



## ALAMEDA COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

### General Meeting Agenda

Monday, July 21, 2025

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

#### In-Person Attendance:

Eastmont Town Center - Maxwell Park Room 6955

Foothill Blvd., 1st Floor, Oakland, CA 94605

**Tentatively Available Via Zoom Video Conference Call, use link below:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84973202907?pwd=SiaSb3z1MLosq3X0s2vxTHTFC4NabD.1>

#### For Dial-in Option, use the number below:

1-408-638-0968

Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 849 7320 2907

Passcode: 798737

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84973202907?pwd=SiaSb3z1MLosq3X0s2vxTHTFC4NabD.1>

*Public participation at Commission meetings is encouraged. Individual public comments per agenda item shall be no more than two minutes.*

10:00 – 10:02

#### **CALL TO ORDER:**

- Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum
- Review and Approval of June 2025 General Meeting Minutes

10:02 – 10:03

#### **SALUTE COLORS-IN-PLACE**

10:03 – 10:04

#### **RECITE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

10:04 – 10:05

#### **MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR POW/MIA & VETERANS LOST BY SUICIDE**

10:05 – 10:10

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

10:20 – 10:30

#### **STAFF UPDATE:**

#### **Guest Speaker/s:**

10:30 – 11:00

Jaime Betancur, MSW, Outreach Coordinator, Office of Public Affairs  
VA Palo Alto Health Care System

#### **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

11:00 – 11:15

- Outreach (Owens/Farmer): BoS Meeting [15 min]

11:15 – 11:25

- Executive (Owens) [10 min]

11:25 – 11:35

- Veteran Observance Days (Williamson/Farmer) [10 min]

11:35 – 11:40

- Veteran Memorial Buildings. (Brunner/Farmer) [5 min]

11:40 – 11:45

- Alameda Point (Farmer) [5 min]

11:45 – 11:50

- Stand Down. (Farmer) [5 min]

11:50 – 11:55

11:55  
12 PM

**NEW BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS. [5 min]**  
**ADJOURNMENT**

## THE COMMISSIONS' PURPOSE

[Article 3 §§ 1 and 2] [CA admin code § 2.92.040 - Duties]

The commission **SHALL ADVISE & ASSIST the BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** on matters relating to veterans & their families as may pertain to meeting their basic needs for **veterans' benefits, housing, food, shelter, & employment:**

1. Assist in all **VETERANS' OBSERVANCE DAYS** during the year;  
[***SUGGESTED** - <sup>1</sup>Armed Forces Day (3rd Saturday **May**), <sup>2</sup>Memorial Day (Last Monday **May**), <sup>3</sup>Patriot Day (Annually **September** 11), <sup>4</sup>Veterans Day (11th **November** Annually).]*
2. Promote, develop, & identify the needs of the veterans and their families.
3. Submit recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding programs, plans, goals, policy, & procedures dealing with veteran services.
4. Review annually the status of veterans' benefits.
5. Study, investigate & research veterans' matters in Alameda County so that services to veterans can be coordinated and maximized.

The Commission's purpose & objectives to **ADVISE & ASSIST the Board of Supervisors** are accomplished through:

- Attending and speaking at civic/community activities.
- Membership in Veterans' Organizations.
- Individual contacts within the Community.
- Membership in Civic Organizations.
- Membership in Honor and Color Guard Units.
- Personal Commitment.
- Participation in Eastbay Stand-Downs.
- Lobbying (Any attempt by individuals or private interest groups to influence the decisions of a politician or public official on an issue), etc.

[Reference: Outlined in the 5/24/2021, 7/22/2019, 11/26/2018, and 9/26/2016 Annual Veterans Affairs Commission Report to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors]



**Alameda County**  
**Veterans Affairs Commission**  
**General Meeting Minutes**  
Monday, June 16, 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 10:07 am
- Roll Call, Quorum Achieved.

| <b><u>In Attendance:</u></b> <i>(P=Present, E=Excused, A=Absent, O=Online Attendance)</i>  | <b>County Staff Present:</b>                               |
|--|--|
| G. Owens (Chair) = P<br>O. Farmer (Vice-Chair) = P<br>R. Forbes = P<br>F. Jaffin = P<br>J. McIlvain = P<br>K. Warner = P<br>J. Phair = P<br>S. Dolgin = P<br>M. Gilmore = P<br>N. Harrison = P<br>L. Brunner = P<br>J. Loparo = P<br>D. Boldt = P<br>R. Cole = E<br>D. Reed = P<br>S. Yohannes = P<br>A. Gordillo = P<br>M. Reed = P<br>D. Williamson = P<br>J. Jones = A<br>D. Bitner = A | Jonathan Montero-Flores<br>Anthony Simpson<br>Rhoda Turner |

