for the Four Chaplains Ceremony

Pepe Mendoza announced that Chaplain John Zinck, of the Veterans' Administration, would be presiding over and conducting the memorial service for the Four Chaplains Ceremony scheduled to take place on February 4, 2008. Members expressed concern about the date due to conflicting events. Chair Stevens would be meeting with Chaplain Zinck for further discussion.

11. Discussion/Action regarding organizations such as the AMVETS Foundation, Unified Arizona Veterans (UAV), and the Purple Heart Association

Based on an Associated Press (AP) article, the committee discussed reports of some veterans' organizations that spent a larger than average percentage of their budgets on overhead. The AMVETS Foundation, Unified Arizona Veterans (UAV), and the Purple Heart Association were cited in the AP news article on 501-C-3 Non-Profit Organizations as groups with questionable fund raising, staff payroll and accounting practices. It was moved, duly seconded and passed by a vote of 8 to 0 (Don Alff, Lester Potts, Bernard McCaffery, Joan Shadwick, Rose Anderson, Larry Byrd, and Aaron Possien, absent/excused) that the Committee would give close and thorough consideration of any organization wishing to have a representative admitted to the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

12. Committee Reports – Discussion/Action

a. Airport Military Lounge

It was reported that the Airport Military Lounge would remain open, but communication with Ft. Huachuca could continue to be difficult with the possible separation of PFC Swenson. The possibility of contacting Davis Monthan Air Force Base for their interest in assigning staff to the Military Lounge was discussed.

b. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Joan Shadwick could not be in attendance, so no report was given. The request to have an additional representative from the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services was still pending.

c. V A Hospital

Pepe Mendoza provided handouts regarding Department of Veterans' Affairs hospice and palliative care as well as information regarding the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, James Peake, M.D. Multiple projects continued.

d. Arizona Veterans' Employment Services

Chair Stevens reported the Arizona Veterans' Employment Services continued to help veterans with employment issues and with recruiting employers to hire veterans.

e. Financial Report

Wendell Hague submitted the financial report for the period 12/1/2007 to 1/7/2008. After review, it was moved, duly seconded and passed by a vote of 8 to 0 (Don Alff, Lester Potts, Bernard McCaffery, Joan Shadwick, Rose Anderson, Larry Byrd, and Aaron Possien, absent/excused) to approve the report as submitted.

13. Future Agenda Items

- Discussion of the Four Chaplains Ceremony
- Discussion/Action regarding the addition/replacement of an alternate signer to the Committee checking account

14. Salute to Colors

The Salute to Colors was led by Chairperson Stevens.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.