



ALAMEDA COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

General Meeting Agenda

Monday, September 15, 2025

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Chabot College's Event Center

Address

**25555 Hesperian Blvd
Building 700, Room 722D Hayward CA 94545**

Tentatively Available Via Zoom Video Conference Call, use link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84973202907?pwd=SiaSb3z1MLosq3X0s2vxTHTFC4NabD.1>

For Dial-in Option, use the number below:

1-408-638-0968

Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 849 7320 2907

Passcode: 798737

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84973202907?pwd=SiaSb3z1MLosq3X0s2vxTHTFC4NabD.1>

Public participation at Commission meetings is encouraged. Individual public comments per agenda item shall be no more than two minutes.

10:00 – 10:02

CALL TO ORDER:

- Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum
- Review and Approval of August 2025 General Meeting Minutes

10:02 – 10:03

SALUTE COLORS-IN-PLACE

10:03 – 10:04

RECITE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

10:04 – 10:05

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR POW/MIA & VETERANS LOST BY SUICIDE

10:05 – 10:10

PUBLIC COMMENT

10:20 – 10:30

STAFF UPDATE:

10:30 – 11:00

Speaking Topic:

Veteran Suicide Prevention – LaShelle Burch, VA Health Administration

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

11:00 – 11:05

- Outreach (Owens/Farmer): [5 min]

11:05 – 11:10

- Executive Meeting (Owens) [5 min]

11:10 – 11:15

- PAL Legislation (Phair) [5 min]

11:15 – 11:20

- Veteran Observance Days (Owens/Farmer) [5 min]

11:20 – 11:25

- Veteran Memorial Buildings. (Farmer) [10 min]

11:25 – 11:35

- Nomination Committee [Owens 5 min]

11:35 – 11:40

- Stand Down. (Yohannes/Farmer) [10 min]

11:40 – 11:50

- Membership (Owens) [5 min]

11:50 – 11:55

- New Business / Announcements

11:55

- Adjournment

12 PM



Alameda County
Veterans Affairs Commission
General Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 18, 2025

Alameda County
Social Services Agency
6955 Foothill Blvd – Ste. 300
Oakland, CA 94605
<http://alamedasocialservices.org>

CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting called-to-order at 10:03 am
- Roll Call – Quorum Achieved.

<u>In Attendance:</u> <i>(P=Present, E=Excused, A=Absent, O=Online Attendance)</i>	County Staff Present:
G. Owens (Chair) = P J. Loparo = P O. Farmer (Vice Chair) = P D. Boldt = P R. Forbes = P R. Cole = P F. Jaffin = P D. Reed = P J. McLvain = P S. Yohannes = P K. Warner = A A. Gordillo = P J. Phair = P M. Reed = P S. Dolgin = P D. Williamson = P M. Gilmore = A J. Jones = P N. Harrison = P D. Bitner = P L. Brunner = P	Jonathan Montano-Flores Sonya Frost Rhoda Turner Anthony Simpson = online

AGENDA/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Item	Discussion/Recommendations
Adopt Agenda	Meeting agenda adopted by Commission as read.
Approval of Meeting Minutes	Correction to Previous Minutes: It was noted that in the minutes from the July 21, 2025, meeting Commissioner Bob Cole was incorrectly marked as excused. The record should reflect that Commissioner Cole was present. Correction to Previous Minutes: It was noted that in the minutes from the July 21, 2025, meeting comments regarding the Veteran Observance Days (Owens), the Veterans Memorial Building (LoParo, McLvain, & Williamson), and the Stand Down event (Owens) were incorrectly attributed to Commissioner Phair. Commissioner Phair was absent from that meeting. A motion was made to remove Commissioner Phair's name from presenting on the topics of Veteran Observance Days, the Veteran Memorial Building, and the Stand Down during the July 21st meeting Motion to approve: Commissioner Omar Farmer (M) Commissioner Diane Williamson (S) Motion Passed

