

COMMISSION ON VETERAN AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES



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**REGULAR MEETING
May 15, 2019**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on May 15, 2019 at One Texas Center located on 505 Barton Springs Rd 13th Floor, Austin Texas 78704

Chair Jason Denny called the Board Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jason Denny - Chair
Pete Salazar- Vice Chair
Alfred Bigham

Elisabeth Collura - Rosenberg
Chris Ehlinger
Manuel Jimenez

Staff in Attendance: Allen Bergeron, Karen Haywood

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Chair Denny asked the Commission members to review the minutes from the regular meeting on January 16, 2019. Vice Chair Pete Salazar made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Commissioner Chris Ehlinger seconded the motion. Motion passed with no objection.

2. BUSINESS

- Commissioner Jimenez and Pete Valdez with the COA-Community Court Department updated the Commission on the status of the Community/Municipal Veterans Court and bring draft of resolution to include veterans in municipal court to change ordinance and work with Council Person Renteria.
- Annual report to be deferred to next meeting
- Work groups: Suicide in Veterans, housing and mental health, veteran families, women veterans, housing, employment, municipal court, Veterans Park.
- Two new commissioners
 - Liz Collura– Army veteran and National Guard as an Aviator, OCS instructor.
 - Al Bigham – 18 year USAF veteran, Austinite, Air weapons controller.
- Motion by Pete and seconded by Liz – discussion on next agenda to talk about suicide prevention as a workgroup and priority.
- Caritas - Serving 113 veteran households through SSVF and eligibilities apply and income under 30%.
- City of Austin partnership with TVC and TWC regarding an employment and benefits fair. Commissioner Ehlinger updated the commission on the initial fair to connect veterans to service organizations and bridge the gap once the Veterans Resource Center

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is developed. This even will take place on May 29, Mexican Arts Cultural Center as another component of outreach.

- Budget process presentation from City of Austin – 9 month framework, goes by fiscal year and informed the commission on the House and Senate budget bill for the State.
- Presentation by YMCA, offers free services to women veterans and their families and can extend to their spouse through funding through TVC. Group of female veterans meet for lunch every Wednesday and participation is encouraged. They offer peer group services next month, free EMDR services and looking for LGBT veterans to assist and provide services.
- Motion from Vice Chair Pete Salazar to provide a recommendation to council to waive all City facility fees in support of AVAFEST. Motion was passed with no objections.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

4. STAFF UPDATES

- Council passed resolution in 2017 to look at a needs assessment. Presented in October 2018 to council and shop the market and push out bids that was released December 2018. Posted a survey and host stakeholder meetings (June 11th, June 13th) and survey will be tabulated. Will present recommendations to CMO and Council.
- Carry the load – May 22nd
- Memorial Day Ceremony on May 23rd at the beginning of Council Meeting at 10AM honoring Jonathan Dunbar.

5. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- Emily Stone, Integral Care – Oversees Veterans Services, Clinic Director of treatment center for those with bi-polar disorder.
- Glenn Towery, Veterans Suicide Channel and AVAFEST – Use art to heal veterans who are suffering PTSD and getting suicide mediation. Fighting for scope and scale of the festival that will be one month and turned to art for treatment of PTSD. Requests commission to provide a recommendation to Council for a request waivers of \$14,000 for each theater.

ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM. Without objection