



Alameda County
Veterans Affairs Commission
General Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 16, 2025



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.

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

AGENDA/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Item	Discussion/Recommendations
Adopt Agenda	Meeting agenda adopted by Commission as read.
Approval of Meeting Minutes	Motion to accept meeting minutes from 5/19/2025: Motion to approve: Commissioner Boldt (M) Commissioner Gordillo (S) Motion Passed
Public Comment	John Reiscenweber from the PGA HOPE Foundation expressed his gratitude to Commissioner Joseph LoParo for his generous donation of golf clubs to the organization.
Staff Updates:	Anthony Simpson, Veterans Service Officer, discussed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 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.▪ There was no new update on the VSO Office at this time.

<p>Guest Speaker: Terry Moran Topic: VETBoats Presentation</p>	<p>Terry Moran (VetsBoats) was unable to attend the meeting.</p>
<p>Sub-Committee Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Membership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ Chair Owens also noted that their appointments bring the Commission to 21 filled positions out of the 22 available seats. ➤ Legislative Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ➤ Outreach, VAC Logo, Santa Rita Jail Visit: <p>The following outreach opportunities were mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VA Clinic – Protest opportunity in Oakland, Thursdays 12 – 1 pm at 2221 MLK Jr. Way. ▪ Santa Rita Jail Tour - 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"> ○ 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. ○ 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. ▪ Fortitude Recovery - A sanctuary for the treatment of veterans. ▪ Swords to Plowshares Mentorship Program: A continuing initiative offering peer mentorship and transitional support for veterans reintegrating into civilian life. ▪ The National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD): Campaign which promotes evidence-based treatments for veterans with posttraumatic stress disorders and encourages them to seek help. ➤ Executive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Executive Committee was held on June 3rd. ▪ Attendees included Commissioners: Greg Owens, Robert Cole, James Phair, and Shewee Yohannes. ▪ 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. ➤ Veterans Observance Days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Veterans Observance Days were displayed on the screen for all attendees to view. ▪ 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.

	<p>➤ Women Veterans Recognition Day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ Commissioners Yohannes and Brunner also shared their impressions of the event, expressing positive feedback. ▪ 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. <p>➤ Veteran Memorial Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ The committee will aim to provide a more in-depth update at the next meeting. ▪ 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. <p>➤ Stand Down:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A presentation on the Stand Down event was shown as Vice-Chair Farmer provided an accompanying explanation. ▪ The County Assessor's Office printed thousands of flyers for the event, which were provided for distribution. ▪ 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.
ORAL COMMUNICATION/ ANNOUNCEMENTS	Commissioner LoParo asked Veteran Service Officer Anthony Simpson a question regarding Apportionment. Mr. Simpson provided a response.
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.