



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 – 6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME / Vice-President Nicholas Rusanoff

Meeting called to order at 6:07PM.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Vice-President Nicholas Rusanoff, Commissioners Bill Barnickel, James Boatman, Hanley Chan, Deborah Dacumos, Prince Jordan Kelly, John Reissenweber

ABSENT: President Jason Chittavong (excused), Commissioners: Joseph Baba (excused), Courtney Ellington (absent), Darya Kutovaya (excused), Ikram Mansori (excused), Jenny Perez (excused)

Quorum present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice President Rusanoff led attendees in reciting Pledge of Allegiance.

SET AGENDA

VP Rusanoff called for motion to approve agenda.

Motion / Second / All in Favor / None Opposed

Motion passed. Agenda set.

Absent: Baba, Chittavong, Ellington, Kutovaya, Mansori, Perez

PRESENTATION – HONORING WWII VETERAN MATTHEW FONG

- Commissioners were very pleased and honored to begin the meeting by welcoming 102-year-old San Franciscan and WWII veteran Matthew Fong. Commissioner Barnickel



thanked Mr. Fong and his family for their attendance at the meeting and spoke admirably about Mr. Fong's military service and his many years of dedicated community service. By unanimous vote, the Commission approved the presentation of a Mayoral Certificate of Honor. Commissioner Barnickel presented the certificate to Mr. Fong.

COMMUNICATIONS

CVSO Report:

CVSO Acting Director Maurice Delmer presented the April report. He reviewed report's content including statistics, announcements, success stories, and upcoming events. [CVSO report is posted to VAC website.]

At conclusion of report presentation, comments and questions included:

- Commissioner Reissenweber noted opportunities for CVSO to engage with veterans at the many PGA Hope graduations and tournaments held throughout the Bay Area. He said he's happy to assist by providing the CVSO with a table and time to present at events. Maurice thanked the Commissioner for this outreach opportunity and said he or another representative would be happy to participate in a San Francisco PGA Hope event. He added that each county in California has its own CVSO office, so SF CVSO would attend San Francisco events only. Commissioner Reissenweber will follow up with CVSO.
- Commissioner Rusanoff referenced the May 18 homeownership event listed on CVSO report under, "Upcoming Events." He reminded about the Below Market Rate (BMR) priority for veterans. Maurice thanked the commissioner and clarified that, although not mentioned in the report, there will be representatives at the May 18 event to discuss BMR.

At the discussion's conclusion, Commissioner Rusanoff thanked Maurice for CVSO's work for veterans.

Supervisor Reports:

- District 4, Supervisor Engardio: Commissioner Barnickel provided an update about placing articles about veterans in District 4 newsletters. He noted an interview with Hanley Chan, a veteran (and commissioner) will run in the June newsletter. Commissioner Barnickel said he had also lined up interviews for July and August.



APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Call for motion to approve April 9, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

Motion / Second / All in Favor. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

Absent: Baba, Chittavong, Ellington, Kutovaya, Mansori, Perez

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of a letter to the Mayor's Office recommending a certificate of honor for US Navy veteran Bill Clift, in recognition of his dedicated work to the veterans community. Commissioner Rusanoff spoke briefly and shared examples of Bill Clift's excellent work. Commissioner Jordan recommended certificates for veterans as an action the commission might consider doing monthly. Commissioner Reissenweber commended Bill Clift's work, noting the support he personally received from Mr. Clift, specifically related to PGA Hope. He recommended a certificate from PGA Hope as well as a Mayoral certificate. Commissioner Rusanoff said he would follow up with Commissioner Reissenweber after the meeting.

- Motion called to approve letter requesting Certificate of Honor for William Clift.

Motion / Second / All in Favor.

Motion passed.

Absent: Baba, Chittavong, Ellington, Kutovaya, Mansori, Perez

Veterans California Legislation Review: Commissioner Hanley Chan serves as elected secretary to the California State Commanders Veterans Council (CSCVC). He updated the Commission about some current legislation being discussed by the CSCVC. [Discussion]

- Commissioner Chan spoke about two bills:
 - CA AB 46: Personal Income Taxes: Exclusion: Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act. Commissioner Chan said this bill was not approved by the governor. Commissioners discussed the importance of bringing attention to the delay in approving AB 46. Commission secretary recommended this as an action item a commissioner could add to a future VAC meeting agenda.



