



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 – 6:00 pm

Hosted Remotely via MS Teams

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME/President Mansori

President Mansori called the meeting to order at 6:06pm

ROLL CALL:

The VAC Secretary called the roll:

PRESENT: President Mansori, Vice-President Martin-Pinto, Commissioners William Barnickel (joined at 6:35PM), Hanley Chan, Jason Chittavong, Deborah Dacumos, Courtney Miller, Nicholas Rusanoff, Raymond Wong

ABSENT: Commissioners Douglas Bullard (excused), Victor Olivieri (excused)

Quorum present.

Presentation by Assessor-Recorder's Office

- President Mansori welcomed San Francisco City & County Assessor-Recorder Joaquin Torres, who gave a PowerPoint presentation about a property tax exemption available to disabled veterans and their families. (PowerPoint slides posted on VAC website.) At the presentation conclusion, commissioners gratefully acknowledged the work being done by the Assessor-Recorder's Office on behalf of the City's veterans, and thanked Assessor-Recorder Torres for sharing this important tax information at tonight's meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

Officers' Report:

- President
 - Commission Bylaws Draft: As a reminder, President Mansori noted the bylaws needed to be updated to incorporate the commission's new administrative secretary role. A first draft of updated bylaws was reviewed by the City Attorney and will be added to a future meeting agenda for discussion.
 - Administrative Changes: President Mansori discussed impending changes to commission membership composition, workflow processes, and committee structures, noting ad-hoc committees were combined into newly formed legislative committee. Details about changes discussed under New Business.



- Departure of Commissioners: Terms ended for Commissioners Baba and Dacumos. Commissioner Marshall resigned effective 3/08/2022.
- Memorial Day Ceremonies and SMA Visit: Confirmed by the OSMA that Sergeant Major of the Army will visit San Francisco over Memorial Day weekend, May 28-May 30, 2022.
- Vice-President
 - Reminder the commission is here to serve veterans of City and County of San Francisco.
- Staff Secretary Report
 - Presented new website at sf.gov. VAC website currently in unpublished phase and on track to be published within next few weeks. City & County Digital Services Department has been very supportive in migrating content to new website.
 - Non-charted commissions continue to meet virtually pending an announcement from the Mayor's Office of return to in-person meetings.

Committee Reports

- Legislative Committee
 - No report
- Finance Committee
 - No report
- Communications Committee
 - Commissioner Chittavong began discussing the CVSO placement within City & County department structure. President Mansori suggested a discussion about CVSO is a better fit for the Legislative Committee and recommended adding it to a future meeting agenda.
 - Commissioner Barnickel shared reminder about Army and SF Sheriff's Department Event at the Palace of Fine Arts on April 14. All commissioners invited to attend.
- Events Committee
 - No update.
- Rules Committee
 - President Mansori reported no updates as committee is being re-structured.
- Ad Hoc Committee (SF Veteran Center)
 - Commissioner Miller happy to report that after meeting with the new head of the center she learned there are no immediate plans to move the Vet Center. However, lease will expire in 2024.
- Ad Hoc Committee (Veteran Justice Court Funding)



- Commissioner Rusanoff shared update about funding status of social services position. Request to HSA is still pending. Another funding source being considered is the Mayor's Office general funds.
- Ad Hoc Committee (Below Market Rate program)
 - MOHCD to present disparate impact analysis report at the May 10 VAC meeting. Commission secretary will email a link to the report, and Commissioner Rusanoff asked fellow commissioners to review the report and prepare questions for MOHCD.

