



City of Las Cruces[®]

Veterans Advisory Board Agenda

The following Agenda will be considered at a regular meeting of the Veterans Advisory Board to be held June 27, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall, Council Chambers, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

1. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum
2. Acceptance of Agenda
3. Veterans Advisory Board Minutes

Documents:

[05-23-23 VAB MINUTES.PDF](#)

4. Recognitions
 - 4.1 Veterans Corner-Chair
5. Board Member Reports
 - 5.1 Board Reports
 - 5.2 City Staff comments
6. Public Participation
 - 6.1 Public comment (3 minutes)
7. Old Business
 - 7.1 Veterans Memorial Park- Parking lot expansion update.
 - 7.2 Veterans' Memorial Park- City Council decision on memorial.
8. New Business
 - 8.1 July 4th Parade route

- 8.2 New VAB Board Appointees
- 8.3 Draft VAB By-Laws

9. Reminders

July 4th- Independence Day

July 27-- Korean War Veterans Armistice Day

July 27- Next VAB Meeting

10. Adjournment

If you need an accommodation for a disability to enable you to fully participate in this event, please contact us 72 hours before this event at [528-3473/V](tel:528-3473) or [528-4211/TTY](tel:528-4211).

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CITY OF LAS CRUCES

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

May 23, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Karen Woods, UMW of Southwest - Chair
Rod Gajewski, MOPH
John Poland, American Legion #10
Victor Eres, USMC
Lawrence "Sam" Bothern, DAV #10
Patrick Ramirez, VFW 10124
Christine Sautter, MOAA

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jesse Addison, VFW 3242
Daniel Ansbach, Special Forces #80
Michael Cano, Member at large No. 3
Hector Sanchez, Member at Large No. 2-Student
James Turner, Member at Large No. 1

STAFF PRESENT:

Larry Nichols, Director Community Development Department, CLC
Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

OTHERS:

Montevis Price
Heidi Blair
Dawn Smith

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chair Woods called the meeting to order.

ALL STAND FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Chair Woods asked all to remain standing and read. "For Vietnam of America, Chapter 431: On Saturday May 13, 2023, at 7:00 a.m., I Vice President Fredrick Madrid, received a call from our Chapter Chaplain Larry Orvis. He advised that Lt. Colonel Elsa J. Baker had passed away. Lt Colonel Baker was born in April 1944. She was retired Air Force. Lt. Colonel Baker was our Chapter's Treasurer and Secretary. She was 79 when she passed away."

1 Chair Woods stated that Lt. Colonel Baker and her husband Walt are very active
2 within the community itself. Her bio is online. She was instrumental with getting
3 the Veterans Park done.
4

5 A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR LT. COLONEL ELSA J. BAKER.
6

7 A quorum was determined to be present.
8

9 **2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

10 Motion to accept the agenda was made by Victor Eres; seconded by John Poland.
11 Motion passed.
12

13
14 **3. VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES - March 28, 2023**

15 Motion to accept the minutes was made by Rod Gajewski; seconded by John
16 Poland. Motion passed.
17

18
19 **4. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

20
21 **4.1 BOARD REPORTS**

22
23 **Victor Eres - Marine Corps League (USMC)** - As of the last meeting in
24 April the Honor Guard provided funeral honors for eight veterans. Also
25 provided two Color Guards, one for the Run for the Wall when they were in
26 town, and following day at the ceremony at Veterans Park. For Memorial
27 Day they have Candlelight Vigil on May 29th. They will be placing flags at
28 Masonic Cemetery on May 28th, 0800.
29

30 **John Poland - American Legion Post 10** - They had the privilege of having
31 the American Legion National Commander attend the post on April 25th.
32 He spoke about suicide prevention which is one of his main goal is getting
33 the word out about suicide prevention which is a national emergency.
34 Approximately 22 veterans per day are lost to suicide. His motto is "Be the
35 One," and encourages everybody to look for the signs of suicide and getting
36 them the help, they need. Picking up litter at the Veterans Memorial Park
37 each Monday. May is American Legion Month and they consider it a
38 privilege doing that. May 19th, they fed about 275 riders in the Run for the
39 Wall, heading to Washington, DC from Ontario, California. Thanked Chair
40 Woods for coming out at 3:00 a.m. to help cook the breakfast for the 275
41 riders. American Legion District 7 meeting in Silver City on May 13th. At
42 that meeting Post 10 was privileged to present the department with a check
43 for \$1,000 for the Children and Youth Program that the American Legion
44 sponsors. Post 10 will be sponsoring the American Legion State
45 Convention here in Las Cruces at the end of June. There was an Honor
46 Flight at the end of April with 33 plus guardians to Washington, DC. Next