- SB 1124: Deceptive practices: Service Members and Veterans. Bill was introduced by CA Senator Menjivar. The goal is to stop predatory business practices targeting veterans. Bill is still on the senate floor.

OLD BUSINESS

Memorial Day Ceremony Planning Update: The commission secretary reminded commission the Memorial Day Observance will be held at The Presidio on Monday, May 27. Several VAC members will participate. If anyone has questions, please email the commission secretary.

Draft Letter of Support for H.R. 6121 – The Filipino Veterans Fairness Act of 2023. This is a follow up action item to last month’s presentation from the Bayanihan Equity Center. Draft letter was shared with commissioners prior to meeting. [Action – Vote]

- Commissioner Dacumos noted a modification to the letter – number of 200,000 should be changed to “over 260,000.” She further commented that this is a very crucial bill for VAC to support.
- Motion called to approve letter – Second / All in Favor / None Opposed / Motion passed.

Absent: Baba, Chittavong, Ellington, Kutovaya, Mansori, Perez

Updated Resolution for CA SB 1012 - Psychedelic Facilitators Act and the Regulated Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy Act. During the April meeting it was noted the draft resolution did not align with the amended version of the bill. An updated resolution, revised by Commissioner Kutovaya, was reviewed by the Commission. Commissioner Hanley Chan invited California licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Nathaniel Mills, who spoke briefly about legislation.

- Commissioner Chan shared comments in support of CA SB 1012. He then introduced Dr. Nathaniel Mills, a California licensed clinical psychologist, who also spoke in support of the bill and engaged in discussion with commissioners.
- Public Comment called for this item. Comments included:
 - Speaker 1: Christopher Kline. Commented he was going to wait until general public comment, but this topic is very relevant to comments he just shared at the Board of Supervisors meeting. He said HSA controls mental health disorders and substance abuse disorders and he spoke about safeguards they are trying to put in place for psychedelics and drugs to help mental health. He read from a document he will present later this week at the Thursday meeting of the Committee on Information Technology (COIT).



- Speaker 2: Michael Young, SF native. Commented on his military experience and his struggles with anxiety and depression. He said psychedelics were an integral part of his healing. He is an outreach ambassador to a 501(c)3 that is sponsoring SB 58 and SB 1012. He urged the commission to support this resolution.

Motion called for roll call vote to support resolution:

Boatman: Aye
Dacumos: Aye
Jordan: Aye
Rusanoff: Aye
Reissenweber: Aye
Barnickel: Aye
Chan: Aye

Motion passed.

Absent: Baba, Chittavong, Ellington, Kutovaya, Mansori, Perez

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.

- Commissioner Barnickel extended good welfare to Commissioners Chan and Rusanoff for their participation at the recent Planning Commission meeting to support housing plans being considered for Stonestown location.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Commissioner Dacumos announced the Westside Mental Health Clinic is now open all day on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Clinic tours are still available to commissioners. Please contact the commission secretary if interested.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Speaker 1: Christopher Kline. He said he attended “Hoops for Troops” and that it was a great event. Before the meeting started, he handed the commission secretary a brochure for a recent Celebration of Life for a Prisoner of War MIA. (The commission secretary passed brochure around for commissioners to see.) Mr. Kline then followed up on comments he made previously during meeting discussion about CA SB 1012,



Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy Act. He referenced again the document that will be presented to the Committee on Information Technology (COIT). A finalized copy of the document will be sent to all commissioners, the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor, etc. He asked the commission to stay tuned for that. He noted that one surveillance system is used by Swords to Plowshares and many other agencies within the city. He asked the commission to keep up great work.

HONOR 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

The meeting adjourned at 7:19pm.

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, June 11, 2024.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Murphy
Commission Secretary
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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**Veterans
Crisis Line**



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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.



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Veterans Affairs Commission



City and County of San Francisco

Support

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