	Motion to accept meeting minutes from 7/21/2025: Motion to approve: Commissioner Omar Farmer (M) Commissioner James Phair (S) Motion Passed
Public Comment	None.
County Updates:	Sonya Frost, Division Director for Adult and Aging Services stated the following: ○ There are currently two vacant Veteran Service Representative positions. ○ Sonya provided an update on the Stand-Alone Office. She reported that the project is moving forward, furniture has been delivered, military flags have been ordered, and efforts are currently underway to set up wi-fi and technology infrastructure. Sonya also mentioned that she is scheduled for another walk-through next week." ○ The address of the new building was confirmed as 22225 Foothill Blvd., Hayward, CA.
Topic: Bylaws	The commission reviewed their bylaws, discussing requirements for commissioners, meeting attendance policies, communication protocols, and the nomination process for leadership positions, with plans to update language to clarify their role and requirements.
Sub-Committee Reports	➤ Outreach: ▪ Commissioner Owens announced that there are a couple of events planned in recognition of Patriot Day on September 11th ▪ East Bay Veterans Observance Day event at the Oakland Memorial Building on November 4th from 4 – 6 pm. ➤ Executive: ▪ The Executive Committee was held on July 21st. ▪ Topics discussed during the meeting included Patriot Day, Stand Down, Bylaws, the Veterans Memorial Building, and legislative affairs. ➤ Legislative Report: Commissioner Phair noted that three pieces of legislation currently active in the California Assembly are of interest to the Commission. He specifically mentioned SB 54 and SB 694. ▪ <i>Senate Bill (SB 54)</i> — Removing veteran's disability payments from court fee calculations. ▪ <i>Senate Bill (SB 694)</i> – Deceptive practices: service members and veterans ▪ Commissioner Phair recommended that each Commissioner take personal responsibility to send an email or letter to their respective State Assemblymember and State Senate , encouraging them to support and vote in favor of SB 694.

	➤ Veterans Observance Days: Commissioner Phair highlighted and gave an overview of the following upcoming veteran observance days: ▪ Victory over Japan Day (also known as V-J Day) is on September 2nd. ▪ Patriot Day on September 11th ➤ Veteran Memorial Building: ▪ Commissioner Farmer provided a review of the items discussed during their sub-committee July 11 meeting. ▪ One of the sub-committee's objectives is to obtain a copy of the resolution between the County and the City regarding the transfer of the Oakland Veterans Memorial Building. ▪ Commissioner Brunner summarized the results of her research into the resolution between the County and the City. ▪ The sub-committee is currently preparing talking points to be presented at future City Council meetings. ➤ Veteran Suicide Prevention Forum: ▪ Commissioner Farmer announced that the Suicide Prevention Forum will be held again this year in recognition of Suicide Awareness Month. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, September 3, from 1800 to 1900 hours at the Hayward Veterans Memorial Building. ➤ Stand Down: ▪ The next Stand Down event will be held on September 19 and 20. ▪ It was noted that there are currently 15 to 20 service providers. ▪ The press release is scheduled for release next week. ▪ The event will be promoted in Street Spirit, a publication serving the homeless community. ▪ Commissioner Farmer encouraged everyone to begin thinking creatively about ways to help promote the Stand Down event, noting that the budget has not yet been approved. ➤ Membership: ▪ Chair Owens introduced Daniel Whitner as the newest member of the Commission, representing the Military Officers Association (MOA). ▪ Commissioner Owens reported that Robert Hart submitted his application for the vacant Marine Corps League position on July 18th, resulting in all 22 Commission seats being filled.
ORAL COMMUNICATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS	Anthony Simpson, Veteran Service Officer, commented that it would be appreciated if any Commissioners could attend the hearing on Wednesday regarding SB 694. He noted that the CAVSO is seeking support and encouraging participation in their ongoing advocacy efforts.
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting adjourned at 12:04 pm.



**Alameda County
Veterans Affairs Commission**
General Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 21, 2025

REVISED



6955 Foothill Blvd – Ste. 300
Oakland, CA 94605
<http://alamedasocialservices.org>

CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting called to order at 10:07 am
- Roll Call, Quorum Achieved.

<u>In Attendance:</u> (P=Present, E=Excused, A=Absent, O=Online Attendance)	County Staff Present:
G. Owens (Chair) = P J. Loparo = P O. Farmer (Vice Chair) = A D. Boldt = A R. Forbes = A R. Cole = P F. Jaffin = P D. Reed = P J. McLvain = P S. Yohannes = On-line K. Warner = A A. Gordillo = A J. Phair = A M. Reed = P S. Dolgin = P D. Williamson = P M. Gilmore = P J. Jones = P N. Harrison = P D. Bitner = On-line L. Brunner = P	Jonathan Montero-Flores Anthony Simpson Rhoda Turner Trina Jennings