1 Honor Flight leaves on September 28th. On May 28th placing flags on the
2 veterans' gravesites at St. Joseph's Cemetery on Espina.

3
4 **Lawrence "Sam" Bothern - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) #10 -**
5 Fundraiser currently going on through Memorial Day at Golden Corral.
6 Flags at the Doña Ana Cemetery on morning of May 27th, 0800, for about
7 60 flags. The Commander and Mr. Bothern will be going to the state
8 convention in Albuquerque mid-June.

9
10 **Rod Gajewski - Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) -** In June
11 United Military Women of the Southwest have the park clean up. May 29th
12 starting with sponsors arriving at 7:00, have the Candlelight Ceremony, and
13 they would appreciate any people to stand by for people who no-show. The
14 ceremony will start at 8:00, May 29th.

15
16 **Christine Sautter - Military Officers Association of America -**
17 Completed all awards to the local high schools JRTC programs, and
18 NMSU JROTC Army and Air Force program. Also lost another member,
19 Bob Whitworth, Vietnam Vet, prolific writer about his time in Vietnam.

20
21 **Patrick Ramirez - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 10124 -** Usual Friday
22 night karaoke with meal of cheeseburger and fries for nominal fee. Last
23 Sunday of the month have post breakfast at 11:00 a.m. for donation if
24 possible. Haircuts from 12:00-3:00 p.m. May 29th, Ceremony at the River
25 at 8:00 a.m.

26 27 **4.2 CITY STAFF COMMENTS**

28
29 Larry Nichols stated he was honored to address the Run for the Wall
30 participants last Friday. Many of the riders mentioned Las Cruces Veterans
31 Memorial Park is the premiere stop on their ride from California to
32 Washington, DC. It is a well-maintained park. He will attend the Candlelight
33 Ceremony Memorial Day. June 5th City Council meeting agenda will
34 include Gonzales request. Chair Woods asked if any of the City Council
35 attended the Run for the Wall Ceremony, and Larry Nichols attended on the
36 Council's behalf. Disappointing that no City Councilor attended.

37
38 Rod Gajewski mentioned there was flag raising a week ago for Peace
39 Officers Association; only two peace officers attended who were two
40 marshals, no City representatives attended.

41 42 **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

43
44 Montavis Price stated they have their anniversary ceremony this afternoon at
45 4:00 at the courthouse, Court Room #1. There is one graduate who will be

1 speaking about how she entered and arrived at healthy living. Chair Wood
2 introduced Heidi Blair to Montevis Price.

3
4 Heidi Blair started her business, Transforming Life with Heidi. May 24th at 1:00
5 she has a transforming life information session discussing three different laws of
6 growth. Chair Woods stated there is pro golf happening for veterans and asked
7 what Heidi thought of the program. Heidi Blair stated P.J. Hope is the golf
8 program that is offering instruction to any veterans that would like to attend. It is
9 a six-week program to be at University Golf Course. This session is already full.
10 Another session will be in September, with another six-week session and there
11 were about three slots still open. The program starts with basics of how to hold
12 the golf club, etc.

13
14 **6. OLD BUSINESS**

15
16 **6.1 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK - PARKING LOT EXPANSION UPDATE**

17
18 Larry Nichols stated he spoke to David Viarreal of Public Works and asked
19 the status of the parking lot expansion. The plans are now complete. They
20 will be going solicitation of bids early June. Once received and reviewed by
21 the Selection Advisory Board with the intent of awarding bid and issuing
22 notification notices to proceed, probably about mid to late July.