**AGENDA/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

| <b>Item</b>                        | <b>Discussion/Recommendations</b>   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Adopt Agenda</b>                | Meeting agenda adopted by Commission as read.   |
| <b>Approval of Meeting Minutes</b> | Motion to accept meeting minutes from 5/19/2025:<br><br><b>Motion to approve:</b> Commissioner Boldt <b>(M)</b><br>Commissioner Gordillo <b>(S)</b><br><br><b>Motion Passed</b>   |
| <b>Public Comment</b>              | John Reiscenweber from the PGA HOPE Foundation expressed his gratitude to Commissioner Joseph LoParo for his generous donation of golf clubs to the organization.   |
| <b>Staff Updates:</b>              | Anthony Simpson, Veterans Service Officer, discussed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ He reported a decrease in staffing due to the recent resignation of a Veteran Service Representative. As a result, there are currently five active Veteran Service Representatives serving the entire county.</li><li>▪ There was no new update on the VSO Office at this time.</li></ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Guest Speaker: Terry Moran</b><br/> <b>Topic:</b> VETBoats Presentation</p> | <p>Terry Moran (VetsBoats) was unable to attend the meeting.</p>   |
| <p><b>Sub-Committee Reports</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Membership:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chair Owens welcomed two newly appointed Commissioners to the ACVAC Commission: Josh Jones representing Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), and David Bitner representing the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). Even though, both new Commissioners were absent from the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Chair Owens also noted that their appointments bring the Commission to 21 filled positions out of the 22 available seats.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Legislative Report:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commissioner Warner provided an update on several bills included in the Legislative Advocate Report, including AB 53, AB 81, SB 56, SB 296, and SB 54. He summarized the current status of each bill and highlighted key implications relevant to the commission's interests.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Outreach, VAC Logo, Santa Rita Jail Visit:</b> <p>The following outreach opportunities were mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>VA Clinic</b> – Protest opportunity in Oakland, Thursdays 12 – 1 pm at 2221 MLK Jr. Way.</li> <li>▪ <b>Santa Rita Jail Tour</b> - Vice-Chair Farmer shared a summary of their recent visit to the Santa Rita Jail Veteran's Pod, highlighting key observations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vice-Chair Farmer suggested that the Commission plan an event in honor of the 176 veterans employed by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, preferably to be held in November.</li> <li>○ Veterans Service Officer, Anthony Simpson, shared his impressions of the tour of the Veterans Pod and expressed support for the program. He also stated that his goal is to conduct a couple of seminars for Santa Rita Jail employees to inform them about their veterans' benefits.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Fortitude Recovery</b> - A sanctuary for the treatment of veterans.</li> <li>▪ <b>Swords to Plowshares Mentorship Program:</b> A continuing initiative offering peer mentorship and transitional support for veterans reintegrating into civilian life.</li> <li>▪ <b>The National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD):</b> Campaign which promotes evidence-based treatments for veterans with posttraumatic stress disorders and encourages them to seek help.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Executive:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Executive Committee was held on June 3rd.</li> <li>▪ Attendees included Commissioners: Greg Owens, Robert Cole, James Phair, and Shewee Yohannes.</li> <li>▪ The committee discussed the following items: the budget for Fiscal Years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026, Women Veterans Recognition Day, and the upcoming Stand Down event.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Veterans Observance Days:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Veterans Observance Days were displayed on the screen for all attendees to view.</li> <li>▪ Members from the American Legion and POW were asked if they had any upcoming events they would like to have acknowledged. They were advised to notify Commissioner Owen with the details/flyer.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>➤ <b>Women Veterans Recognition Day:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commissioner Williamson provided an overview of the event, noting it was a wonderful experience. She shared that attendance exceeded last year's numbers, the keynote speaker was excellent, and highlights included the Quilt of Valor presentation, an art show, strong camaraderie among attendees, and good food. She expressed enthusiasm for next year's event.</li> <li>▪ Commissioners Yohannes and Brunner also shared their impressions of the event, expressing positive feedback.</li> <li>▪ Vice-Chair Farmer and Chair Owens expressed their gratitude to Commissioners Williamson, Yohannes, and Brunner for the excellent work they did in organizing and executing the Women Veterans Day event.</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>Veteran Memorial Building:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It was noted that a meeting was held a few weeks ago, and another meeting is scheduled to take place this Friday (6/20) via Zoom.</li> <li>▪ The committee will aim to provide a more in-depth update at the next meeting.</li> <li>▪ Vice Chair Farmer stated that the Memorial Building Committee may include up to nine commissioners. Currently serving on the committee are Commissioners: Farmer, Brunner, McIlvain, LoParo, and Williamson. Commissioners Harrison and D. Reed will also be added to the committee.</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>Stand Down:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A presentation on the Stand Down event was shown as Vice-Chair Farmer provided an accompanying explanation.</li> <li>▪ The County Assessor's Office printed thousands of flyers for the event, which were provided for distribution.</li> <li>▪ Vice-Chair Farmer requested volunteers from the Commission to assist on the day of the Stand Down event by helping to show attendees around the venue. He also asked that volunteers arrive at the event by 8:30 am.</li> </ul> |
| <b>ORAL COMMUNICATION/<br/>ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> | Commissioner LoParo asked Veteran Service Officer Anthony Simpson a question regarding Apportionment. Mr. Simpson provided a response.   |
| <b>ADJOURNMENT</b>                           | Meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.   |