



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 – 6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME / Vice-President Jason Chittavong

Meeting called to order at 6:05PM.

Due to excused absence of President Mansori, VP Chittavong led meeting. He welcomed attendees and noted time on the agenda for general public comment. He read instructions regarding remote participation for members of the public who cannot attend in person due to disability. He then asked VAC secretary to call roll.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Vice-President Jason Chittavong, Commissioners Joseph Baba, William Barnickel, Douglas Bullard, Hanley Chan, Deborah Dacumos, Courtney Miller, Nicholas Rusanoff, Jordan Sun

ABSENT: President Mansori (excused), Commissioners Ellington (excused), McDonald (absent), Martin-Pinto (excused)

PRESENTER: Elena Kim, Director Veterans Service Office

STAFF: Mary Murphy, Commission Secretary

Quorum present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-President Chittavong led attendees in reciting Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA CHANGES

Vice-President Chittavong called for motion to set agenda.

Motion – Bullard/ Second – Dacumos

All in Favor – Aye: 9, No: 0, Abstain: 0.



Motion passed. Agenda set.

Absent: Ellington, McDonald, Mansori, Martin-Pinto

COMMUNICATIONS

Officers' Report:

President (update provided by VP Chittavong):

- Briefly Reviewed VAC Administrative Code
Noted VAC Administrative Code became effective March 17, 2023. Several BOS appointed commissioners are on hold over status during appointment process. Deadline to submit applications to BOS was April 6, 2023, however deadline was extended to April 14. If commissioners intend to re-apply do so ASAP. Email VAC Executive Team with any questions.
- Liaison Needed for District 2 Supervisor
Contact Executive Team if interested.

Vice-President:

- Revised VAC Bylaws
Bylaws draft document emailed to commissioners prior to meeting. VP Chittavong noted discussion of bylaws listed on meeting agenda under New Business.

Staff Secretary:

- Commission Application / Re-application Process
Re-stated deadline to submit applications for BOS appointed seats 3, 4, 5, and 8. Tentative date for BOS Rules Committee to review appointments is April 17. Email commission secretary with any questions on application process.
- Meeting Procedures
Reminded that SF City & County commissions are required to follow meeting procedure rules of San Francisco City Attorney Good Government Guide.

CVSO Report:

- Presentation by Elena Kim, Director Veterans Service Office, City & County of San Francisco.
[CVSO March Report available on VAC website.]
Ms. Kim began by noting last month she presented CVSO's annual report and tonight's presentation was a monthly report. She then reviewed March CVSO report statistics, displayed new feature of CVSO website, updated on staff changes, and shared news of upcoming events. Upcoming event of



particular note is a CVSO Workshop on June 9, 2023. Workshop to be hosted by CVSO in conjunction with San Francisco Public Libraries and will provide step-by-step guidance on how to prepare college applications for tuition fee waiver. Tuition waiver is a benefit for son, daughter or spouse of a veteran to attend a California Community College, Cal State or University at no charge.

At conclusion of presentation Ms. Kim asked for questions or comments:

- Commissioner Bullard asked about criteria for VA work study program. Ms. Kim replied program is part of VA educational benefits. Participation in any federal VA educational program meets eligibility requirements for work study. In terms of recruitment process of CVSO office, process includes review of student veteran's resume and follow up remote interview. Ms. Kim mentioned office is in need of help with recruiting.
- Commissioner Chan offered to reach out to Alan Wong for assistance with recruitment. Alan Wong is a veteran and president of the College Board.
- Commissioner Barnickel asked about Medi-Cal verifications. Ms. Kim answered the role of CVSO is to help those eligible for veterans benefits to move off Medi-Cal and CalFresh benefits. Ms. Kim briefly reviewed process, which includes income verification and follow up steps with VA.
- Commissioner Rusanoff complemented new meeting accommodation feature of CVSO website.

Supervisor Liaison Reports

District 1: Sup. Chan – Commissioner Bullard
No report.

District 2: Sup. Stefani – VACANT
Commissioner Chan volunteered to be liaison for District 2.

District 3: Sup. Peskin – Commissioner McDonald
Absent – no report.

District 4: Sup. Engardio – Commissioner Barnickel
Commissioner meets with supervisor once a week. Supervisor will do his best to support veterans.

District 5: Sup. Preston – Commissioner Chittavong
No report for District 5. Said he will connect with Commissioner Dacumos regarding support for mental health services.

District 6: Sup. Dorsey – Commissioner Rusanoff
No report.



District 7: Sup. Melgar – Commissioner Chan
Scheduled to meet with Supervisor Melgar on May 5. Report to follow.

District 8: Sup. Mandelman – Commissioner Dacumos
Commissioner Dacumos recently toured Westside Crisis Clinic. This was in response to a veteran who spoke to the commission a few months ago about his difficulty in finding mental health assistance. She noted clinic is open for drop-in visits and accepts public, private, VA insurance. She gave a brief overview of clinic staff, which includes a psychotherapist, in house pharmacy, nurse practitioners, and social workers. Commissioner Dacumos said she will work to assist Westside Clinic obtain funding from the city. She recommended VAC support clinic by raising awareness of its services throughout veterans community.

District 9: Sup. Ronen – Commissioner Miller
Said she plans to reach out to Supervisor Ronen in coming months. Requested Commissioner Dacumos share more information about veterans mental health service needs. Commissioner Miller will share information with Supervisor Ronen.

