

**Veterans Commission
Meeting Minutes**

July 14, 2025

Present: Alfred Banfield, Brandon Jones, Corey Braddock, Mary Cravalho, Ben Sunchin, Keith Darby, Stan Maupin,

Staff: Ed Kiryczun, Alex Ayag, Samay Chhun,

Public Comments By: Rose

Topic	Discussion	Actions/Next Steps
Meeting called to order & Pledge of	<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	Approval of Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Made: May meeting minutes approved. • Action Item: Minutes approved 	No Additional actions or steps
Public Comments	Discussion: Rose, a social worker, inquired about parenting support programs for veterans. She couldn't find any resources. Key Point: There is a need to compile and disseminate information on available resources for veterans. Access to resources and navigation is difficult. Joshua Caspillan-Legislative Aide to Supervisor Lisa Gauthier. Formal Introduction to how he can assist the Veterans Commission.	Action Item: The commission will review resources and contact Rose. Action Item: Kyle suggested Rose check the VA website for parenting training modules. Action Item: Kyle noted CA Veterans Affairs CALVET program has financial education for veterans and parents

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Veterans Commission Business	Ed Kiryczun, VSO Operation Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veteran Interactions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year-to-date (Jan 1 - June 30): 1704 (vs. 1582 in 2024), an increase of 122 veterans.• Total Retroactive Received:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year-to-date: \$2,803,410 (vs. \$2,947,962 in 2024), a decrease of \$144,000.• Total Monthly Assistance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year-to-date: \$429,980/month (vs. \$382,315/month in 2024), an increase of \$47,000/month.• Claims Submitted:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year-to-date: 594 (vs. 611 in 2024), a decrease of 17 claims.• College Fee Waivers:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year-to-date: 68 waivers (\$596,156 savings) (vs. 77 waivers (\$675,059 savings) in 2024), 9 fewer waivers and about \$78,000 less savings.• Note: College waiver numbers will increase as the fall semester approaches.• Customer Satisfaction:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 98% satisfaction rate based on 170 surveys.• Discussion: Possible reasons for retroactive payment decrease:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PACT Act initial influx of veterans with longer retroactive periods has subsided.• Claim processing times fluctuate.• Anecdotal evidence suggests an increase in claim denials.• Key Point: Appeal process is in place to overturn denials.	No Additional actions or steps
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<p>Veterans Commission Business Continued)</p>	<p>Stand Down Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: September 25th (Thursday), 10 AM - 3 PM • Location: County Center (side of the building) • Organizations: 55+ organizations signed up, including the VA. • Lunch: Lunch will be provided. • Volunteers: Needed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manning two entrance tables. • Directing people to legal services in Building 400 (courtyard corner). • Guiding people to parking (3rd and 4th floors) and providing parking passes. • Legal Services: San Francisco County Courts next and Santa Clara Courts will hopefully be represented. • Dental Services: No mobile dental clinic this year due to budget constraints. 	<p>Action Item: Volunteers should contact Alex.</p>
<p>Veterans Commission Business (Continued)</p>	<p>Ed Kiryczun, VSO Operation Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: November 6th, 1 PM - 4 PM (open window, actual time TBD) • Format: Reimagined event - eliminating the sit-down lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socializing/networking mixer with hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic drinks. • Formal presentation (videos, possible keynote speaker). • Awardees are available for meet-and-greet/photos in the reception area. • Ticket Fee: No ticket fee, hoping to increase attendance. • Capacity: Hoping to accommodate 300+ people. • Event Project Management: Needed for event planning, program development, registration table setup, etc. • Transportation: Consider transportation options for veterans (Menlo Park VA, Veterans Village in Colma). • Registration Process: Need help organizing the registration process, printing/preparing name tags. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Item: Volunteers should contact Alex. • Committee: A committee will be formed to assist with event planning and award selection. • Action Item: Look at ways to outsource transportation. <p>Discussion: Taking away the fee is a huge plus because it was a barrier to</p>

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<p>Veterans Commission Business (Continued)</p>	<p>Outreach Event Update (Alex)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased outreach efforts compared to last year. • Pacifica outreach is productive. • Action Item: Flyers sent out for September Stand Down (attendees and service providers). • Attending Veteran Memorial Car Show later this month. • Working on a coffee house event with HUD Vash at Fair Oaks Housing to offer claim services. <p>Unsheltered Veteran Housing (Ben)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa Clara County is hosting a "Surge Event" to outreach unsheltered veterans. • The surge events are a national effort to house 40,000 Vets. • San Mateo County has approximately 60 unsheltered veterans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Item: Ben will send out flyers about the surge event and make them available on the website.
<p>Veterans Commission Business (Continued)</p>	<p>BMR (Below Market Rate) Housing Program (Ben, Stan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Francisco's BMR program is being reviewed as a potential model for San Mateo County. • Key difference: San Francisco is a city and county, so BMR applies to the whole jurisdiction. • San Mateo County would need to start at the county level and then work with individual cities. • Action Item: Send out the BMR info. • Key Point: There are vets who are under-housed, not just un-housed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Item: Ed to research data regarding veterans accessing affordable housing. • Action Item: Ben to contact Hillsdale Apartments to see if they would give veteran preferences • Action Item: Check data with the Department of Housing to track what the numbers are, what the city control, vs. the County. • Action Item: Selena suggested that when incentives are given to say, "hey we want you to let us build" we should advocate for veterans. • Action Item: Stan will reach out to Nick to assist in mapping it out.

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<p>Veterans Commission Business (Continued)</p>	<p>Veterans Committee Election</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for a new chair and vice-chair, effective January. • Stan expressed interest. • Action Item: Contact Donna if interested. • Discussion: Bylaws and Timing of Election need clarification. <p>2025 Veteran of the Year Event Update (Stan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stan is the chair. • Need members for the selection committee to review the nominees. • Also need help with event logistics outlined by Ed. • Currently we have two Patriot of the Year nominations and one Veteran of the Year nomination: No Enterprise of the Year nominations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Item: Solicit for more nominees, share the flyers. • Action Item: Contact Stan if you're interested in getting on the selection committee. • Action Item: Follow up with Donna regarding the election dates to make sure it is legal.
<p>Veterans Commission Business (Continued)</p>	<p>Committee Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative: Keith Darby, Corey Braddock • Discussion: Assembly Bill 53 (Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act) - excludes \$20,000 of military retirement/survivor benefits from CA income tax. It has passed assembly but tell the state to senate and governor. • Key Point: Legislative items often don't pass the first time, so establishing a position is important. • Key Point: County has lobbyists at the state level who advocate for county positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Item: Recirculate letter for commission for point of agenda for voting. • Action Item: Ed will look back at the initial letter to make sure no provisions have changed then circulate to Donna.

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	<p>Mental Health Services Act Task Force Transition (Mary):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavioral Health Services Act transition is in progress; changes won't occur until June 30, 2026.• Task force is working on the transition with more state control and less local control.• Prioritizes support for those with mental health conditions and drug addiction and increase access to permanent supportive housing.• Focus on transparency in fiscal expenditures.• Wendy P. offers forest therapy (forest bathing) walks.• Opportunity for veterans to decrease stress/anxiety and connect with nature.	<p>Action Item: Commission to consider taking a walk. Connect Wendy to Ed's office to share her contacts.</p>
<p>Adjournment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm- Adjourn approved 7 Y/ 0 N	