

**Veterans Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Monday, May 11, 2026

Present: Brandon Jones, Ben Suncin, Kyle Corcoran, Donna Vaillancourt, Mary Cravalho, Keith Darby, Stan Maupin, Fred Baer, Al Banfield

Staff: Ed Kiryczun, Samay Chhun, Alex Ayag

Public Comments By: Mark De Paula

Topic	Discussion	Actions/Next Steps
Meeting called to order & Pledge of Allegiance Recited	- Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm Pledge of Allegiance and roll call taken – 9 commissioners present.	No additional actions or steps
Approval of minutes & adoption of agenda	- Minutes from March 9, 2026, Commission meeting were adopted - Minutes Approved 9 Y/ 0 N - Agenda Approved 9 Y/ 0 N	No additional actions or steps
Public Comments	- Detailed the VA's refusal to cover external medical care for mesenchymal cord blood and tissue injections/infusions for back pain. - Emphasized that umbilical cord stem cells (MSCs) are not fully mature, do not cause rejection, and can be used for all blood types. - Plans to travel to Washington D.C. to meet with VA representatives regarding external medical treatment.	No additional actions or steps

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Public Comments (Continued)	Chris Hunter (Supervisor Gauthier Office): Update & Support • Discussion Points: ○ Introduced as the former Chief of Staff for Supervisor Don Horsley, now assisting Supervisor Gauthier in rebuilding staff levels. ○ Supervisor Gauthier office is committed to assisting the commission, especially with the upcoming veterans' luncheon, despite current staffing regeneration challenges. ○ Expressed personal pride in his father's military service (career Army officer, Purple Heart recipient).	• Chris Hunter and the subcommittee (Donna, Al) will coordinate to balance responsibilities for the upcoming veteran's luncheon. • Action Item: Chris and the Chair will work to schedule Supervisor Roche to speak at a future commission meeting about her vision for the commission.
Veterans Commission Business	Ed Kiryczun (VSO Updates) • No Updates 1. Legislative ○ No updates. 2. Mental Health ○ First Responder and Veteran Forum: ▪ Date: September 10th ▪ Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (forum), 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (connection, resources, refreshments) ▪ Venue: Central Peninsula Church, Foster City (capacity 650 people, centrally located). ▪ Need: Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) focusing on suicide, medical, public/private mental health, and holistic medicine. A letter is ready for outreach; suggestions for experts are welcome. ▪ Need: Marketing and Outreach subcommittee members. ▪ Meetings: Bi-weekly/tri-weekly in Foster City, likely Thursdays at 4:00 PM, increasing frequency closer to the event.	No additional actions or steps

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Veterans Commission Business (Continued)	Subcommittee Updates: Housing and Homelessness • Oak Gardens Housing: ○ Status: Open for business. HUD-backed units are spoken for, but other units are available. ○ Issue: Apparent lag in getting veterans into non-HUD units. ○ Resolution: Contacted Jerome Olympiada (Samaritan House, Coordinated Entry Services). Confirmed no residency requirements or impediments for veterans applying to Oak Gardens under the new AML program (minimum income based). ○ Action Item: Reach out to contacts in other counties to inform them about Oak Gardens units for veterans, as units are available and need to be leased up. Eucalyptus Grove Apartments: • Event: Opening ceremony on Friday, May 11th. • Time: 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM (lunchtime). • Action Item: Interested commissioners to contact Brandon immediately for RSVP information.	No additional action or steps

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Veterans Commission Business (Continued)	Subcommittee Veterans Recognition Update Stan Maupin Provider Event: ○ Success: Very successful event last month with over 140 attendees. ○ Acknowledgments: Thanked the committee (Stan, John, Ben), staff (Michelle, Jeffrey from VA Supervisor Gauthiers team), Elks Lodge, Claire Cunningham (HSA). ○ Future: Expected to become an annual event. ● Database: Alex sent out the updated database to all commissioners; more organizations are signing up and information is being verified. ● Feedback: A survey was sent out for feedback on the luncheon; another can be sent if needed.	No additional actions or steps
Veterans Commission Business (Continued)	Subcommittee Updates ● San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission Budget Cuts: ○ Concern: Budget cuts in SF will lead to the loss of two staff members at the Veterans Treatment Court, impacting support for veterans with "other than honorable" discharges (often partnered with Swords to Plowshares). ○ Action Item (Individual): Brandon can provide a sample email for commissioners to send <i>personally</i> (not as commission representatives) to the City of San Francisco to reconsider the impact. ○ Owner: Brandon (to provide email template) interested commissioners. ● Redwood City Veterans Center / Senior Center: ○ Visit: New building recently opened, visited on May 4th. ○ Features: Incredible amenities for seniors, veteran-centric, features NFL historical nods. ○ Potential: Could be considered a potential venue for future events, despite potential parking challenges (due to YMCA construction). ○ Action Item: Consider the Redwood City Veterans Center as a potential future venue.	No additional actions or steps

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Veterans Commission Business (Continued)	Greatest Generation Restoration Presentation (Meredith Larson) ○ Meredith Larson, co-founder of Greatest Generation Restoration, presented preserving WWII Air Force stories and assisting families of missing in action (MIA) veterans. ○ Her personal journey began with a family photo and the discovery of incorrect information regarding a relative's WWII disappearance. ○ Emphasized that families often have limited or incorrect information about MIA relatives and possess valuable artifacts (medals, letters, journals) that can aid in research. ○ A significant portion of WWII records were destroyed in a National Archives fire, but personal family records can help reconstruct history. ○ Online records are often classified for 62 years post-discharge, making recent access challenging for previous generations. ○ Highlighted the emotional healing that occurs when families learn about their service members, especially through monuments and recognition abroad. ○ The group specializes in genealogy to connect families of service members who served together. ○ A monument was recently erected in Poland for Ralph Munoz's crew. ○ Statistics: 81,000 Americans still MIA from past conflicts; 75% in the Pacific; 41,000 presumed lost at sea. DPAA estimates ~50% of cases can be solved. WWII has the highest number of MIA cases. ○ Resources: DPAA (provides free records, DNA kits for MIA family members), Project Recover (scuba diving nonprofit, Marine veteran CEO, documentary "To What Remains"), Pacific Decametric Accounting Group, Heroes Wings, Operation Nightingale.	No additional action or steps
Announcements Adjournment	● Meeting adjourns at 8:00 pm	No additional actions or steps