AGENDA/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Item	Discussion/Recommendations
Adopt Agenda	Meeting agenda adopted by Commission as read.
Approval of Meeting Minutes	Commissioner Comments: Commissioner Reed questioned the wording of the Oral Communications/Announcements section in the minutes, stating that the question posed to Veteran Service Officer Anthony Simpson regarding apportionment was vague and should be more clearly stated in accordance with the Brown Act. Response from Veteran Service Officer Veteran Service Officer Anthony Simpson responded that Commissioner Loparo sought clarification regarding apportionment and the determination of entitlement to it. He went on to explain how an incarcerated veteran can apply for apportionment. He stated that the veteran or their dependents must submit a written request to the VA, including documentation of the incarceration and information about the dependents seeking benefits. Motion to accept meeting minutes from 6/16/2025: Motion to approve: Commissioner Jaffin (M) Commissioner Harrison (S) Motion Passed

Public Comment	None.
Staff Updates:	Anthony Simpson, Veterans Service Officer stated the following: ○ There are currently five Veteran Service Representatives actively serving within the department. Trina Jennings, a Veterans Service Representative, who was in attendance, was introduced. Mr. Simpson acknowledged her ongoing service at the Eastmont and Fremont locations.
Guest Speaker: Jaime Betancur Topic: Guaranteed Income and VA Benefits	Jaime Betancur, Outreach Coordinator, from the Office of Public Affairs VA Palo Alto Health Care System, provided a presentation on Guaranteed income and its relationship and VA benefits.
Sub-Committee Reports	➤ Outreach: ▪ Board of Supervisor's Meeting - Chair Owens informed the commission of an upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting, during which he and Commissioner Farmer will be in attendance. He stated that they will deliver a presentation outlining the commission's initiatives, purpose, and other key objectives. ➤ Executive: • The Executive Committee was held on June 26th. • Attendees included Greg Owens, Omar Farmer, Robert Cole, James Phair, and Sheweeet Yohannes. • An overview of the topics discussed included the Stand Down event, the upcoming Board of Supervisors Meeting, the 2025/2026 fiscal budget, Women Veterans Recognition Day, upcoming speakers, July 4th activities, and legislative affairs. ➤ Legislative Report: Commission Jaffin provided a recap of the key legislative items: • <i>Trailer Budget Bill</i>— The exemption would apply to individuals with an adjusted gross income (AGI) up to \$125,000 or joint filers with an AGI up to \$250,000, effective for tax years beginning January 1, 2025, and continuing through December 31, 2029. • <i>Senate Bill (SB 694)</i> – Outside legal Assistance programs. • <i>Senate Bill (SB 296)</i> — Would provide property tax relief for 100% disabled veteran homeowners, specifically targeting those who are <i>blind in both eyes and have lost two or more limbs</i>, by exempting eligible homeowners from property tax on their principal residence. ➤ Veterans Observance Days: Commissioner Owens highlighted the following upcoming veteran observance days: • <i>July 4 – Independence Day</i> • <i>July 27 – National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day</i> • <i>August 4 – Anniversary of the Founding of the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard Birthday)</i>

	➤ Veteran Memorial Building: • Commissioner McIlVain reported that the County of Alameda has transferred the deed of the Veterans Building to the City of Oakland, which now holds ownership. The city has since renamed the facility the Downtown Oakland Senior Center. • The Commissioners detailed several ongoing issues related to the Oakland Veterans Memorial Building, including difficulties accessing the facility (e.g., challenges being let in), being asked to pay rent for its use, and closed on Fridays. • Commissioner Williamson stated that, as it currently stands, meetings at the Downtown Oakland building are held every third Friday. She further noted her intention to attend next month's meeting in order to represent the interests of veterans. • The Commissioners held a discussion regarding the Article, relevant state laws, and property records pertaining to the Veterans Memorial Buildings. • It was mentioned that Commissioner Farmer had previously expressed interest in establishing building commissions in each Veterans Memorial Building. ➤ Stand Down: • Commissioner Owens reported that the recent Stand Down event was a success, noting strong participation and community engagement. • It was noted that, among all branches represented the U.S. Army had the highest number of attendees, followed by the U.S. Navy. • Commissioner Owens explained that among the services offered, the most requested service was legal assistance. • It was announced that the next Stand Down event will be held on September 19 and 20. ➤ Membership: • Chair Owens mentioned that the Commission has 21 filled positions out of the 22 available seats.
ORAL COMMUNICATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS	Commissioner Don Reed reported that during their last Marine Corps meeting, an individual named Robert Hart expressed interest in joining the Commission.
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting adjourned at 12:04 pm.