



Alameda County
Veterans Affairs Commission
General Meeting Minutes
 Tuesday, February 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 10:02 am
- Roll Call, Quorum Achieved.

In Attendance: (P=Present, E=Excused, A=Absent, O=Online Attendance)	County Staff Present:
O. Farmer (Vice Chair) = P R. Forbes = P S. Dolgin = P M. Gilmore = P N. Harrison = P F. Jaffin = A L. Brunner = P I. LoParo = A D. Boldt = A R. Cole = P G. Owens (Chair) = P J. Phair = online K. Warner = P D. Williamson = P J. McLvain = P S. Yohannes = A A. Gordillo = P	Jonathan Montero-Flores Diarra Piggue Rhoda Turner

AGENDA/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Item	Discussion/Recommendations
Adopt Agenda	Meeting agenda adopted by Commission as read.
Approval of Meeting Minutes	Motion to accept meeting minutes from 1/21/2025: Motion to approve: Commissioner Jaffin (M) Commissioner McLvain (S) Motion Passed
Public Comment	None
Staff Updates:	No updates reported
Guest Speaker: Mr. Phong La, ALCO Assessor	Mr. Phong La shared his personal story of escaping from Vietnam and his journey to becoming the Assessor. He emphasized his commitment to helping veterans understand their property tax exemptions. Michael Gabriel, Debbie Cabo, and Nan Tran, from the Assessor’s office also participated in the meeting and they discussed the disabled veterans' property tax exemption and answered questions. A presentation on Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption was shown. <i>Comment: Commissioner James Phair mentioned that there is also a \$4,000 exemption for veterans. It has the same restriction as the disabled veterans that you can't claim the homeowners and \$4,000 exemption. Currently ACA 5 (Assembly Constitution Amendment) is in</i>

	<p><i>the legislature and if it's signed it will allow veterans to claim both exemptions.</i></p>
<p>Sub-Committee Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stand Down: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first stand down event is planned for June 27-28, which coincides with PTSD Awareness Month. • The second stand-down will be on September 19-20, coinciding with POW/MIA Day. • They are working to increase attendance and outreach for these events. ➤ Outreach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner Gilmore shared information about an upcoming movie screening about veterans' experiences, "Brothers after War" that will be at the Regal cinemas on February 28th. • The committee is also working on creating an exhibit at the African American Museum Library in Oakland to honor local veterans. • Plans were discussed for a tour of Santa Rita Jail's veteran pod. • Commissioner Farmer mentioned other upcoming events like Give Veterans a Smile Day and a Memorial event. ➤ National Vietnam War Veterans Day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commission is planning to organize a National Vietnam Veterans Day event on March 29th, with Vietnam veteran members taking the lead. ➤ Executive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting was held on 2/10/25 and topics covered included the 2024 year in review and AB 2449, which limits the duration of teleconference participation by members. • The next meeting will be held at the Pleasanton Veteran Memorial Bldg. ➤ Veteran Memorial Buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group discussed strategies for regaining control of veterans' memorial buildings. • The discussion highlighted the complexities and variations in how different cities and counties manage these buildings. • suggested researching historical records and getting the building registered as a historic site to protect it. ➤ Flag Day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The upcoming Flag Day event on June 14th was discussed, which coincides with the Army's birthday. • Replacing worn-out flags at various buildings with recycled flags. • Commissioners Jack McIlvain and Omar Farmer were identified as the initial members of the subcommittee for this task.

ORAL COMMUNICATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ LaShawn from College of Alameda, volunteered to give a tour of the Veterans Service Center at the College of Alameda (where the meeting took place).▪ Diarra Piggue, Outreach Specialist mentioned that the budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year went up before the Board of Supervisors – VAC budget \$15,500.▪ Diarra Piggue also asked for the names of the commissioners who were still in need of a name plate/tag.
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting adjourned at 11:54 pm.