



Alameda County
Veterans Affairs Commission
General Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 21, 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 10:07 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) = A D. Boldt = A R. Forbes = A R. Cole = E F. Jaffin = P D. Reed = P J. McIlvain = 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 Shewee 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 Phair 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 Phair mentioned that the City of Oakland holds ownership of the Veterans Building and has since renamed it 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. ➤ Membership: • Chair Owens mentioned that the Commission has 21 filled positions out of the 22 available seats. ➤ Stand Down: • Commissioner Phair 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 Phair 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.