



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 – 6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME/President Mansori

President Mansori called the meeting to order at 6:02PM.

President Mansori welcomed commissioners and members of the public. She noted the meeting was being recorded through Microsoft TEAMS and the video will be posted to the VAC website.

ROLL CALL:

The VAC Secretary called the roll:

PRESENT: President Ikram Mansori, Vice-President Martin-Pinto, Commissioners William Barnickel, Hanley Chan, Jason Chittavong, Deborah Dacumos, Courtney Ellington, Courtney Miller, Christopher McDonald, Nicholas Rusanoff, Raymond Wong

ABSENT: Commissioners Bullard (excused), Olivieri (absent), Sun (excused)

Quorum present.

COMMUNICATIONS

Before moving to Officers' Report, President Mansori introduced Alan Wong, Legislative Assistant to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Wong shared information about legislation currently being drafted to support reservists working in the private sector.

He began by acknowledging past successful collaborations with the Veterans Affairs Commission on affordable housing and parks legislation. He then summarized legislation currently being drafted to assist reservists working in the private sector. Under current local, state, and federal law, public sector reservists are due their full pay for up to 30 days when they go on leave. Private sector reservists do not have the same protection. The legislation being drafted is modeled on federal, state, and local laws for public sector employees. It will allow military reservists who go on leave to receive the equivalent of the difference between their regular pay from a civilian job and their military pay for up to 30 days. The law will apply to San Francisco employers with 100 plus employees. If passed, legislation will be the first of its kind nationwide. Mr. Wong concluded by noting draft legislation is being reviewed by the City Attorney and could potentially be submitted to the Board of Supervisors at the October 25 meeting. He requested formal support from the commission.



A brief discussion followed, during which several commissioners shared positive comments and strong support. President Mansori thanked Mr. Wong and said legislation will be added to the commission's November 8 meeting agenda, as well as to the agenda of the VAC Legislative and Rules Committee meeting being held later this week.

Officers' Report:

President

- Updated commissioners on Veterans Day Parade, scheduled for Sunday, November 6 at Fisherman's Wharf. Event organizers invited commissioners to march in parade or serve as parade marshals or judges. Commission secretary to email further details.
- Welcomed new CVSO, Elena Kim.
- Congratulated all commissioners, with special thanks to Commissioners Dacumos and Barnickel, for Fleet Week events success.

Vice-President

- Restated thanks to commissioners for efforts on Fleet Week events.

Staff Secretary

- Updated about potential Sunshine Ordinance training for the commission. Supervisor Mandelman's office offered assistance to find appropriate training resource.

Committee Reports

- Legislative and Rules Committee – Report by Committee Chair Jason Chittavong:
 - Committee meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum. Committee Chair briefly updated commission on two time sensitive items:
 - Operation Green Light for Veterans – Noted next step is to reach out to city and state legislators regarding legislation to increase funding support for CVSOs. Stated Commissioner Chan volunteered to follow up on this and asked for an update. Commissioner Chan responded he forward information to Representative Pelosi's office and is waiting on response.
 - Discharge Upgrade Training – Commissioner McDonald noted cost is \$118 per person for the training course. He recommended course as being very beneficial to commissioners. President Mansori agreed and suggested Legislative and Rules Committee research funding sources and report back to the commission.
 - Comment was made about both committee meetings having to cancel due to lack of quorum. Discussion followed about importance of meeting attendance. Commissioner Ellington requested committee members be notified sooner when a



meeting requires rescheduling, and allow committee to review potential date options for the rescheduled meeting.

- Communication and Events Committee – Report by Committee Chair Nicholas Rusanoff:
 - Reported committee meeting cancelled due to lack of quorum. Provided opportunity for committee members to update commission on various items:
 - Veterans Day Parade – Commissioner Wong shared request from parade director that commissioners serve as parade marshals or judges. Adding there is a need for four marshals and two judges. All commissioners are invited to march in parade. Commissioner Wong provided contact information of parade organizer, Nestor Tom.
 - Fleet Week – Commissioner Dacumos reviewed events, including Blessing of the Fleet and the Senior Leadership Conference. She noted leadership conference was especially well done and encouraged commissioners to attend in the future.
 - Navy Band Event on Irving Street – Commissioner Barnickel commented there was a good turnout and event went very well.
 - Operation Green Light for Veterans – Commissioner Chittavong requested Commissioners Dacumos and Miller assist in contacting City Hall for lighting event.
 - Commissioner Rusanoff concluded report. President Mansori added she will review reinstating multiple committees of three members each. Topic further discussed under New Business.

Supervisor Liaison Reports

- District 1: Sup. Chan – Commissioner Bullard
 - Absent – no report.
- District 2: Sup. Stefani – Commissioner Wong
 - No report
- District 3: Sup. Peskin – Commissioner McDonald
 - No report
- District 4: Sup. Mar – Commissioner Barnickel
 - Updated on progress of three projects underway to bring affordable housing for veterans. One project broke ground.
- District 5: Sup. Preston – Commissioner Chittavong
 - No report – meeting with supervisor was rescheduled to following week.
- District 6: Sup. Dorsey – Commissioner Rusanoff



