



Veterans' Affairs Committee

Wednesday, September 9, 2020, 6:00 pm
City Manager's Conference Room – 1st Floor
City Hall, 255 W. Alameda, Tucson, Arizona

Legal Action Report and Summary Minutes

1. Call to Order / Establish a Quorum

Virtual meeting called to order by Chairperson Bruce Hamilton at 6:00 p.m. Those present and absent were:

Present:

Steve W. Aguirre
Gary Ochoa
Carol Rundell-**ARRIVED 6:11 pm**

C.W. Hall
Kevin Dumas
Phyllis Russell-**ARRIVED AFTER ITEM 5**
Gaeton P Briseno

Terry Byron
William Wojciechowski

Robert "Bob" Slocum-**ARRIVED 6:11 pm**
LEFT 7:09 pm

Marlon Ruiz

Luke Johnson
Joel Stoltz
Bruce Hamilton
Martin Belden
Melvin Morgan-**ARRIVED 6:22 pm**

Peter Kane (**Advisory Member**)

Representing:

American Legion Department of Arizona
Arizona Department of Veteran's Services
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary,
Cactus Chapter 2
Disabled American Veterans Chapter 4
Disabled American Veterans Chapter 28
Esperanza En Escalante
Korean War and Korea Service Veterans
Assoc. Inc., Pima Chapter
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Military Officers Association of America,
Tucson Chapter
Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of World Wars, Department of
Arizona
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System
Tucson Jewish War Veterans Post 201
Tucson Veterans Serving Veterans
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 106
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 106

Tucson Airport Authority

Absent:

William Burks
Henry Johnson

Mark Levine
Shaun Pfund

Representing:

Disabled American Veterans Chapter 26
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
and Post 81 Scottish American Military Society
of Southern Arizona
Tucson Jewish War Veterans Post 201
Tucson Veterans Cemetery Group

**Legal Action Report
Veterans' Affairs Committee
September 9, 2020**

Staff Member Present:

Bambi Flores
Jesus Acedo
Delma Sanchez
Jaime Corrales

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Due to COVID19 restrictions and this meeting being held virtually; there was no pledge of allegiance for this meeting.

3. Invocation

There was no invocation for this meeting.

4. Introduction of Guests

Jennifer Gutowski, Director, SAVAHCS
Natasha McTaggart, for Jennifer Hopek, Social Worker, VA Caregiver Support Program
Brittany Duarte, for Jennifer Hopek, Social Worker, VA Caregiver Support Program

5. Approval of Legal Action Report and Summary Minutes from March 11, 2020 meeting

No discussion was held.

It was moved by Committee Member M Belden, duly seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 12 to 0 (**Committee Members William Burks, Henry Johnson Mark Levine and Shaun Pfund absent, Committee Members Melvin Morgan, Carol Rundell, Phyllis Russell And Bob Slocum arrived late**), to approve the Legal Action Report and Summary Minutes from the March 11, 2020 meeting.

6. Treasurer's Report

Report was given by Committee Member M. Belden and a discussion was held.

It was moved by Committee Member C. Rundel, duly seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 16 to 0 (**Committee Members William Burks, Henry Johnson Mark Levine and Shaun Pfund absent**) to approve the March 2020 financial report.

**Legal Action Report
Veterans' Affairs Committee
September 9, 2020**

7. COVID19 Impact on Veterans / Resources Available

Chair Hamilton briefly spoke on this. He explained that a large number of organizations including non-profit organizations met in regards to the COVID19 pandemic and it's effects on Veterans. Discussed was emergency funds and how these efforts can be coordinated to include all requests.

Committee Member Bob Slocum stated that the purpose of the meeting was to inquire if any VSOs would be interested in starting a group to offset funding for Veterans. This would be for housing, food and emergency needs only. The outcome was favorable, and it was decided that a group like this would be needed. They are still unsure how these goals would be met and all further decisions regarding the outcome of meeting are on hold until input from all involved organizations is received.

