



Veterans Advisory Board Agenda

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](tel:528-3473) or [528-4211/TTY](tel:528-4211).

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Posted July 21, 2023



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

June 27, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Karen Woods, UMW of Southwest - Chair
Rod Gajewski, MOPH
Daniel Ansbach, Special Forces #80
Christine Sautter, MOAA
John Poland, American Legion #10
Victor Eres, USMC
Lawrence "Sam" Bothern, DAV #10
Patrick Ramirez, VFW 10124
Hector Sanchez, Member at Large No. 2-Student
James Turner, Member at Large No. 1
Michael Cano, Member at large No. 3

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jesse Addison, VFW 3242

STAFF PRESENT:

Larry Nichols, Director Community Development Department, CLC
Robert Nunez, Interim Director Parks and Recreation Department, CLC
Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

OTHERS:

LD Palmer
Heidi Blare
Crystal
Montevis Price
Dolores Archuleta
Dawn Armstrong

1. 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.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

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

1
2 **3. VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES - May 23, 2023**
3

4 For the minutes, Chair Woods requested clarification from Mr. Madrid on what he
5 was Vice-President of, which is Chapter 431 of the Vietnam Veterans of America.
6 This was on page one of the May 23, 2023 VAB minutes. John Poland mentioned
7 page 4, item 7, New Business, first paragraph, last sentence, "searing" should be
8 "searching."
9

10 Motion to accept the amended minutes was made by Rod Gajewski; seconded by
11 John Poland. Motion passed.
12

13 **4. RECOGNITION**
14

15 **4.1 Veterans Corner-Chair**
16

17 Sam Bothern stated they are having a workshop for helping veterans file
18 claims on August 29th, held at the Mesilla Community Center 0900-1300.
19 Fliers were passed out.
20

21 **5. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**
22

23 **5.1 BOARD REPORTS**
24

25 **John Poland - American Legion Post 10** - Post 10 hosted a very
26 successful State American Legion Convention last Thursday - Sunday. It
27 was very successful. Robert Rodriguez from Albuquerque was elected the
28 new Department of New Mexico Commander. Ed Torrez of Las Cruces was
29 elected Department of New Mexico Vice-Commander for the southwest
30 area of the state, which Post 10 is a part.
31

32 **Victor Eres - Marine Corps League (USMC)** - This past month the
33 detachment did funeral honors for four veterans. Also participated in two
34 color guards. The detachment will be involved in providing a color guard
35 for the Electric Light Parade on July 3rd. Also a color guard for the fireworks
36 display on July 4th, evening, prior to fireworks.
37

38 **Daniel Ansbach - Special Forces #80** - Nothing to report.
39

40 **Lawrence "Sam" Bothern - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) #10** -
41 Nothing to report, other than the aforementioned workshop in August.
42

43 **Rod Gajewski - Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)** - Nothing to
44 report.
45

1 **James Turner - Member at Large No. 1** - Asked staff when the transition
2 from At Large position to 10124. Larry Nichols stated he will be making the
3 announcements under new business, but it will be at the next City Council
4 meeting. Nothing else to report.

5
6 **Patrick Ramirez - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 10124** - Nothing to
7 report.

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

18
19 **Christine Sautter - MOAA** - Nothing to report as they are on summer
20 break.

21
22 **5.2 CITY STAFF COMMENTS**

23
24 Larry Nichols stated he will defer comments to New Business section.

25
26 **6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

27
28 Heidi Blair from Transforming Life with Heidi, she is coaching, teaching, and
29 speaking. As a military member she felt overlooked and left behind. She is now
30 a Maxwell Leadership Certified coach, teacher, and speaker. Also a couple of
31 books certified to give speeches. She is hoping to do some free coaching,
32 teaching, and speaking at the library and any of the organizations represented on
33 this Board. Currently doing a mastermind on the 15 laws of growth that meets on
34 Wednesday afternoon at 1:00 virtually. She and Crystal went to El Paso to a
35 women's veterans symposium. They are looking at November 10th, VFW 6917 to
36 sponsor.

37
38 Victor Durham stated he supporting the Marine Corps League. And was interested
39 in talking about the unfortunate incident at Veterans Park, which will be addressed
40 later in the meeting.

41
42 Dolores Archuleta, Chair of Veterans Memorial Wall. She is here on behalf on
43 Andres Rivera of the Marine Corps League. His complaint at the City Council on
44 June 20th was that he was being charged for doing a color guard or memorial
45 service at Veterans Park and he needed a permit as well. The Mayor did not know
46 details but to e-mail him. The service was for was veteran George A. George.