District 10: Sup. Walton – Commissioner Ellington
Excused Absent – No report.

District 11: Sup. Safai – Commissioner Bullard
No report.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- Call for motion to approve March 14, 2023 regular meeting minutes.
- Motion - Rusanoff/Second - Bullard
- All in Favor – Aye: 9, No: 0, Abstain: 0.
- Motion passed. March 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes approved.

Absent: Ellington, McDonald, Mansori, Martin-Pinto

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 2023 Memorial Day Ceremony Planning [Discussion]
Ceremony being planned by Golden Gate National Cemetery staff. Participation of VAC during ceremony is welcomed. Commission secretary noted GG staff will contact VAC executive team with planning updates. Updates to be shared with commissioners via email.

NEW BUSINESS



Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to expand definition of “public service” to allow members of San Francisco Employees’ Retirement System to purchase service credit for time served in the military before City employment. [Discussion / Possible Action]

- Commissioners discussed and voiced support for ordinance. A commissioner requested commission secretary notify commissioners when ordinance goes to BOS committee. Commission secretary will send Outlook calendar invite. It was noted information about ordinance is posted on BOS website.
- VP Chittavong called for public comment. No public comment. Meeting moved to next New Business item.

Draft resolution to support CA Assembly Bill 1386, which will amend Section 987.005 of the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans at risk for homelessness or experiencing temporary or chronic homelessness. [Discussion / Possible Action]

- Commissioner Chan drafted a resolution in support of AB 1386. Draft was emailed to commissioners prior to meeting. Commissioner Chan opened discussion by briefly reviewing benefits of bill and requested commissioners’ support of resolution.
 - Call for motion to approve resolution in support of AB 1386.
 - Motion - Rusanoff/Second - Baba
 - All in Favor – Aye: 9, No: 0, Abstain: 0.
 - Motion passed. VAC Resolution to support AB 1386 approved.

Absent: Ellington, McDonald, Mansori, Martin-Pinto

- Commissioner Chan requested copy of resolution be sent to Los Angeles Veterans Advisory Commission. He will email contact information to commission secretary.

First Draft revision to VAC Bylaws

- Commission Secretary noted draft of bylaws was emailed to commissioners. Bylaws will be added to next month’s meeting agenda as actionable item. Commission secretary requested commissioners email comments, suggestions, questions no later than one week prior to May 9 commission meeting. VP called for questions or comments. As there were none, meeting moved to next agenda item.

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 veteran community.

Good Welfare Comments included:



- Commissioner Rusanoff extended good welfare to Commissioner Dacumos for her care in providing a veteran with the respect and dignity of a proper burial.
- Commissioner Baba thanked Commissioner Chan for his assistance in collecting surplus supplies from Salesforce to be used as earthquake preparedness supplies.
- Commissioner Chan thanked Commissioner Baba and Salesforce for donating supplies.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

An opportunity for commission members to share information on veterans activities or briefly comment on San Francisco veterans related news.

- Commissioner Bullard reminded about the Bataan Death March Remembrance event this Saturday, April 15 at Presidio National Cemetery.
- Commissioner Bullard announced the Spring Drill Championships for JROTC will be held Saturday, April 22 at Lincoln High School from 10:00am-2:00pm. All are welcomed to stop by.
- Commissioner Chan shared information about the Bay Area Psychedelics Conference on April 18-19. Commissioner noted studies have shown healing benefits of psychedelic and psychedelic research for mental health including PTSD. Commissioner Chan will email conference information to commission secretary to distribute to commissioners.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Commissioner Dacumos commented on SCA-4, a new bill in California State Legislature to repeal Proposition 19, which changed the tax protections of inherited property. Commissioner Dacumos will share information about amendment with commissioners.

[NOTE: At this time, commission secretary reminded that general public comment is time allotted for the public to address the commission. Commissioners should not participate in public comment.]

- Commissioner Rusanoff announced his intention to add an item to next month's meeting agenda to honor the employees of the Veterans Justice Court. Expressed his hope the Veterans Affairs Commission will start honoring veteran organizations and individual veterans in the community on a regular basis.



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

VP Chittavong adjourned the meeting at 6:54pm.

The next regular meeting of the Veterans Affairs Commission will be held in-person at 6:00pm in Room 416 at San Francisco City Hall on Tuesday, May 9, 2023.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Murphy
Commission Secretary
Veterans Affairs Commission

This document is Official Business of the Veterans Affairs Commission, City and County of San Francisco. It is part of the official Public Record of the City and County of San Francisco.

Public Access:

Public Records are covered under the State of California Brown Act, as well as the Sunshine Ordinance of the City and County of San Francisco. These acts ensure that deliberations of City Business are conducted “before the People,” and that City and County operations are open to the People’s review.

For information on your rights under the Sunshine Ordinance (Chapter 67 of the San Francisco Administrative Code), or to report a violation of the ordinance, please contact the Administrator of the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force.

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.

Disability Access:

City Hall of San Francisco is wheelchair accessible via all entrances. There is wheelchair accessible public parking nearby, including the underground garage at the north side of City Hall. The nearby 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**



1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

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.



**SAN FRANCISCO
SUICIDE
PREVENTION**

24/7 Confidential
Support

Text **MYLIFE** to **741741**

Crisis Line:
(415) 781-0500