

Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission
1688 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, AZ 85007

May 1, 2025

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners Present

Philip Cushman, Chair (virtual)
Gene Crego, Commissioner (virtual)
Chris Gibbs, Commissioner (virtual)
Kathy Gallowitz, Commissioner (virtual)
Matthew Kenney, Commissioner (virtual)

AZ Department of Veterans' Services

Lupita Santellano, Executive Assistant (virtual)
Julia Gusse, Legislative Liaison (virtual)
John F. Scott II, Director (virtual)

Absent

Charles Byers, Vice Chair
Andrew Meshel, Commissioner

Guests

Call to Order – The Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission (AVSAC) meeting, via Google Meet: meet.google.com/imd-zurz-rot; Dial-in: (US)+1 414-909-7635, PIN: 383 215 132#. Chairman Cushman called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Chairman Cushman led the commission in the pledge of allegiance followed by guest introductions.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chairman Cushman called for a motion to approve the AVSAC meeting minutes from January 9, 2025, January 31, 2025, and March 13, 2025. Commissioner Gibbs motioned to approve all three minutes. Commissioner Crego second the motion. The Commission approved all three sets of minutes unanimously with no objections.

Agency Announcements and Updates

Director's Department Update – Director Scott sent Chairman Cushman the Governor's heat plan for the state to share with the commission and Vice Chair Byers. Director Scott thanked the commission for their support of his Director nomination as well as their support of the department. He will save his updates for the meeting in Kingman, AZ.

Legislative Update – Governor Hobbs approved the following bills:

- SB1021- ROTC cadets education bill

- SB1424 – Veteran Impersonation bill
- SB1122 - Property tax exemption; inflation adjustment
- SB2009- Vehicle license; tax exemption
- SB1163 –Veteran; emergency admission; transport
- SB1009 – Appropriations; nuclear emergency management funds

There are six bills still pending appropriation and approval, to include bill 1704.

Old Business

Commission Meeting Planning- Kingman, Discussion and possible action re:

Agenda for May 22, 2025– The commission will meet at the board of supervisor's office in Kingman. Chairman Cushman suggest the commissioners or anyone else attending the meeting travel on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, and leave Friday, May 23, 2025. He encouraged commissioners to make their hotel reservations as soon as possible. The commission discussed agenda items to include the nomination and election of a new chair and vice chair. Commissioner Gallowitz would like Judge Kay to be a guest speaker; she will reach out to invite Judge Kay to the Kingman meeting. The commission request a Veterans Benefits Counselor attend the commander's call and the Advisory Commission meeting. Commissioner Crego will coordinate a tour of the Jerry Ambrose facility and will ask Patrick Farrell to attend and speak at the commission meeting. The Commander call will take place at American Legion Post 14 at 7:00 am. Russell the Marine in Kingman will be invited to attend the commander's call. The VFW Department of Arizona commander is attending the commission meeting. He will speak at the commission meeting for five minutes. Commissioner Crego requested generic invitations for the commission meeting to send out to over 300 connections. The commission will meet for lunch after the commission meeting; will tour the Jerry Ambrose location at 2:00 pm.

Commission Meeting Planning- Flagstaff, Discussion and possible action re: Agenda

for July 10, 2025- The commission will hold the commanders call at a 7:00 am at VFW post across from the Arizona State Veteran Home – Flagstaff. The commission will meet at the Arizona State Veteran Home – Flagstaff (ASVH-F) at 10:00 am. The commission would like the following items on the agenda: a demonstration of how the Starlink kits work, discuss conflict of interest, open meeting law training, tour of the Arizona State Veteran Home – Flagstaff. The commission would like the Administrator of ASVH-F to speak at the commission meeting regarding the home and any issues he is currently dealing with. The commission would like a VBC to attend the commander's call and the Advisory Commission meeting. Peter Kloeber with MOAA will be invited as a guest speaker. Julia Gusse will reach out to NAU to invite someone from that school to attend and speak at the commission meeting regarding what they are doing for the Veteran population in their area. Commissioner Gallowitz will reach out to the Purple Star Schools in the local area to request a speaker come out to give a presentation. The commission will also tour the Arizona

Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Camp Navajo in the afternoon on July 10, 2025.

Discussion and Possible Action re: Arizona Military Museum- Chairman Cushman drafted a letter to the Governor's Office Staff, Adjutant General, and the Arizona Military Museum Committee and shared the letter with the commission for discussion, review, and edit. Chairman Cushman asked commissioners for their input regarding the drafted letter. Commissioners provided their opinion. Director Scott mentioned the Adjutant General would be retiring soon. Legislative Liaison Gusse asked when the commission plans to send the letter to the Governor's office staff. Chairman Cushman asked the commissioners if they adopt the letter as a whole and approve to mail it out as is. Commissioner Gallowitz made the motion to approve the letter today, Thursday, May 1, 2025 and mail it out tomorrow. Commissioner Crego second the motion. Commissioner Gallowitz asked to confirm the letter would be mailed out as is or if the commission would only keep the last paragraph of the letter. She also wanted to confirm the chair felt confident in the letter and had fact checked all items in the letter before it is mailed out. If so, she felt confident to support the letter as written. The commission voted unanimously to mail the letter as written.

New Business

Discussion and Possible Action to Establish a Fact Finding Committee re: The Implications of The Summer Heat on Veteran Housing and Homeless Veterans and their Families- Chairman Cushman mentioned Commissioner Byers wanted the commission to discuss this topic but unfortunately, he was not present at the meeting to discuss this matter. Director Scott did email the Governor's Heat Plan for the state. He mentioned there are many state department working on with the governor's office on this plan this summer and all people, including veterans would be covered under this plan. He recommended the commission read the plan first.

Commission Updates

Commissioner Gallowitz attended the symposium and thought it was great. She also attended the Veterans Caucus council; they are making great progress. Commissioner Gibbs also attended the symposium and thought it was great. Commissioner Kenney did not have any new updates. Chairman Cushman also attended the symposium. The chair reminded the commission to provide written outreach report days in advance of the commission meeting.

Open Floor for Comments

None.

Adjournment

Chairman Cushman called for a motion to adjourn the Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission Meeting. Commissioner Crego motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gibbs second the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:01pm.