

Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission
3839 N. 3rd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85012

March 14, 2022

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners Present

Joan McDermott, Chairwoman (virtual)
Gene Crego, Vice Chair (virtual)
Chris Gibbs, Commissioner (virtual)
Kathryn Gallowitz, Commissioner (virtual)
Edward Logan, Commissioner (virtual)
Kirk Loving, Commissioner (virtual)
Michael Noble, Commissioner (virtual)
Rebecca Villalpando, Commissioner (virtual)

AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Jennifer Harris, Legislative Liaison (virtual)
Lupita Santellano, Executive Assistant (virtual)

Guests

Call to Order – The Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission (AVSAC) Ad Hoc meeting, via Google Meets: meet.google.com/hkh-zihd-aed; Dial in: (US) +1 617-675-4444, PIN: 699 181 312 3827#. Chairwoman Joan McDermott called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm.

Chairwoman McDermott lead the commission in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chairwoman McDermott called for a motion to approve the AVSAC meeting minutes from January 13, 2022. Commissioner Gibbs motioned to approve the previous meeting minutes, Commissioner Logan second the motion. There being no changes to the minutes or any objections by the Commission, the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

Second Letter to the Governor – Chairwoman McDermott explained the Commission's interest in creating a subcommittee to gather data for the second letter to the Governor. Commissioners Logan, Gallowitz, and Noble volunteered to be part of the subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet before April 14th, 2022, to discuss possible topics for the second letter to the Governor. The subcommittee will report back to the Advisory Commission on topics and data collected before the Advisory Commission Meeting on April 14, 2022. Chairwoman McDermott asked Jennifer Harris, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) Legislative Liaison to comment on any pressing issues the commission could highlight in the letter to the Governor. Jennifer states March 25, 2022, is the last day for the Senate to hear House of Representative bills in the Senate, as well as the last day for the House of Representatives to hear Senate bills in the House.

Jennifer reiterated department priorities such as veteran employment, more specifically state employment, which is an initiative supported by ADVS. There is an AZHiresVets! job fair at Wesley Bolin Plaza on March 30, 2022. Another priority is the lack of housing/affordable housing, which Jennifer states has become a

barrier or deterrent for Veterans who want to live in Arizona. She encouraged the commission to review housing related bills; there are currently five bills related to housing. She states ADVS cannot take positions on housing bills but continues to track them closely. Accessible transportation to rural areas and suicide prevention continues to be a priority for the department.

Commissioner Logan would like to highlight the development of a Fisher House in Phoenix, Arizona and the VA (Veteran Affairs) property tax exemption. Jennifer Harris, states Senator Andrade has introduced a House of Representatives resolution that would provide support for another Fisher House in Phoenix, Arizona. She states there are approximately four or five property tax exemption bills that were introduced and are currently in different statuses within the Legislature. Commissioner Gallowitz would like to highlight Purple Star Schools and draw veteran talent to the State of Arizona. Commissioner Villalpando would like to highlight the need for more Veteran VA Centers throughout Arizona.

Chairwoman McDermott called for a motion to vote on the formation of the subcommittee. Vice Chair Crego motioned for the creation of the subcommittee, Commissioner Gallowitz second the motion. The commission voted; there being no objections by the commissioners present, the motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Recruitment of Commissioners –The Commission currently has one vacancy. Chairwoman McDermott and Commissioner Villalpando's terms will expire July 1, 2022, which will bring the total vacancies to three. Chairwoman McDermott encouraged the commission to recruit new members. No more than two veterans from the same veteran service organization may be part of the commission. Chairwoman McDermott offered to walk applicants through the application process or they can contact the Executive Assistant at ADVS for assistance. The commission will need candidates from the Northern and Southern Region. Vice Chair Crego states the Tucson Stand Down being held on March 16, 2022, would be an ideal event for recruitment, as well as the Maricopa Stand Down in Phoenix, on March 17, 2022. Vice Chair Crego suggested Commissioner Gibbs recruit veterans from the VVA in Tucson and Sierra Vista. Commissioner Villalpando had no candidates in mind for the Northern Region; however, she plans to begin recruitment efforts. Chairwoman McDermott stated she is currently recruiting one individual for the Northern Region but the candidate is hesitant to apply. Commissioner Logan will recruit Airforce Association members, more specifically the chapter presidents in Tucson and Sierra Vista. Commissioner Noble clarified veteran members from the American Legion, Veteran of Foreign Wars, and Marine Corp League may still be recruited.

Strategic Policy Directives and Operating Guidelines – Goals & Objectives – The Strategic Policy Directives and the Operating Guidelines must be updated and the final version of both documents must be approved and signed by the next Advisory Commission meeting on April 14, 2022. Chairwoman McDermott asked the commissioners to review the Strategic Policy Directives and Operating Guidelines and send their edit suggestions via email to her only by April 1, 2022. She will update the Strategic Policy Directives and Operating Guidelines based on their suggestions. The commission will then vote on the final version of both sets of documents at the Advisory Commission meeting on April 14, 2022. Both sets of documents may be found in the commissioner binders as well as the [ADVS - Advisory Commission](#) website.

Open Discussion for the Good of the Order

Commissioner Gallowitz asked Chairwoman McDermott for clarification on who will lead the subcommittee meeting. Chairwoman McDermott will lead the subcommittee meeting. A scheduling poll will be sent out to the subcommittee volunteers to determine availability for the week of March 21 through 25, 2022.

Vice Chair Crego reiterated the importance of handing out Advisory Commission business cards at outreach events. He states the AVSAC is not known in Arizona. He suggested the commissioners outreach in June, when the DAV, VFW, American Legion and Marine Corp League hold their state meetings.

Commissioner Gallowitz asked if the commission could create literature which explains the purpose of the Advisory Commission.

Commissioner Noble asked if there were any funding issues with Veteran Programs. Chairwoman McDermott will ask Director Wright if ADVS is experiencing any funding issues with Veteran Programs.

Commissioner Logan stated the commission may need to stay informed on any issues that may arise from veterans who volunteer to help Ukraine. He also mentioned STEM education may be a topic to highlight in the future.

Chairwoman McDermott called for a motion to adjourn the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services Advisory Commission Meeting. Vice Chair Crego motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Gibbs second the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:08 pm.