8. Committee Reports

a. Southern Arizona VA (Veterans' Affairs) Health Care System

Jennifer Gutowski, Director SAVAHCS (Southern Arizona Veterans' Affairs Health Care System) introduced herself and thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak at the meeting. She shared and explained the SAVAHCS Director's Report (a copy of the report was sent electronically to all VAC members via email. She spoke on what was going on with the VA nationwide and explained how these changes would affect the VA locally. She shared her contact information and held a brief question and answer session.

Senior Vice Chair Luke Johnson explained that he was away from his office and stated that he would resend the link to the town hall for suicide prevention.

Natasha McTaggart and Brittany Duarte, VA Caregiver Support Program, were present for Jennifer Hopek, Social Worker, VA Caregiver Support Program. They shared a slide show for the VA Caregiver Support Program. They explained their mission and role in providing support to Veterans and caregivers. They provided a general overview of the types of support they offer and answered questions from the committee. A copy of their presentation was provided and forwarded to the VAC via email.

b. Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery – Marana

Committee Member Terry Byron briefed the committee on cemetery business including Wreaths Across America

c. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Junior Vice Chair Gary Ochoa stated that there have been COVID19 related changes and explained how they affect Veterans. He stated that VA Services is currently working virtually. He stated that counselors are available by phone or computer for all clients. He stated that some funding was available for qualified Veterans. He stated that despite the COVID19 pandemic cemeteries are fully operated.

**Legal Action Report
Veterans' Affairs Committee
September 9, 2020**

9. General Fundraising Efforts

Committee Member Terry Byron stated that the VAC fundraising letter needed a revision to shorten it up. She asked for ideas or suggestions from the Committee including contact information for potential donors.

a. Fundraising Letter

Discussion was held. Committee will revise letter prior to mailing put to potential donors.

b. Fundraising Donor List

Discussion was held. Committee will revise donor list and follow up with revised letter.

c. Fundraising

No discussion was held.

10. Hats Off To Heroes

Chair Hamilton stated that it was his understanding that The Hats Off to Heroes event for 2020 was Cancelled.

Senior Vice Chair Luke Johnson confirmed that this event was cancelled and stated that the 2021 was being considered, based on COVID19 restrictions.

Junior Vice Chair Gary Ochoa stated that a meeting with the Mayor would be a good starting point for the 2021 event.

11. Veteran's Day Parade

Chair Hamilton stated that the Veteran's Day Parade was still scheduled to take place. He stated that he and Committee Member Rundell had extended an invitation tot the Mayor and would follow up with her office.

12. Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony Update/Discussion

Committee Member Terry Byron stated that the Four Chaplains event held earlier this year was a success. She is hoping that the 2021 event will still take place but suggested a possible live stream if circumstances do not allow.

13. Military Lounge Update/Discussion

Advisory Member Peter Kane informed the Committee, that due to the COVID19, the Military Lounge was temporarily closed.

14. Operation Exodus Update/Discussion

Advisory Member Peter Kane informed the Committee that a meeting regarding Operation Exodus was scheduled for October 15, 2020. He will update the Committee once the information is made available to him.

**Legal Action Report
Veterans' Affairs Committee
September 9, 2020**

15. **Report on Current Events: For the Good of the Order**
Reports on upcoming events were provided by Committee Members Terry Byron, CW Hall, Phyllis Russell, Bob Slocum, Steve Aguirre and Chair Bruce Hamilton.
16. **Future Agenda Items:**
Stand Down-to replace Hats Off to Heroes as item 10 on Agenda.
17. **TEMPORARY Removal of Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to Colors from VAC Agenda**
It was moved by Committee Member C. Rundel, duly seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 14 to 0 (**Committee Members William Burks, Henry Johnson Mark Levine and Shaun Pfund absent, Committee Member Committee Member Butch Morgan had no audio, Committee Member Marlon Bob Slocum left at 7:09**) to temporarily remove the Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to Colors from the VAC Agenda.
17. **Salute to Colors**
Due to COVID19 restrictions and this meeting being held virtually; there was no pledge of allegiance for this meeting.
18. **Adjournment**
Meeting adjourned at 7:11 pm