

**Veterans Commission
Meeting Minutes**

May 12, 2025

Present: Alfred Banfield, Donna Vaillancourt, Aditi Patel, Mary Cravalho, Carolyn Schlocker, Corey Braddock, Ben Suncin

Staff: Ed Kiryczun, Samay Chhun, Selina-Toy Lee

Public Comments By: None

Topic	Discussion	Actions/Next Steps
Meeting called to order & Pledge of Allegiance Recited	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm- Pledge of allegiance and roll call taken – 7 present	No Additional actions or steps
Approval of minutes & adoption of agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minutes March 10,2025 approved 7 Y/ 0 N- Call to set Agenda approved 7Y/ 0 N	No Additional actions or steps
Public Comments	Marci Dragun will be retiring and leaving the County. Thank you from all commissioners for her assistance with the Veterans Commission.	No additional actions or steps

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Veterans Commission Business

Ed Kiryczun, VSO Operation Update

No Additional actions or steps

Measure	2024	2025	Difference
Veteran Interactions	914	1217	+303
Total Retroactive received	\$1,899,328.63	\$1,254,473.53	-\$644,855.13
Total Monthly Assistance	\$236,000.54	\$188,669.21	-\$47,331.33
Claims Submitted	412	380	-32
College Fee Waivers Granted	23	30	+7
College Fee's Waived	\$201,641.00	\$263,010.00	+\$87,670.00

- Reminder of Veteran Stand Down Event here at 500 County Center, RWC on September 25. Event Time 10-3pm
- Santa Clara and San Mateo County Courts will be in attendance
- 50 + organization are looking to table event
- Election for New Commission will start in November of 2025. Donna and Brandon will be leaving as Chair Commissioner

- March 5, 2025- VA determinations of whether evidence is “in approximate balance” are factual findings subject to clear-error review
- Ruling raises the standard veterans must meet to successfully appeal a denial.
- Veterans must provide a stronger medial and factual evidence when filing a disability claim. Veterans meet a higher burden to successfully challenge it in court
- We are seeing an increase in claim denials as shown based on our current numbers

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Topic	Discussion	Actions/Next Steps
Veterans Commission Business (Continued)	<p>Open Doors to Future Possibilities-Guest Speaker Chris Hughes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Veteran Non Profit Organization open its doors in 2019. Mission is to support Veterans, first responders and families to achieve their goals and lead fulfilling lives.- Services provided includes counseling, tutoring, workshops, employment assistance with weekly roundtable discussions.- 100 Veterans who utilized our counseling are no longer experiencing any symptoms of PTSD, suicidality or deep depression- Learning Centers offers financial literacy classes, 8-week basic digital program and free laptops for Veterans. Drop-in service hours to access counseling and or therapist.- Looking to branch out to more locations in the Bay Area. Office Space within San Mateo County is in the works	No Additional actions or steps

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Veterans Commission Business (Continued)	Lashell Burch- VA Healthcare <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Re-introduce herself and the efforts in suicide prevention- Funding comes from VACO—her mission within VA healthcare is to service Monterey, San Mateo , Alameda, Santa Clara, etc are the general area she serves- Will take calls from anywhere who will need her to offer her support and knowledge in Suicide Prevention- Recently connected with Space Force Stan Maupin and Ben Suncin-Housing and Homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none">- BMR Project-Another meeting with Nick in SF regarding the project- Currently working on another list and data to present to commission- Looking forward to meeting with housing department to present them with the data collected	No Additional actions or steps
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Adjournment	Meeting adjourns at 7:35 pm	No Additional actions or steps
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