



Alameda County
Veterans Affairs Commission
General Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 17, 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.

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

AGENDA/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Item	Discussion/Recommendations
Adopt Agenda	Meeting agenda adopted by Commission as read.
Approval of Meeting Minutes	<div>Motion to accept meeting minutes from 2/18/2025:</div> <div>Motion to approve: Commissioner Reed (M) Commissioner Harrison (S)</div> <div>Motion Passed</div>
Public Comment	<div>Jeff Stock, from Hired Labs commented that their next Cohort will be on April 15th.</div> <div>Jason Kuroiwa, from the Northern California Coast Guard Retiree Council mentioned that they are having an All Services Retiree Seminar on April 25th at 8'oclock in Alameda.</div>
Staff Updates:	<div>Anthony Simpson, Veterans Service Officer stated the following:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mario Castillo, Veterans Service Representative, has completed the first part of his certification.○ Bruce Choy, Retired Annuitant I, retired officially.○ Move in date for the New Stand-Alone office in Hayward is still unknown.○ The commission budget was approved.</div>

<p>Guest Speaker: William Danko, Commander District 10, American Legion</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Melissa Hernandez, former Mayor of Dublin & Liaison for Healthcare & Social Services</p>	<p>William Danko, Commander District 10, explained what they do at American Legion. He also mentioned some of the programs/activities they provide such as Bingo, Wreath Across America, scholarship programs, and Boy/Girl State (where they send kids from high school who are interested in politics to Sacramento for a week).</p> <p>Melissa Hernandez spoke on how Dublin plays their part to assist the veterans. They hold an annual luncheon every November for veterans, and they hold annual stand downs. They are hoping to have their Livermore satellite office ready by the end of the year.</p>
<p>Sub-Committee Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Membership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new members were announced, married couple Don and Madeleine Reed. • Josh was introduced, who is contemplating on joining the Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans of America. • Currently there are 19 seats filled and 3 vacant seats available – Marine Corp. League, Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans of America and Military Officers Association of America. ➤ Stand Down: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft flyer for the Stand Down was shown. • The Veteran Treatment Court (VTC) will attend the stand down. • St. Vincent De Paul is working on getting their own tables and chairs that can be used. • Waiting to hear back regarding the music. • Working on getting in contact with the person who oversees the parking tickets for the City of Oakland to have hearings at the stand down. • Reached out to Street Spirit, who published our stand down in their newspaper last year. ➤ Outreach and VAC Logo: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a Bench Program. Honor a family member, friend, veteran, or organization by adopting a new or existing six foot bench in one of Dublin's many parks. • There is no official logo. • Commissioner Yohannes volunteered to create sample logos. • Brothers After War held for a third week in Dublin. It's a limited release movie held at Regal Cinema. • Swords to Plowshares – Volunteers wanted. <p>St. Patrick's Day dinner fundraiser held by American Legion Post 837 tomorrow at 1800 hrs. (6 pm) in Fremont.</p> ➤ National Vietnam War Veterans Day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceremony will be held on Saturday March 29th on the USS Hornet at 11:30 am. • Darren Walton, author and a U.S. Marine recon, in the Vietnam War, will be the guest speaker.

- Free to all veterans.

➤ **Women Veterans Recognition Day:**

- Proposed date Thursday, June 12th from 7 – 8:30 pm.
- The location is the Alameda Naval Air Museum, where it was held last year.
- Working on getting female speakers for the event.
- Volunteers needed to man stations.

➤ **Executive:**

- The Executive meeting was held last week on March 10th.
- Commissioners Gilmore and Forbes were thanked for their service on the committee.
- Some of the items discussed were the March agenda, potential VAC logos, location of April's meeting (Cal State East Bay), Women Veterans Day, potential PAL Legislation.

➤ **Flag Day:**

- Early stages of trying to go around local cities to identify public and some private buildings with worn or tattered flags.
- There were some spare flags that were dropped off.
- There will be a letter that will be addressed to city managers notifying them of where they are going to go and get them to participate in either providing a flag or informing them they need a flag.

➤ **PAL Legislation**

- SB 623 (Archuleta) Property taxation: homeowners' veterans' and disabled veterans' exemption.
- SB 56 (Seyarto) Property taxation: Disabled veterans' exemption: household income.
- AB 53 (Ramos) Personal income taxes: exclusion: and Governor's Proposed Military Retirement Pay Tax Exemption.
- SB 1 (Seyarto) Personal income taxes: exclusion: Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act.
- SB 54 (Umberg) Court fee waivers: veterans.
- SB 798 (Rubio) Veterans financial assistance
- On the National level "The Guard Act" Predatory claim processes.
- Proposals that are gaining momentum are the Means-Testing Policy - The Means Test (MT) for veterans determines their copayment responsibilities, enrollment priority group assignment, and entitlement to beneficiary travel benefits. The Richard Star Act – Providing full retirement and disability benefits.
- Go to DAV.org to sign up for the Commanders Action Network. Directly linked based on your zip code to your representative locally and nationally.

ORAL COMMUNICATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS	Commissioner Owens announced to his fellow commissioners if they need a name plate or business card to see Diarra Piggue, Specialist Clerk.
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting adjourned at 11:58 pm.