The following Agenda will be considered at a regular meeting of the Veterans Advisory Board to be held July 25, 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
   - 3.1

Documents:

06-27-23 VAB MINUTES.PDF

4. Recognitions
   - 4.1 Veterans Corner-Chair
   - 4.2 Certificates Of Appreciation

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 VAB Appointments
   - Jason Ferguson- Military Order of the Purple Heart
   - Fred Madrid- Vietnam Veterans of America
   - John Poland- American Legion Post 10
   - James (JR) Turner- VFW Post 10124

8. New Business
8.1 Veterans Memorial Park Event Permits
8.2 City transit tickets for veterans

9. Reminders

July 27 -- Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
August 7 -- Purple Hear Day
August 29 -- 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 or 528-4211/TTY.

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Posted July 21, 2023
CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chair Woods called the meeting to order. A quorum was determined to be present.

ALL STAND FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Motion to accept the agenda was made by Rod Gajewski; seconded by John Poland. Motion passed.
3. VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES - May 23, 2023

For the minutes, Chair Woods requested clarification from Mr. Madrid on what he was Vice-President of, which is Chapter 431 of the Vietnam Veterans of America. This was on page one of the May 23, 2023 VAB minutes. John Poland mentioned page 4, item 7, New Business, first paragraph, last sentence, "searing" should be "searching."

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

4. RECOGNITION

4.1 Veterans Corner-Chair

Sam Bothern stated they are having a workshop for helping veterans file claims on August 29th, held at the Mesilla Community Center 0900-1300. Fliers were passed out.

5. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

5.1 BOARD REPORTS

John Poland - American Legion Post 10 - Post 10 hosted a very successful State American Legion Convention last Thursday - Sunday. It was very successful. Robert Rodriguez from Albuquerque was elected the new Department of New Mexico Commander. Ed Torrez of Las Cruces was elected Department of New Mexico Vice-Commander for the southwest area of the state, which Post 10 is a part.

Victor Eres - Marine Corps League (USMC) - This past month the detachment did funeral honors for four veterans. Also participated in two color guards. The detachment will be involved in providing a color guard for the Electric Light Parade on July 3rd. Also a color guard for the fireworks display on July 4th, evening, prior to fireworks.

Daniel Ansbach - Special Forces #80 - Nothing to report.

Lawrence "Sam" Bothern - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) #10 - Nothing to report, other than the aforementioned workshop in August.

Rod Gajewski - Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) - Nothing to report.
James Turner - Member at Large No. 1 - Asked staff when the transition from At Large position to 10124. Larry Nichols stated he will be making the announcements under new business, but it will be at the next City Council meeting. Nothing else to report.

Patrick Ramirez - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 10124 - Nothing to report.

Karen Woods - UMW of Southwest - Showed a printout from the City website that shows the termination dates of the Board Members. UMW are in the works of holding another Veterans Health Fair, and Dawn is helping. That fair will be October 16th. One with VFW 10124 and one to be held at the American Legion, to reach more veterans. September 8th at 5:00 a.m. to noon, American Legion, having pancake breakfast, this will help Honor Flight. Additional information will be forthcoming, order online and swing by. December 9th annual Bingo, also at American Legion, starting at 1:00, doors open at 11:00 a.m.

Christine Sautter - MOAA - Nothing to report as they are on summer break.

5.2 CITY STAFF COMMENTS

Larry Nichols stated he will defer comments to New Business section.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Heidi Blair from Transforming Life with Heidi, she is coaching, teaching, and speaking. As a military member she felt overlooked and left behind. She is now a Maxwell Leadership Certified coach, teacher, and speaker. Also a couple of books certified to give speeches. She is hoping to do some free coaching, teaching, and speaking at the library and any of the organizations represented on this Board. Currently doing a mastermind on the 15 laws of growth that meets on Wednesday afternoon at 1:00 virtually. She and Crystal went to El Paso to a women’s veterans symposium. They are looking at November 10th, VFW 6917 to sponsor.

Victor Durham stated he supporting the Marine Corps League. And was interested in talking about the unfortunate incident at Veterans Park, which will be addressed later in the meeting.

Dolores Archuleta, Chair of Veterans Memorial Wall. She is here on behalf on Andres Rivera of the Marine Corps League. His complaint at the City Council on June 20th was that he was being charged for doing a color guard or memorial service at Veterans Park and he needed a permit as well. The Mayor did not know details but to e-mail him. The service was for was veteran George A. George.
Also mentioned needed insurance for performing in the park. She did contact Parks and Rec and was informed a permit and insurance is needed. Robert Nunez, Interim Parks and Recreation Director stated that all events at Veterans Park are permitted for time, date, etc. Depending on the type of event, if it is open to the public the City requests the user get insurance. Rod Gajewski stated the Marine Corps League was informed that they had to have a noise permit, but in the past 25 years they did not need a noise permit. Robert Nunez stated they will do an internal procedure specific to Veterans Park for all staff for standard operating procedures for the park. Larry Nichols mentioned that when Veterans Park acquired the Special Use Permit, that is when the permitting began.

Montevis Price stated from the veterans outreach program they had one graduate, which is the sixth consecutive graduate that came to them without housing, healthcare treatments. They currently have six clients, with three that are pending. There is vacancy for program coordinator. Their mental health treatment is routed through Peak. Also having the home stand down on October 20th at VFW 10124.

Sam Jones from Las Cruces Vet Center. The Vet Center is now open and bringing groups back into the Vet Center as of last week.

Dawn Armstrong she has some questions about Veterans Park and where to obtain the insurance and who is the company. Chair Woods stated it is online, e-event, and costs about $129. It was mentioned to check with personal insurance also for event insurance. She felt using personal insurance was "shady." Robert Nunez will include all information on the website. Bus tickets on Sun Metro veterans ride free, but she does not know the policies or procedures. Larry Nichols will look into local bus and their policies and procedures. October 16th American Legion event for health and wellness fare.

