



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 – 6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME / Vice-President Nicholas Rusanoff

Meeting called to order at 6:02PM.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

President Jason Chittavong (6:10pm), Vice-President Nicholas Rusanoff, Commissioners Joseph Baba, James Boatman, William Barnickel, Hanley Chan, Deborah Dacumos, Prince Jordan Kelly, Darya Kutovaya, Jenny Perez, John Reissenweber

ABSENT: Deborah Dacumos (excused), Courtney Ellington (absent)

Quorum present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

SET AGENDA

Vice-President Rusanoff called for motion to approve the agenda.

Motion / Second / All in Favor

Motion passed. Agenda set.

Absent: Chittavong, Dacumos, Ellington

COMMUNICATIONS

CVSO Report:

- CVSO interim director Maurice Delmer was not available to attend the meeting. The November report is posted on VAC website.



Secretary Report:

- Followed up to a comment from a previous meeting about inviting Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) to a VAC meeting. The secretary contacted MOHCD and received a reply from Maria Benjamin. Maria said MOHCD is happy to provide an activities report at a meeting in early 2025.

Vice-President Report:

- Provided an update about veteran applications to MOHCD housing lottery. Based on information he has received, there are currently 190 veterans validated into the priority process as applicants. And 50 veterans are applying for specific affordable housing rental units. Noted the work of this commission has put veterans in housing and that commissioners should be proud. Further, VP Rusanoff said he attended last month's meeting of the County of San Mateo Veterans Affairs Commission and shared information about VAC's work regarding Below Market Rate housing. The hope is to have more counties in California adopt housing prioritization for veterans.

President Report:

- Nothing significant to report.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- Call for motion to approve the November 12, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

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

Absent: Dacumos, Ellington

NEW BUSINESS

- Business license one year exemption program extended to disabled veterans. Commissioner Chan met with Supervisor Melgar and shared an update with the Commission.
 - Commissioner Chan said the one-year San Francisco business license fee waiver, started during the pandemic, is set to end this year.



Commissioner Chan had the idea of giving fee waiver to disabled veterans to encourage veterans to start businesses in San Francisco.

- Commissioner Barnickel asked how disabled veterans will be identified. Commissioner Chan noted veterans have a VA card that shows service-connected disability. But added it is still being discussed how to identify a disabled veteran for a San Francisco business license fee waiver.
- Commissioner Reissenweber asked if there is a list with the number of veteran owned businesses in San Francisco. Commissioner Jordan responded he will look into this and send any information he finds to the commission secretary.
- Commissioner Chan will see if someone from Supervisor Melgar's office is available to attend a future VAC meeting to answer the commissioners' questions.
- Veterans Justice Court Update presented by Commissioner Rusanoff.
[Presentation slides posted to VAC website.] Follow-up comments included:
 - Commissioner Barnickel asked about Judge Begert's status with VJC. Commissioner Rusanoff responded that as of now it is understood Judge Begert will no longer be involved in the Veterans Justice Court.
 - It was noted the veterans non-profit, "Open Doors for Possibilities," which gave a presentation to the VAC last month, already made a connection with the VJC.

EXECUTIVE TEAM ELECTIONS FOR 2025 TERM

Commission President and Vice-President Election. [Action/Vote]

- Nominated during the November 2024 meeting were Commissioner Barnickel for president and Commissioner Rusanoff for vice-president.

President Chittavong opened floor for any further nominations. Commissioner Jordan nominated Commissioner Hanley Chan for president. Commissioner Chan accepted the nomination.



Nominees for President: Bill Barnickel and Hanley Chan. The two nominees each shared remarks with commissioners and meeting attendees. Following remarks, the commission secretary called a roll call vote for 2025 commission president:

Baba: Chan	Rusanoff: Barnickel
Boatman: Chan	Kutavaya: Chan
Perez: Barnickel	Reissenweber: Barnickel
Jordan: Chan	Barnickel: Barnickel
Chittavong: Barnickel	Chan: Chan

The roll call vote ended in a tie – five votes for each nominee. The commission secretary said she will check with the city attorney for next steps. [NOTE: Following the meeting, Commissioner Hanley Chan graciously offered his support to Bill Barnickel. Commissioner Barnickel accepted and he will serve as the 2025 commission president.]

Nominee for Vice-President: Nicholas Rusanoff. The secretary call for All in Favor vote for vice-president. All members voted in favor of Nicholas Rusanoff serving as commission vice-president for 2025.

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 Boatman mentioned there will be a Swords to Plowshares holiday celebration this Thursday at 1060 Howard Street. The commission secretary will email the event flyer to commissioners.
- Commissioner Jordan invited commissioners to attend this weekend's Wreaths Across America wreath laying ceremony, Saturday, December 14 at Golden Gate National Cemetery Presidio.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Commissioner Chan said he met with several newly elected San Francisco supervisors. He noted that incoming Supervisor Jackie Fielder has many family members who have served or are serving in the US Navy. All elected BOS members are looking forward to their roles and to working with the commission.



- Commissioner Jordan said he has been working very closely with Mayor-elect Daniel Lurie. He said the newly elected mayor has been a vocal supporter of the veterans community.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Speaker: Chris Hughes
Mr. Hughes works with Open Doors for Possibilities. He noted that over Thanksgiving Open Doors for Possibilities hosted an event for veterans at the War Memorial Building. They will have a similar dinner event on December 20. He wished the commission a happy holiday season.

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 6:47pm.

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, January 14, 2025.

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****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.

Veterans Affairs Commission



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