



VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

222 W. Hospitality Ln., 3rd Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0470

Minutes of the Meeting March 24, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE –Members: Matt Knox (Board Liaison), Demarius Carmichael (Deputy Director, San Bernardino County VA) Ralph Figueroa, Jim Frost, Jimmy Lona, Paul Marsh, Terry Porter, Michael Rector, and recording Secretary Johnna Yuhas were present. James Willingham was absent. Guests: Jeff Allen. Frank Forbes, and Clint Miller.

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – Minutes from the meeting held on January 27, 2025, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE – Matt Knox welcomed the new committee members.

- The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) conference was in February, and Matt attended. This conference provided the opportunity to engage with legislative offices to advocate for legislation supported by the association. SB23 would provide full property tax exemption for veterans with a 100% disability rating, and their surviving spouses (if the veteran passes from a service-connected injury). It is currently with the Veteran Committee. In January's budget proposal a request for a \$3 million increase to subvention funding was submitted. Statewide, counties currently receive a percentage of the subvention funding based on workload units. This proposal would increase that amount from \$11 million in total to \$14 million to be shared. Unfortunately, since the natural disasters additional funding may not be available.
- The department was invited to participate in the County Multi-Disciplinary Training (MDT). The county is taking a strong stance on homelessness and working to identify which departments are currently serving the homeless population and how. The county Veterans Affairs department is not a homeless service provider but may be serving homeless veterans. The data sharing between departments will show what services are available where and how they can be provided more efficiently. This will also allow for an opportunity to provide more services.
- The department began offering services at the Barstow Department of Aging and Adult Services in February. In person services will be available from 9 am – 2 pm on the third Thursday of each month.
- The Department has attended the following events:
 - March 19 – Needles Resource Fair
 - March 21 – Matt spoke at the Military Officers Association of America dinner in Redlands regarding the services the department provides.
- The Department will be attending these upcoming events:
 - March 28 – Benefits presentation at Ft. Irwin
 - April 12 – Veterans Community Resource Fair
 - April 24 – Take Your Child to Work Day (County Employee Event)
 - May 17 – Working Dogs for Warriors event in Fontana

FROM THE MEMBERS

Vote to appoint Jeff Allen and James Willingham as At-Large members – A motion is made and seconded to appoint Jeff Allen (former 3rd District appointed member) and James Willingham (former 4th District appointed member) to At Large positions. The motion is passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Jim Frost– The Chair position is open and would like to have voting for a new chair and vice chair. He recommends the positions be held by appointed members rather than at large, however there is no rule in the by-laws that restrict it to appointed members only. An email will be sent requesting nominations/interest in the positions and voting will be held at the next Committee meeting. Additional nominations can also be accepted formally at the

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next meeting. Voting for these positions will be added to the next agenda. Jim also suggests possibly having an annual face to face meeting that could be held at a different location within the county, such as an American Legion. However, that would be up to the possible new committee leadership to decide.

Michael Rector – Recently referred one veteran to a grant program and was able to get them housed quickly

Paul Marsh – Nothing to report.

Terry Porter – Nothing to report.

Jimmy Lona – jimmy shares some upcoming events in the local area. March 25th there will be a lunch and learn at Bear Valley Community Hospital with the American Legion. This meeting will also have a representative from Representative Obernolte's office in attendance. On March 30th Operation Dirt Bike Freedom – Ride or Shoot will be held in the high desert. July 9-11 American Patriot Music Project will be teaching veterans how to build an electric guitar from scratch at the Elks Lodge. Rim Vets will be hosting a family fishing outing in Lake Arrowhead. Big Bear will be hosting a monthly Hug a Horse event.

Ralph Figueroa – Ralph is newly appointed to represent the fifth district. He is a Grad Student at Cal State San Bernardino and works with the Veterans Success Center/Veterans Resource Center to assist with vocational placement. Ralph was named Student Veteran of the Year in January by the Student Veterans of America organization, which he is actively involved with. Part of his work is looking at the younger veterans and getting them aligned with and aware of all resources. Ralph shares some upcoming events. On March 28th DAV will be partnering with Representative Pete Aguilar's office for a Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran Pinning ceremony from 11 am – 1:30 pm. March 29 from 11 am – 3 pm at the Veterans Hall in La Verne there will be a VFW day of service event. On April 11, Cal State San Bernardino is holding their veteran graduation ceremony with Supervisor Joe Baca in attendance. At the end of April there will be a Spring Salute Family event. There is a Military Appreciation dinner on April 17 at the National Orange Show. On May 26, the City of Rialto will be hosting a Memorial Day Tribute at the Rialto Park Cemetery. Eyes of Freedom is a traveling memorial and will be visiting CSUSB. After the visit a group is being organized to escort the memorial to the county line as it makes its way to Orange County.

FROM THE FLOOR

Clint Miller – Mr. Miller will be the 4th District appointed member effective March 25, 2025. Clint works in Work Force Development in Ontario and assists veterans in finding work. He is a lifetime member of the VFW and is part of the VFW in Rancho Cucamonga.

Jeff Allen – Mr. Allen encourages everyone to engage with their elected officials regarding the property tax exemption bill and the budget request.

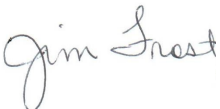
DATE/TIME/LOCATION OF NEXT MEETINGS

Monday, May 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Veterans Affairs conference room, and via Zoom.

Monday, July 28, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Veterans Affairs conference room and via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT - Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim Frost
Vice-Chair