Supervisor Liaison Reports

- District 1: Sup. Chan – Commissioner Bullard
 - Commissioner Bullard absent, no report
- District 2: Sup. Stefani – Commissioner Miller
 - No report
- District 3: Sup. Peskin – Commissioner McDonald
 - No report pertaining to District 3. Commissioner McDonald took this time to thank the many commissioners and others who have stopped by to visit him in the hospital over past several weeks.
- District 4: Sup. Mar – Commissioner Barnickel
 - After visiting Commissioner McDonald in the hospital accompanied Supervisor Mar on a tour of the VA Medical Center. Then stayed to celebrate retirement of hospital director Bonnie Graham and presented her with certificate of honor from the Board of Supervisors in recognition of her leadership at the VA Hospital.
- District 5: Sup. Preston – Commissioner Dacumos
 - Reached out to Supervisor Preston with reminder that next month is Memorial Day.
- District 6: Sup. Haney – Commissioner Rusanoff
 - Has started meeting on a monthly basis with a member of Supervisor Haney's staff. Be aware of changes that may occur for District 6 as Supervisor Haney is seeking election for state assembly. Supervisor Haney no longer serving on budgetary committee. He was replaced by Hillary Ronen.
- District 7: Sup. Melgar – Commissioner Chan
 - Met with Supervisor Melgar and reported she's always a supporter of veterans and to reach out with any needs. Also met with Supervisor Mandelman.
- District 8: Sup. Mandelman – Commissioner Dacumos
 - Introduced herself to Supervisor Mandelman. Commissioner Dacumos added she is glad Commissioner Chan has a direct relationship with the supervisor.
- District 9: Sup. Ronen – Commissioner Miller
 - First month serving as District 9 liaison. Reached out to Supervisor Ronen and suggested a Zoom meeting for introductions.
- District 10: Sup. Walton – Commissioner Martin-Pinto
 - No report for District 10, but commented that re-districting is going on now so be aware that some may be in a different district next month.
- District 11: Sup. Safai – Commissioner Bullard



- No report, Commissioner Bullard absent.

Before moving to next agenda item, President Mansori commented that liaisons with supervisors will continue, however the Executive Team is working to develop a workflow to streamline communication and involve supervisors more directly with meeting agenda items. She requested commissioners email executive team with ideas or suggestions about future workflows. All ideas and suggestions welcome.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- President Mansori called for a motion to approve the March 8, 2022 regular meeting minutes.
- Commissioner McDonald motioned for approval.
- Commissioner Chan voiced objection, citing a reference in the meeting minutes to his removal from the Rules Committee by President Mansori. Brief discussion followed, with Commissioner Rusanoff reminding approval of meeting minutes is based on accuracy of record not on agreement or disagreement with actions taken during a meeting.
- Roll call vote taken by commission secretary: Yes-7, No-2, Abstain-1.
- March 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes approved with no changes by majority vote.

Absent: Bullard, Olivieri

Before moving to next agenda item, President Mansori requested Commissioner Chan contact her with any concerns or if he feels something was done incorrectly.

AGENDA CHANGES

1. No agenda changes

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- MOHCD Presentation of Disparate Impact Analysis [Discussion]
 - MOHCD invited to present the report at the Veterans Affairs Commission Meeting on May 10.
 - April 14 Event at The Palace of Fine Arts
 - Discussed earlier during meeting. All commissioners invited to attend event.

NEW BUSINESS



- **Committee Reassignments and Workflow [Discussion]**
President Mansori said committee work has been re-assigned to two committees – Legislative and Communications/Events. She shared recommended committee member structure:

Communication/Events Committee

Jason Chittavong
Raymond Wong
Bill Barnickel
Hanley Chan
Doug Bullard

Legislative Committee

Courtney Miller
Victor Olivieri
Stephen Martin-Pinto
Christopher McDonald
Nicholas Rusanoff

President Mansori asked commissioners to review their committee assignments. If they want to make a change, please email change request to the Executive Team by Friday, April 15. Anyone interested in serving as committee chair please also send request by email. Committees will be finalized by early next week.

Commissioner Chan asked that it be noted he is requested to be added to the Legislative Committee. President Mansori thanked Commissioner Chan for his comment and said his request is noted.

