



Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee

November 19, 2021 – 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
Melissa Harcrow
Tephane Hopper
Justin Rotti

Members Absent

Hope Jackson
Bruce Biegel

1. **Call to Order.** 10:01 AM MST.
2. **Roll Call.** 6 of 8 in attendance. **Quorum.**
3. **Discussion and Action to Approve Minutes of:** October 22, 2021. Approved.
4. **Vote to approve or disapprove absent or no-show members:** Justin Rotti. Discussed circumstances surrounding the absences and approved.
 - a. Conflict between Bylaws and City Code. If a member misses three meetings in a row, the Mayor and Council must be notified. The Bylaws state that a vote must be taken to approve or disapprove a notification. The City Code takes precedence. Bylaws must be amended.
5. **Citizen Comment Period:** Individuals limited to 3 minutes; no specific action may be taken. No comments.
6. **El Paso VA Health Care Clinic Update:** Mike Amaral, Director.
 - a. Had a vaccination clinic for veterans who live across the border. WBAMC cut power to the old building. Concerned that there may be a problem with the EPVA Clinic. Lance Lehr met with DOLVETS program. Would like to offer the VAACs support for any Homelessness Grant applied for. Will talk offline about the Homeless Stand Down Day. Need to speak with subject matter experts to figure out when to do homeless outreach, and it normally happens in September.
7. **El Paso County Veterans Assistance Program Manager** – Efren Montelongo briefed.

- a. Still doing claims but by appointment only with the County Office (Northeast or Eastside). Financial assistance grant is still active, and funds are available. If money is needed for the holiday, please have them come to the office before November 29. Checks will be issues December 6.
 - b. Veteran of the Year service was noted as wonderful by Lance Lehr.
- 8. **Community Update:** El Paso County Veterans Advisory Board Chair update - Alexis McCray. Not present.
- 9. **El Paso Coalition for the Homeless** – Camille Castillo. Not present.
- 10. **Discussion and Action:** Subcommittee Chairs update on assigned focus areas.
 - Bruce Biegel – Employment
 - Employment: Pleased to see progress made with the City HR Department. Continuing working on goals and talking point with Secretary input. Lance will be rejoining at the next meeting.
 - Hope Jackson – Homelessness
 - Homelessness: Sub has been meeting and has been waiting on a report for the Coalition for the Homeless. Looking at going to multiple organizations to learn more about what programs are offered throughout the City to aid in the homeless effort.
 - Tephanie Hopper – Marketing and Outreach
 - Marketing: Laura and Tephanie are meeting to continue working on VAAC sub talking points. Meeting was conducted between City's Chief Military Officer and the Subcommittee on the marketing plan. A meeting with the City Strategic Communication Director will be scheduled. Suicide prevention will be a part of the VAAC communication plan. Homeless and Employment Sub Committees need to communicate with the Marketing Committee for any outreach efforts. Carl Dwyer did a EPSHRM training. Mike Amaral: Consider billboard in terminal for veteran resources. Need to follow up on the hospital signs that need to be moved from the old WBAMC. It is a TXDoT sign, and they at least just need to take them down for the old hospital.
 - For all subcommittees: Developing a letter to send to Council Reps to ask for inclusion of Goals into the City Strategic Plan. This will support our main three goals. Letter drafted by Lance and edited by Laura.
- 11. **Discussion on upcoming Annual Election of Officers**
 - a. The first meeting of the calendar year will be the annual election of officers. Current Officers can perform consecutive terms.
- 12. **Division of Veteran and Military Affairs Update.**
 - a. Meeting occurred with the Director and Assistant Director of Sun Metro for going to New William Beaumont. There is no current bus route that goes anywhere near it. The bus costs about \$100 an hour to operate and ridership only cost \$1.50 before discounts. There have been a couple of meetings with Fort Bliss to ask if they will subsidize the cost, but the answer has been since appropriated funds cannot be used. Fort Bliss will take care of the transportation of the soldiers. Meetings and talks will continue to investigate other lines of funding (like TVC grants) that will help pay for the Sun Metro bus route. The Sun Metro bus stops in front of the WBAMC were built by the Army Corps of Engineers and not Sun Metro. Mike Amaral noted that there are two buses almost at the same time that drop off at the current main clinic at the old hospital. This is wasteful and Sun

Metro needs to look at ridership. Often no one is getting off the bus. Paul is going to bring it up that they should take away from that route to make a new route.

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

- a. Saturday November 20th will be a Thanksgiving lunch hosted by Endeavors and the Salvation Army for the homeless.
- b. Travis Manion Foundation is meeting at the Hoppy Monk at 6 PM November 19th.
- c. UTEP vs. Rice will be a Veteran Appreciation Game with recognition of the County Veteran of the Year.
- d. Army vs Navy – Saturday, December 11th at noon at the Veterans One Stop.

14. Next VAAC Meeting: January 21, 2022, at 10:00 AM MST Virtual Meeting online.

15. Adjourn. 10:54 AM MST.

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 1:45PM BY *Paul Albright*
PAUL ALBRIGHT.