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.1 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK - PARKING LOT EXPANSION UPDATE

Larry Nichols stated he spoke with Public Works Department and the construction documents are 100% complete, and ready to go out to bid starting first week of July. Bids will be required to be submitted by August 1st. A contract selection will be mid-August to September. Notice to proceed will be after the first week of September, early to mid-fall 2023.

7.2 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK - CITY COUNCIL DECISION ON MEMORIAL

Larry Nichols deferred to Chair Woods. Chair Woods stated she did not care for the answer. The City has policies dealing with monuments, and during the Council session the policies were not even taken into consideration. Veterans were insulted. The indicators were Council was
making an exception to the rule. There were two votes on this, and both times voted no. The Council had already made up their minds prior to voicing their votes. Chair Woods was insulted personally when the Council stated about various family members in the services, but what child is buried in Arlington Cemetery, Ft. Bliss - None. They are setting their own precedence here to let this happen. There is complete understanding of tragic loss of a loved one, and everyone deals with that individually, all service members have and do deal. Chair Woods asked if the Board would like to compose a letter addressed to the Mayor. The VAB exists to advise, and the Council was advised by the VAB on how they felt about this situation. Board Members have questioned why have a Board if Council doesn't listen. The Board's general consensus was in agreement to write the letter to the Mayor. It was mentioned that in private conversations the Mayor was in agreement with veterans, but then voted against. Rod Gajewski states that this decision assuages the guilt of the parents for not watching their child. There are no winners in this situation. Veterans are 10% of the voting population. It was mentioned that a few members of the Board have resigned based on this issue. Chair Woods will acquire information from all Board Members and get the letter written soon. The Council voted on a bench and a tree as a memorial. The City staff will be working with the family on placement.

Lester Dale Palmer suggested slowing down the new parking lot. He has been here 15 years. Stated if this Board is in charge of Veterans Park, put the parking lot off. If none of the veterans words are good to the City Council, why do a parking lot that is going to benefit apartments next door. He stated that the veterans and the parking are being blamed for the child's death. He suggested going to the United Veterans Council working with them, not the City. He stated the City Council is not fair and is a click. They let Mr. Gonzales speak more than the three minutes and the other veterans were limited to three minutes. Larry Nichols verified that Mr. Gonzales did have numerous times to speak during the Council meeting. Rod Gajewski stated this Board is an advisory board and agrees in part with Mr. Palmer and all the Board Members are offended by being overruled. And this Board does not have the right to stop the parking lot. Stopping of the parking lot would be detrimental as when there are events people have to park on Roadrunner Parkway and it is unsafe.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 JULY 4TH PARADE ROUTE

Larry Nichols stated the route is starting at Apodaca Park, proceed south on Solano, east to Hadley, end at Maag Park. Robert Nunez stated there will be a fun run and a 5k starting at approximately 7:00 prior to the parade. As soon as the sun is starting to set the parade will start, approximately
8:30-ish. Parade will be led by the color guard, and the parade marshals, who were announced yesterday.

8.2 NEW VAB BOARD APPOINTEES

Larry Nichols stated all applications and information has been provided to the City Clerk's office. There will be four Board appointments made at the next City Council meeting (July 3). The names are J.R. Turner, John Poland, Fred Madrid, and Jason Ferguson. Chair Woods will check with the City Clerk to see if Jesse Addison was removed. She also mentioned Mr. Wayne Rossman would like to be on the Board, and with J.R. sliding to Patrick's spot (VFW 10124), she would like to recommend Mr. Rossman for an At Large position. Larry Nichols stated the protocol is for people to submit their application so the City Clerk can prepare for Mayor to make the appointment.

8.3 DRAFT VAB BYLAWS

Larry Nichols stated that the Chair had requested a draft bylaws for this Board. He will initiate that. Rod Gajewski stated there are bylaws in place and he remembers a modification when Purple Heart was added, approximately seven-eight years ago. Larry Nichols mentioned there is an ordinance to establish the composition of the Board and described basic duties of the Board, but not sure if that was the bylaws requested by the Chair. He will look into this.

Dolores Archuleta stated all this information is in an ordinance, not separate bylaws for this Board. Chair Woods mentioned that Parks and Rec have bylaws and suggested this Board need a set of bylaws.

Dan Ansbach asked about the family that wants the bench and tree for their daughter, is the City paying or the family? Larry Nichols stated the family has the responsibility for paying for the memorial. The City will have responsibility for installation for any type anchorage required.

Christine Sautter felt that at the City Council meeting was not run as it should have been. Mr. Gonzales was allowed to speak way over the time that any of the veterans were allowed to speak. And did not appreciate his comments. She feels the letter is a good thing and go on record telling the City Council they do not agree with their decision.

Chair Woods stated a comment was made by Mr. Gonzales or one of the Council members, they said "the VAB does not know what they’re talking about, we’re just too old."

9. REMINDERS
Chair Woods mentioned the above reminders for July. James Turner stated the Garrison Flag would be on the Fourth of July, 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. retreat. The Korean War Armistice is the 27th. He has schedules on fliers. Chair Woods displayed a list of the Board Members and their dates on the Board. She then asked if this meeting is their last meeting. Larry Nichols stated the Board Members currently seated will maintain that until the new appointees are made, and then have the opportunity to step down. For the Board Members stepping down, please attend the following meeting as the City would like to a brief recognition and appreciation of their service on the Board.

9. **ADJOURNMENT (10:25)**

Motion to adjourn made by Daniel Ansbach; seconded by Lawrence (Sam) Bothern. Motion passed.

Chairperson