23
24 **7. NEW BUSINESS**

25
26 Dawn Smith (915) 227-1253, program support assistant for Home Based Primary
27 Care (HBPC), Medical foster home. They have partnered with Casa de Peregrinos
28 and are delivering food to veterans in need. They will be participating in the 4th of
29 July parade. They are searing for other ideas with veterans' groups to collaborate
30 with.

31
32 Chair Woods asked about the theme for the 4th of July parade. Larry Nichols will
33 acquire that information. Dawn Smith stated it is posted on the City of Las Cruces
34 website, and applications are at Frank Papen Community Center and due by June
35 26th by 5:00 p.m.

36
37 Rod Gajewski asked how HBPC are doing with home veteran sponsors. Dawn
38 Smith stated NMSU has a huge proponent for veterans, military veterans, school
39 academics. There is a huge event downtown for every type of military organization
40 and they will set up a booth and then able to recruit homes to be a part of the
41 program. Home Based Medical Care and then Medical Foster Home is under that.
42 If a veteran is not able to get to CBOC (Community Based Outpatient Clinic) or the
43 main VA, ours is in El Paso, then HBPC will help support that veteran. Should the
44 veteran be unable to remain home alone, they will locate a medical foster home.
45 Currently in Las Cruces there are three medical foster homes, and El Paso has 23.
46 They do work with DAV for transportation, and Vets Center. They are also getting

1 donations for bus ride tickets for veterans. Rod Gajewski needs specifics for travel
2 donations and then Purple Heart would contribute. Dawn stated they do things
3 throughout Las Cruces and El Paso, and recently attended a two-day summit in El
4 Paso. The summit included presentations for veterans and the services that were
5 offered.

6
7 Rod Gajewski asked if Peak Medical was decertified, no longer part of the VA.
8 Monteviz Price stated that Peak is not a part of the VA, but since there are no
9 residential programs or detox facilities, they use Peak for those treatment.

10 11 **SERVICE DOG PROGRAM**

12
13 Andrea Joseph with Four Paws and a Wake Up. Aly Delao the trainer with a dog
14 to present.

15
16 Demonstration of the service dogs' abilities was presented. This included picking
17 up various objects of size, shape, form, also laser pickup if the item is more of an
18 unknown to the dog, standing watch such as an ATM. Also includes triggering on
19 PTSD symptoms to help.

20
21 Andrea Joseph states they have a 4,000 square foot training facility here in Las
22 Cruces. All dogs are trained on a treadmill for exercise, as some veterans are
23 unable to truly get the dog full exercise due to their own mobility issues. Teach
24 dogs to wake up people from night terror. They do need veterans to sign up for
25 dogs. The pairing of dog and veteran, look at dog's strengths and the veterans'
26 needs. They will come and do presentations. They do have a dog that has been
27 trained, but unfortunately, she is very dog-obsessed so focus on dog and not her
28 service, therefore not able to be a service dog. There are no fees or charges to
29 the veteran. Only have fees if dog is repurposed as a pet, general public request
30 a nominal adoption fee. They are starting an owner assisted program to see if
31 someone's dog can become a service dog, and this program will necessitate a fee.
32 Training a dog takes 12-24 months. Website - k94paws.org.

33 34 **7.1 BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

35
36 Chair Woods stated there are a couple underway. Wayne will be putting in an
37 application. Also get 6917 back onto the Board. Mr. Pullen has filled out his
38 application. Mr. Madrid has done paperwork.

39
40 Larry Nichols stated there are three, possibly four, appointments that need to be
41 presented to the Mayor to bring them before City Council.

42 43 **8. REMINDERS**

44
45 **8.1 MAY 29 - MEMORIAL DAY (HALF-STAFF UNTIL 1200 HOURS) -**
46 **GARRISON FLAG**

- 1 **8.2 JUNE 14 - FLAG DAY**
- 2 **8.3 JUNE 18 - FATHER'S DAY**
- 3 **8.4 JUNE 27 - NEXT MEETING**

4

5 **9. ADJOURNMENT (10:06)**

6

7 Motion to adjourn made by Christine Sauter; seconded by Rod Gajewski. Motion

8 passed.

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Chairperson