- No report. President Mansori requested Commissioner Rusanoff connect with Commissioner Sun, who can assist with District 6. She further noted Commissioner Sun requested to be added to the Legislative and Rules Committee.
- District 7: Sup. Melgar – Commissioner Chan
 - No report – stated he will comment under New Business agenda item.
- District 8: Sup. Mandelman – Commissioner Dacumos
 - Scheduled a meeting with Supervisor Mandelman to discuss mental health for veterans.
- District 9: Sup. Ronen – Commissioner Miller
 - Scheduled a meeting with Supervisor Ronen for October 17.
- District 10: Sup. Walton – Commissioner Ellington
 - Met with Supervisor Walton’s chief of staff and discussed total amount of veterans in the district. Discussed starting town hall meetings for veterans in District 10.
- District 11: Sup. Safai – Commissioner Bullard
 - No report – Commissioner Bullard absent.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- Call for motion to approve September 13, 2022 regular meeting minutes.
- Motion - Rusanoff/Second - Ellington
- All in Favor – Aye: 11, No: 0, Abstain: 0.
- Motion passed. September 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes approved.

Absent: Commissioners Bullard, Olivieri, Sun

AGENDA CHANGES

Items added under New Business

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Policy Roundtable Event [Discussion]
 - Assigned to Communication and Events Committee to discuss at their September meeting. Since meeting was cancelled, topic added to committee’s October 17 meeting agenda. President Mansori asked for comments from commissioners related to Policy Roundtable Event.
 - Commissioner Rusanoff responded that support is needed for the USO at San Francisco International Airport. USO is running low on funds and could use support of the VAC. President Mansori noted the importance of this issue, adding it’s a good example of an item to email to the commission secretary one week ahead of a meeting for addition on that meeting’s agenda.



- Wreaths Across America [Discussion]
 - President Mansori reminded wreath laying ceremony is scheduled for December 17. Commissioner Ellington updated about the event planning process, adding she will send information to the commission secretary for distribution to commissioners.
- Veterans Blvd. Signs in Need of Repair [Discussion]
 - Commissioner Chan updated that he will reach out to DPW and report back to commission at next month's meeting.
 - Commissioner Martin-Pinto suggested Caltrans as resource to help with sign repair. He volunteered to contact and update commission. Commissioner Chan added he also will follow up about Caltrans during his meeting with Assembly member Ting.

NEW BUSINESS

- President Mansori called for any new items to be added to the meeting agenda.
 - Commissioner Chittavong suggested opening a discussion about the commission becoming a chartered commission. President Mansori called for motion to add discussion item.
 - Motion – Rusanoff / Second – McDonald.
 - Lengthy discussion followed about pros and cons of commission becoming chartered. President Mansori noted research is required for this change, and added the topic will be included as a discussion item at a future meeting.
 - Commissioner Barnickel requested addition of a discussion item regarding a revision/update to commission bylaws. Motion – Rusanoff / Second – Ellington. Discussion item added. Briefly reviewed by commission. Item will be taken up by the Legislative and Rules Committee and presented as an actionable item at next month's commission meeting.
 - Commissioner Chan requested addition of discussion item regarding disabled veterans business enterprise. President Mansori called for motion to add item: Motion – Rusanoff / Second – Ellington. Item briefly discussed. President Mansori recommended topic be added to Legislative and Rules Committee meeting agenda, and requested Commissioner Chan send information he has to the commission secretary.
 - Commissioner Ellington requested clarity of commission's expectation for supervisor liaison reports. She observed commissioners often have no report to share at meetings. Brief discussion followed. Commissioner Chan commented the purpose of connecting with supervisors is to build relationships in order to



help pass meaningful legislation to benefit the veterans community. President Mansori said the Executive Team will discuss creating a summary of items commissioners should discuss with supervisors and share it with the commission.

- Commissioner Chan asked for clarification on why a vote was not called after motion /second to add items to this meeting's agenda. President Mansori responded there was no voting because action was not taken by the commission, items were added to the agenda for discussion only.

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.

- Good Welfare Comments included:
 - Commissioner Mansori acknowledged the good work and dedication of Mark Benton, Civilian Aide to The Secretary of the Army.
 - Commissioner McDonald acknowledged moving Fleet Week event held in District 8.
 - Commissioner Ellington announced the War Memorial Building voted her as the new War Memorial Commissioner overseeing space in the building. Offered special thanks to Commissioners McDonald and Chan for their vote and support. Added she can facilitate reserving rooms at the building for commission meetings and events.

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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Public Comments included:
 - Jenny Perez commented on urgent funding needs of USO at San Francisco Airport. She noted with holidays approaching needs will increase, and wanted to bring issue to the attention of the Veterans Affairs Commission. President Mansori requested commission secretary contact the HSA department as a



potential funding source. She further noted item will be added to the commission's next meeting agenda.

- Commissioner Rusanoff commented on recent issue of Swords to Plowshares rejecting contract to work with Veterans Justice Court.
- Commissioner Chan stated his support for USO and said he will reach out to Airport Commission for support.
- Commissioner McDonald commented on USO, he will check with the Legion for potential support.
- Commissioner Ellington commented on USO needs by requesting a list of needed items. Suggested commission could hold an event where people bring items for commission to donate to USO.
- President Mansori commented on USO, suggested idea of USO setting up a donation box at the airport.

ADJOURNMENT

President Mansori adjourned the meeting at 7:48pm.

The next regular meeting of the Veterans Affairs Commission will be held remotely at 6:00pm on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

Links and meeting documents can be found on the Veterans Affairs Commission website.

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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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.

Veterans Affairs Commission



City and County of San Francisco



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