President Mansori explained in further detail the workflow of the two committees. Meetings will be held as public meetings, and follow the same procedure as the commission regular monthly meeting. Procedure includes attaining a quorum to conduct meetings, posting meeting notes to the VAC website, providing remote access link and/or meeting location in the agenda and posting agenda at least 72 hours in advance of a meeting. The commission secretary will not attend committee meetings, but will assist in posting documents to the website. All meetings to be managed by committee chairs.

- **VAC Membership Requirement in Article XI [Discussion]**
President Mansori shared that the Executive Team began a process to revise the VAC membership requirements by reducing the commission from 17 members to 11 members and open membership to military spouses. She noted the VAC was formed in 1982 and struggled in past years to reach quorum, which is most likely why it was set at 17 members – the largest commission in San Francisco. After consulting with the City Attorney and Board of Supervisors, the Executive Team determined the timing is right to revise membership requirements. President Mansori then opened the floor for general discussion, asking commissioners for their thoughts, concerns or questions. Discussion ensued and included the following comments related to membership revision:



- Inquiries made about VAC becoming chartered commission. President Mansori replied that step is not being considered at this time as the commission does not establish city policy so there isn't a reason to pursue chartered status.
- Commissioner Chan proposed the VAC become a 13 member body – with 2 appointments by the Mayor and 11 appointments by BOS – or, alternately, remain a 17 member body commission.
- VP Martin-Pinto and Commissioners Chittavong and Rusanoff voiced support for adding military spouses, noting the unique perspective spouses can provide. Commissioner Rusanoff further recommended expanding on military spouses to include domestic partnership and same sex partners.
- President Mansori explained the decision to reduce the commission to 11 members was reached after discussions with the City Attorney and BOS, noting most commissions are set at 7 or 9 members. She recommended this as a topic the Legislative Committee take up for further discussion.
- There were requests to reconsider reducing the commission membership at all, noting there is strength in numbers, and mentioning fact that 25,000-27,000 veterans are living in San Francisco as one reason to stay as 17 member commission.
- Commissioner Chan said discussions about reducing commission membership and adding spouses should have public input, adding public comment should be included in every item discussed by the commission. President Mansori replied that a public comments section is included at the end of every meeting agenda, and at that time members of the public can comment on any of the meeting agenda items.
- Visit by SMA on Memorial Day
Details about the Memorial Day ceremony and other related events will be emailed to commissioners. Anyone interested in participating please email the Executive Team. Note that personal emails will not be used, so please monitor VAC emails for event updates.

GOOD WELFARE

This is the opportunity for members of the Veterans Affairs Commission to share special thanks and congratulatory remarks for the good welfare taking place in the veterans community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comment.

HONORS REPORT AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

In memory of American service members in all wars and conflicts who made the ultimate sacrifice. We also remember the passing of homeless veterans, veterans who died while awaiting approval of benefits, and suicides within the veteran and armed service communities.



ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.

The next regular meeting of the Veterans Affairs Commission will be held remotely on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Murphy
Secretary to Veterans Affairs Commission

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Veterans Affairs Commission Meetings:

General meetings of the SFVAC are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month, with the exception for the month of July, when there is no scheduled SF VAC meeting, and are held in Room 416 in City Hall.

Meeting confirmation, and specific announcement of general meetings are made via public posting of the Meeting Agenda as required by law, at least 72 hours prior to scheduled meetings. Agendas for SFVAC meetings (and archived meeting minutes) are available on the SFVAC Pages of the City of San Francisco website, and are also available for public view and inspection at the 5th Floor Government Information Center at the San Francisco Public Library, at 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. The documents librarian telephone number is (415) 554-4472.

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BART/MUNI station (Civic Center) is wheelchair accessible as are nearby city bus lines and stops. For more public transit information services, call (415) 923-6142 or dial 311.

Veterans Crisis Line



If you or a Veteran, you know is in immediate danger to themselves or others, please call 911 or visit your local emergency room.

The Veterans Crisis Line is also available by texting 838255 or by going to their website and chatting with a mental health professional.



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