



VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

Minutes of the Meeting

July 28, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

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

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 May 19, 2025, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE – San Bernardino County Veterans Affairs Director, Matt Knox, provides an update.

- The state budget was approved for 2025-2026 budget year with no significant impact on CalVet's budget, which means there was no impact on the Department's budget. Unfortunately, there was no increase in funding for subvention, but there was also no decrease.
- Legislative Updates: AB53 by Assemblymember Ramos did make it out of the state assembly and has moved to the state senate where it was referred to the senate revenue and taxation committee. SB296 by Senator Archuleta has made it out of the senate and is at the assembly but has been placed on suspense. SB694 by Senator Archuleta is supported by CACVSO, and the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. It has been approved by the state senate and has been approved by the state assembly veterans affairs committee, the assembly judiciary committee and has been referred to the appropriations committee.
- The Department is working with the Sheriff's department to establish a regular meeting schedule for incarcerated veterans who are requesting assistance from the department. The goal is to create a rotating set schedule that would provide services for veterans at the detention centers in the most efficient way possible with the least impact on department staffing.
- Interviews have been completed for the last open Veterans Service Officer (VSO) position and the offer should be extended within a day or two. Filling this position will mean the department is fully staffed with VSOs.

Demarius (Deputy Director) provides further updates:

- The department has been participating in Shelter Court, which is a monthly hosted by the probation department and superior court providing services to assist with removing barriers to find work, housing, or other county services. The department is now a permanent attendee. The next Shelter Court is July 30, 2025, in San Bernardino at a local church, and there will also be one on August 21, 2025, at the Gonzales Center in Colton.
- The department has been attending COC Steering Committee meetings and will be providing presentations to let the community organizations know what our department does and the services that we provide.
- Semper-Fi & America's Fund were awarded federal money to support veterans with housing insecurity. They assist veterans with becoming current with rent and/or utilities. The department has referred 4 veterans so far. Veterans cannot self-refer and must meet the program requirements to be eligible. If any committee members know of veterans in need of these services, please refer them to Demarius for assistance.
- The Homeless Veteran Community Planning Group HVCPG meets every Tuesday to track homeless veterans. If a community partner or county department encounters a homeless veteran, their name is added onto a list that is shared with the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) to be partnered with organizations/departments that can provide resources. The department is working to establish itself as a touchpoint for these veterans.
- The head of OHS is planning to install Kiosks within the county to connect community members with county services. The department is looking at how these kiosks can be used to connect with veterans in the community.

Since the last meeting the department has attended the following events:

- May 21– Probation Shelter Court in Fontana
- May 28 – Supervisor Hagman's Hiring Fair and Expungement event in Ontario

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- June 7 – Arrowhead United Way Brave Standdown in San Bernardino
- June 25 – Veterans Treatment Court Hearing at the Rancho Cucamonga courthouse
- June 29 – Working dogs for Warriors in Fontana
- July 12 – Assemblymember Rodriguez's Resource Fair in Chino

The department will be attending these upcoming events:

- July 30 – Shelter Court in San Bernardino
- July 31 – Barstow State of the City/County event
- August 28 – Big Bear Job and Resource Fair

FROM THE MEMBERS

Jim Frost– Participated in Run for the Wall and had the opportunity to place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown.

Clint Miller – On May 21, Supervisor Hagman had an open house at his office that was well attended. The event was very well attended and may become an annual event. On May 28, the job fair at Ontario Airport had about 40 organizations participate. It was attended by 567 job seekers with approximately 20 veterans that formally checked in. The county will be hosting a job fair on August 28, 2025, at the Ontario Convention Center and will be the largest job fair of the year in the inland empire.

Jim Lona – Attended the Department of Insurance Partner Introduction webinar to ensure access to important insurance education and consumer protections and support programs. The webinars are held the last Friday of each month with two more coming up. Met with the American Legion Auxiliary in Yucaipa to and encouraged them to attend city council meetings. Proceeded over a celebration of life for an army vet who served in operation Iraqi Freedom. Currently assisting an Army vet navigate the community care process in Big Bear. Big Bear Valley Hospital has also designed a card to show veterans the steps to get into the community care program. On August 19, the hospital will hold another lunch and learn with local & state government officials invited to attend. The American Patriot Music Project had its fourth guitar build and was the largest three-day event so far with 20 vets. Provided the opening invocation for the city council meeting and updated them on veteran community activities. The Big Bear Memorial Day service had over 300 attendees. Supervisor Rowe will be grand marshal for Running Springs' Mountain Top Days parade on Friday and will be riding with a 95-year-old Korean War veteran in his 1932 Ford Roadster.

Ralph Figueroa – Attended the Brave event. The community involvement was high, but there were not as many homeless veterans in attendance as expected. The Memorial Day event for the City of Rialto went well and was well attended. Still working at Cal State San Bernardino (CSUSB) in the Veterans Success center while preparing to transition into a new role. The Veterans Success Center at CSUSB is one of the best in the country. This year has had an uptick in veterans who are registering directly out of service. Typically, the higher number of veterans comes from transfers. The veteran students are getting more involved and are encouraged to join veteran community groups such as American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars. Continues to work with Student Veterans of America, and was recently sent to Milwaukee, Wisconsin for an event where \$1 million was donated, in partnership with Harley Davidson and Hanx for your Service coffee, to VFW, American Legion, and Wounded Warrior Project. Next Tuesday from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Supervisor Joe Baca Jr. will be hosting National Night Out at Ayala Park in Rialto. A Veteran Monument will be unveiled at 7 p.m. Disabled American Veteran is planning their annual Thanksgiving turkey giveaway. This year it will be a full resource event, and more information will be shared as it becomes available. May be at the orange show, still working on planning. Will share as soon as more info available. Will be full on event not just a giveaway, with a 5k run/walk and resource fair.

Paul Marsh – Nothing to report.

Jeff Allen – Nothing to report

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FROM THE FLOOR

Frank Forbes – Supervisor Rowe thanks everyone for the great job they're doing. Keep up the good work.

DATE/TIME/LOCATION OF NEXT MEETINGS

Monday, January 26, 2026, at 3 p.m. in the Veterans Affairs conference room, and via Zoom.

Monday, March 23, 2026, at 3 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Figueroa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ralph Figueroa
Chair