



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Commission on Veterans Affairs

Recommendation Number: (20220805-08): Creation for a Office of Veteran Affairs

WHEREAS, the City of Austin seeks to be a national leader and community model in bridging the military-civilian divide by intentionally reintegrating those who have served as well as their families into our communities with purpose;

WHEREAS, the Council passed Ordinance No. 20130214-043, creating the Commission on Veterans Affairs to serve as an advisory board to the city council concerning the wellbeing of military veterans in the Austin area; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Veterans Affairs has found that Veteran employment, housing, education, training, family counseling, PTSD/mental health, healthcare, and VA benefits counseling are dispersed throughout Austin placing access to vital services out of reach for many with limited economic and transportation resources; and

WHEREAS, City Council has previously recognized the great need for veteran support services, passing Resolution No. 20170622-035 directing the City Manager to draft a business plan to establish a Veterans Resource Center; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Veterans Affairs passed Recommendation No. 20200115-B003 encouraging City Council to create a Department of Veterans and Military Affairs. The Commission's intent is to consolidate all veterans and military-related matters "internal" and "external" under one office. Currently, Veteran's initiatives and programs are dispersed within the City of Austin. The office would serve to engage the Veteran's community by attending local VFW, American Legion, and Disabled Veterans of America post meetings. The Veteran's office must work in partnership with the Travis County Veteran Service office.

WHEREAS, City Council has previously recognized the need to provide veterans services, passing Resolution No. 20211209-057 directing the City Manager to explore the establishment of a Veterans and Military Affairs Office. The City Manager's report findings identified the need to create an additional Program Manager II position at an annual cost of \$127,000 a year. The City of Austin has a funded vacant Veterans Program manager position under the Civil Right Office and a funded Veterans Consultant position under the Human Resources Department.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission on Veteran Affairs recommends the creation of a Veterans and Military Affairs office. It is recommended that the Program manager II position identified in the report to establish a Veterans and Military Office by the City managers, the current vacant Veterans Program Administrator position under the Office of Civil Rights, and the Veteran Services Consultant under the Human Resource Department all be placed under a newly formed Veterans and Military Affairs office. This office must report directly to the City Manager. The City Manager shall work with the Commission of Veteran Affairs to receive input and provide updates on the process of creating the new office. The City manager shall include the Director of the Travis County Veterans Service and the Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars in the hiring process along with two Veteran Affairs commissioners. The head of the new office should have a minimum of ten years of experience serving in the active-duty armed forces, and the staff should have experience serving in the armed force. The newly formed office would acts as the Commission on Veteran Affairs liaison.

Date of Approval: 8/5/2022

Record of the vote: 6-0

Attest: _____



Christopher 'Cam' Wilson