

**County of San Diego
Health and Human Services Agency
SAN DIEGO MILITARY & VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL (SDMVAC)
Phone (858) 694-3222 * Fax (858) 505-6961**

Via Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 893 6008 3223 Passcode: 575136

**MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 2022, 6:00pm**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order by Chair Jack Harkins at 6:02 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance led by Chair Jack Harkins
3. Roll Call.

Present: Griselda Delgado, District 1.
 Danny Jackson, District 3.
 Jack Harkins, District 4.
 Mark Balmert, Member at Large Seat 6.
 Philip Kendro, Member at Large Seat 7.
 Tony Teravainen, Member at Large Seat 8.
 Jude Litzenberger, Member-at-Large Seat 9.

Absent: Paula Jansen, District 2.
 Mia Roseberry, District 5.

Guest: Anya Kuzma, National City Public Library

ACTION ITEMS

4. Authorization of Teleconferencing Meeting Option Pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(e).

Chair Jack Harkins opened discussion on potential resolution to make emergency condition and public health measures finding, for purpose of a remote special meeting in March or a remote regular meeting in April; discussion closed with no motion to do so. preference for a special meeting in March or regular meeting to take place in April for the by-laws, which could meet physically and not by virtual.

Member Jude Litzenberger recalled the previous discussion in seeking opportunity for persons to remotely participate in meetings when no declared state of emergency exists.

Member Tony Teravainen suggests approaching the County or the State on other rules that can accommodate some in hybrid. Chair Jack noted that there will be public participation someday.

Chair Jack Harkins opened floor for discussion and a motion to set a date for the April Regular Meeting. Discussion resulted in concurrence that Member's availability was acceptably high for Wednesday-April 6. Jack Harkins moved that the April 2022 Regular Meeting be held Wednesday April 6 at 3:30 pm, meeting place to be announced later.

Member Danny Jackson seconded.

No discussion.

In favor: All present.

Opposed: None.

5. **Approval of January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes.**

Moved by Chair Jack Harkins.

Seconded by Vice Chair Griselda Delgado.

No discussion.

In favor: All present.

Opposed: None.

Motion passed.

6. **Non-Agenda Public Comments.**

None.

7. **Chair Comment.**

None.

8. **Information Item: SD County Health & Human Services Department Update To Advisory Board Chairs.**

Chair Jack Harkins share the County HHSA Feb 01st advisory committee meeting was very well done with encouraging explanation in the new strategic plan. Serving the County by different agencies, take time to look up the process, most significantly the content of the strategic plan in fine graphic, where values of the mission and vision, are well so prepared. Sub-detail in budget process and how new very vigorously equity budget process is now being adopted.

9. **Information Item: 2022 Legislative Initiatives Summary.**

Chair Jack Harkins discussed that the Bill AB-1675 has been brought to us by the active-duty community for years. This has anticipated working on Chambers Defense Military Veterans Committee by Chambers of Commerce. One resolution on legislation within the state to recommend to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) as County governance give support to this measure, pass, and enacted in the law by legislature in the government.

Ex-Officio Wil Quintong commented that judgment normally will go to Office of Strategy and Innovation (OSI) and any cap legislation that the county tries to support this measure.

Member Mark Balmert suggests bringing this to legislation and have the County Board of Supervisors to write letters to various committees that support legislation. AB-1675 might go through the other organizations' help in drafting in particular word in making the letter. The committee recommendation should not be edited and should go straight to the BOS and not to other organizations.

Member Mark stressed that AB-1675 was largely drafted by Kelly Douglas, Department of Defense Family Liaison to the western region. She drafted and work with Chris Ward in supporting organization for this legislation to meet with teachers' union to make sure there's no objection from the union.

Vice Chair Griselda extend her complete support of AB-1675, there's a need for every avenue of teachers who are credentialed.

Chair Jack open for motion that council resolve to recommend that the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors support the passage and enactment of AB-1675 by the Legislature and the Governor.

Member Tony Teravainen made the motion that the government of San Diego County support passage and enactment of AB-1675 as written.

Seconded by Member Phil Kendro.

All votes were in favor.

Opposed: None.

Motion passed.

