



Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee

May 20, 2022 – 10:00 AM MT
Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams
Live Streamed via City's website:
<http://www.elpasotexas.gov/videos>
Television on City15

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofelpasotx/videos>

MINUTES

Members Present

Lance Lehr
Laura Butler
Jonathan Bohannon
Bruce Biegel
Melissa Harcrow
Rodney Washington
Justin Rotti
Victor Casas

Members Absent

Rodney Washington

District 2 Vacant

1. **Call to Order. Meeting started at 10:01AM**
2. **Roll Call. Quorum. 8 of 9**
3. **Discussion and Action to Approve Minutes of:** April 15, 2022. Approved
4. **Citizen Comment Period:** Individuals limited to 3 minutes; no specific action may be taken
 - a. Sarah Kamalipour VA caregiver support program: Two programs; A stipend program and a resource program. Sarah can be reached at 915 564-7522. 915 564-6100 ext 6065.
5. **El Paso VA Health Care Clinic Update Interim Director –Mike Rielo**
 - a. The new Executive Director Mr. Froy Garza will arrive in the next 3 weeks. He is coming from Miami VA.
 - b. Money has been appropriated to start moving forward on the build for the new VA clinic. Proposals will be sent out for bidding in August. This is a design - build with one vendor.
 - c. Masks are still required at the VA. The El Paso VA is considered to be at a medium risk and will always announce requirements for entry into the facility.

6. El Paso County Veterans Assistance Program Manager – Carl Dwyer. No Update.
Not in attendance.

7. Community Update:

- a. El Paso County Veterans Advisory Board Chair update - Alexis McCray.
 - i. Early voting is ongoing now
 - ii. The County Veterans Advisory Board has a vacancy, Please send recommendations to Carl Dwyer. Opening is for Precinct 3 and the Veteran is recommended to reside in that precinct.
 - iii. The VAB has changed the eligibility for Veteran of the Year. Residence is no longer required. Applications are currently being accepted.
 - iv. Women Veterans day will be recognized by the County at Ascarate Park on June 10th at 9am
 - v. The Veterans Business Association is hosting a Golf tournament on May 21, 2022 at Painted Dunes Golf Course.
 - vi. Armed Forces Day Parade is on Ft. Bliss on May 21st at 10AM
 - vii. EPVRA and Shammaly Ford on May 22nd at 10AM
 - viii. Veterans at Breakfast will meet at the Veterans One Stop May 26th at 0830. They meet every last Thursday of the month and looking for a new leader. 50 years of age and younger is preferred.
- b. El Paso Coalition for the Homeless update- Camille Castillo – no update. Not present.

8. Discussion and Action: Assign new Committee members to Subcommittees.

- a. Victor Casas District 1 is assigned to the Employment and Homelessness subcommittees.

9. Discussion: Subcommittee Chairs update on assigned focus areas.

- a. Bruce Biegel – Employment- Achieved most all goals that have been presented to the City. Currently working to share these strategies with the municipality. Lance wants to use the We Hire Vets recognition to promote veteran Employment. He wants to pursue funding opportunities for the DOL Veteran Employment Program. Justin Rotti wants to find ways to bring Veteran friendly companies to move to El Paso. Laura wants to add the Borderplex Alliance to the conversation. Paul Albright will set up a meeting with the Economic Development department to learn how to bring Veteran Friendly organizations to El Paso. He also mentioned having a recognition ceremony for Businesses that hire Veterans. Lance asked about how to help Veteran start –ups. This conversation with the City is ongoing. The City is building a 150,000 Sq ft innovation factory for Start – ups.
- b. Melissa Harcrow – Homelessness- the Subcommittee had a great meeting which included members from the City Community Development. How will the repeal of Title 42 effect Veteran Homelessness efforts. Question was not answered. The Conversation turned to how to reinstate someone that was blacklisted from a shelter to allow them to return.
- c. Rodney Washington – Marketing and Outreach- Laura Butler briefed that they will have a meeting and talk about how to hold a meeting to move forward on goals set forth by the subcommittee.

10. Division of Veteran and Military Affairs Update.

- a. Texas Veteran Network Regional manager is Martha Garza and she is located on Ft. Bliss. Works with Combined Arms to provide resources to Veterans across the State. Will bring Combined Arms to brief the VAAC.
- b. Have reached out to Clear Channel Solutions to purchase digital billboards.
- c. Will begin working on the Veteran Resource page to update all of the information.
- d. The City has three IGSA's. Ft. Bliss just asked about putting together a 4th IGSA for Hazardous waste.
- e. Will meet with the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation in the week of May.

11. Announcements: Limited to Veteran and Military Events pertinent to the El Paso Region.

- a. Texas Women's Veterans Day will be on June 11, 2022. This is an event hosted by Senator Blanco's Office and the City of El Paso. Looking for Women Veterans to have a resolution read on their behalf. Will be at the Old Glory memorial at 10AM.
- b. Fort Bliss expo July 19 - 21, 2022.
- c. VA Cemetery flag placement for Memorial Day will be on May 28th. 8AM-12PM.
- d. May 30th Concordia Cemetery in conjunction with the City of El Paso.
- e. June 2nd 9am is the Company E memorial unveiling.
- f. Events are located on the Social Media pages. City of El Paso veteran and Military Affairs.
- g. Armed Forces Day parade on Ft. Bliss May 21st.

12. Next VAAC Meeting: June 17, 2022, at 10:00 AM MDT Virtual Meeting online.

13. Adjourn. 11:30AM

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:

The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee of the City of El Paso may retire into EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D, to discuss any of the following: (The items listed below are matters of the sort routinely discussed in Executive Session, but the Veterans Affairs Advisory Community of the City of El Paso may move to Executive Session any of the items on this agenda, consistent with the terms of the Open Meeting Act.) The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee will return to open session to take any final action and may also, at any time during the meeting, bring forward items for public discussion, as appropriate.

Section 551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY

Section 551.072 DELIBERATIONS REGARDING REAL PROPERTY

Section 551.073 DELIBERATION REGARDING PROSPECTIVE GIFTS

Section 551.074 PERSONNEL MATTERS

Section 551.076 DELIBERATION REGARDING SECURITY DEVICES

Section 551.087 DELIBERATION REGARDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NEGOTIATIONS

Sign Language interpreters will be provided for this meeting upon request. Requests must be made to the Community Development department at phone number 915-212-1654 a minimum of 48 hours prior to the date and time of the meeting. Copies of these Minutes will be provided

in Braille, large print or audiotape upon request. Requests must be made a minimum of 48 hours prior to the date and time of the meeting.

POSTED THIS 28 DAY OF July AT 12:15PM BY *Paul Albright*
PAUL ALBRIGHT.