Member Mark on Bill AB-305 mentioned, it is a more complicated assembly bill. There's a cause associated with the legislative session. Navy and Marine Corps liaisons to the legislature have asked for help to move the measure into active status and support passage. There's a large number of veterans' benefits but they are not identified.

Chair Jack noted if there's any member of the council who would find essential information on the bill, it is worth giving recommendation to it.

10. **Information Item: Military and Veterans Actions and Events.**

Ex-Officio Wil Quintong report:

In July of 2021, OMVA is now under Self-Sufficiency Services (SSS), no longer under the Aging and Independent Services, they go hand in hand, they serve a lot of clients that need money / services. Currently coordinating outreach efforts utilizing the Live-Well on Wheels Mobile unit. There's a successful collaboration in Borrego Springs, one in Valley Center, Campo, Ramona, Alpine coming-up on Mar 07th and currently looking at Julian. The mobile unit, help veterans, together with SSS, helping with CALFRESH, etc.

In 2020 prior covid, the Veterans Services Rep (VSR) appointment wait times was basically 8-10 weeks since covid and been doing virtual counselling. It has reduced drastically to an average of 1 week for a veteran to speak to a VSR. This was probably due to the new service delivery model and addition of several service representatives. The current goal is to maintain that average of 1 week.

County attempted VetConnect system expansion to Tijuana, by installing a VetConnect system at the Deported Veteran Support House location known as "The Bunker".

Covid struck further restrictions that prevented the system equipment installation. Since covid restrictions have lifted, the deported veteran support house is trying to move into a different facility.

County keeping four staff members in the Vet Connect program, Chair of the Board Nathan Fletcher put this into motion where he named it "Leave no veteran behind". Still seeking additional facility to be another VetConnect site. Chris Gunn will be retiring on Mar 15th, that will be another Sr Veteran Services Rep position to be looking for.

Also, a vacant Veteran Services Rep position, was offered to 3 different folks who all declined after the interview. A couple of them are out of state. If coming from other state, kind of pretty tough in coming to San Diego with the high cost of living.

An Office Support Specialist (OSS) is going thru background check in place of Jennie Reza.

The College Fee Waiver (CFW) new income level went up to \$14,097.00, for 2023, is now out from \$13,465, better for dependents/students working because they can make up a little bit more before they disqualify themselves from the CALVET CFW.

The projected prevention fund state did approve additional convention funding of \$5.2M to \$11M that can be distributed among County in California. LA County is a recipient of a lot of this money. The reason for that is the workload unit, LA has over 20 VSRs, we got 13, they have more than 30K veterans. That gives credits to how well my VSRs are getting out veterans' disability.

San Diego have the highest utilization rate among all counties in the state, about 37% means how many of the 255k vets in the county that are receiving VA benefits: San Bernardino is the 3rd, they got about a 100K veterans, and they are very successful in medical cost avoidance. They were able to sign up many of their veterans to the VA healthcare system.

Livewell-on-Wheels will be out in Alpine on Mar 07th with Self-Sufficiency Services. Looking at Julian, Fallbrook, Chula Vista, National City, Coronado - those are all targets to take the mobile unit go out to where the veterans are. Trying to keep performance up and serve quarter a million veterans in San Diego.

Member Danny ask if there is any way to tag along in going to rural areas to observe. Wil agreed, the mobile unit will be out in Alpine on Mar 07th near their library. Tim Mathues will contact him and make sure he gets the info on the time and location.

Vice Chair Griselda ask if council could hybrid invite some speakers, to give a little update and the actual experiences to know what is really going on there. Also asked if the mobile units can go to schools. Wil replied yes, like up in Campo. There wasn't enough room at the library parking lot for the mobile unit, so it is parked at the VFW down the street.

11. **Information Item: Council Member activity reports.**

Member Jude Litzenberger on significant federal class action lawsuit. Yale Law school veteran's clinic are doing a lot of litigation regarding discharge upgrades. Their findings that certain rules were in place given by the Hagen memo deserves a review, huge cases were turned down.

Vice Chair Griselda ask if anyone is interested, Supervisor Vargas invited attendance to a Veteran Health round table discussion. This is the opportunity for them to have a representative to join this meeting. Time and date and are not decided yet.

12. **Discussion Item: Priorities for Council attention and initiative.** None.

13. **Adjournment.** Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED:

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