1 Also mentioned needed insurance for performing in the park. She did contact
2 Parks and Rec and was informed a permit and insurance is needed. Robert
3 Nunez, Interim Parks and Recreation Director stated that all events at Veterans
4 Park are permitted for time, date, etc. Depending on the type of event, if it is open
5 to the public the City requests the user get insurance. Rod Gajewski stated the
6 Marine Corps League was informed that they had to have a noise permit, but in
7 the past 25 years they did not need a noise permit. Robert Nunez stated they will
8 do an internal procedure specific to Veterans Park for all staff for standard
9 operating procedures for the park. Larry Nichols mentioned that when Veterans
10 Park acquired the Special Use Permit, that is when the permitting began.

11
12 Montevis Price stated from the veterans outreach program they had one graduate,
13 which is the sixth consecutive graduate that came to them without housing,
14 healthcare treatments. They currently have six clients, with three that are pending.
15 There is vacancy for program coordinator. Their mental health treatment is routed
16 through Peak. Also having the home stand down on October 20th at VFW 10124.

17
18 Sam Jones from Las Cruces Vet Center. The Vet Center is now open and bringing
19 groups back into the Vet Center as of last week.

20
21 Dawn Armstrong she has some questions about Veterans Park and where to
22 obtain the insurance and who is the company. Chair Woods stated it is online, e-
23 event, and costs about \$129. It was mentioned to check with personal insurance
24 also for event insurance. She felt using personal insurance was "shady." Robert
25 Nunez will include all information on the website. Bus tickets on Sun Metro
26 veterans ride free, but she does not know the policies or procedures. Larry Nichols
27 will look into local bus and their policies and procedures. October 16th American
28 Legion event for health and wellness fare.

29
30 **7. OLD BUSINESS**

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32 **7.1 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK - PARKING LOT EXPANSION UPDATE**

33
34 Larry Nichols stated he spoke with Public Works Department and the
35 construction documents are 100% complete, and ready to go out to bid
36 starting first week of July. Bids will be required to be submitted by August
37 1st. A contactor selection will be mid-August to September. Notice to
38 proceed will be after the first week of September, early to mid-fall 2023.

39
40 **7.2 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK - CITY COUNCIL DECISION ON**
41 **MEMORIAL**

42
43 Larry Nichols deferred to Chair Woods. Chair Woods stated she did not
44 care for the answer. The City has policies dealing with monuments, and
45 during the Council session the policies were not even taken into
46 consideration. Veterans were insulted. The indicators were Council was

1 making an exception to the rule. There were two votes on this, and both
2 times voted no. The Council had already made up their minds prior to
3 voicing their votes. Chair Woods was insulted personally when the Council
4 stated about various family members in the services, but what child is buried
5 in Arlington Cemetery, Ft. Bliss - None. They are setting their own
6 precedence here to let this happen. There is complete understanding of
7 tragic loss of a loved one, and everyone deals with that individually, all
8 service members have and do deal. Chair Woods asked if the Board would
9 like to compose a letter addressed to the Mayor. The VAB exists to advise,
10 and the Council was advised by the VAB on how they felt about this
11 situation. Board Members have questioned why have a Board if Council
12 doesn't listen. The Board's general consensus was in agreement to write
13 the letter to the Mayor. It was mentioned that in private conversations the
14 Mayor was in agreement with veterans, but then voted against. Rod
15 Gajewski states that this decision assuages the guilt of the parents for not
16 watching their child. There are no winners in this situation. Veterans are
17 10% of the voting population. It was mentioned that a few members of the
18 Board have resigned based on this issue. Chair Woods will acquire
19 information from all Board Members and get the letter written soon. The
20 Council voted on a bench and a tree as a memorial. The City staff will be
21 working with the family on placement.

22
23 Lester Dale Palmer suggested slowing down the new parking lot. He has
24 been here 15 years. Stated if this Board is in charge of Veterans Park, put
25 the parking lot off. If none of the veterans words are good to the City
26 Council, why do a parking lot that is going to benefit apartments next door.
27 He stated that the veterans and the parking are being blamed for the child's
28 death. He suggested going to the United Veterans Council working with
29 them, not the City. He stated the City Council is not fair and is a click. They
30 let Mr. Gonzales speak more than the three minutes and the other veterans
31 were limited to three minutes. Larry Nichols verified that Mr. Gonzales did
32 have numerous times to speak during the Council meeting. Rod Gajewski
33 stated this Board is an advisory board and agrees in part with Mr. Palmer
34 and all the Board Members are offended by being overruled. And this Board
35 does not have the right to stop the parking lot. Stopping of the parking lot
36 would be detrimental as when there are events people have to park on
37 Roadrunner Parkway and it is unsafe.

38
39 **8. NEW BUSINESS**

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41 **8.1 JULY 4TH PARADE ROUTE**

42
43 Larry Nichols stated the route is starting at Apodaca Park, proceed south
44 on Solano, east to Hadley, end at Maag Park. Robert Nunez stated there
45 will be a fun run and a 5k starting at approximately 7:00 prior to the parade.
46 As soon as the sun is starting to set the parade will start, approximately

1 8:30-ish. Parade will be led by the color guard, and the parade marshals,
2 who were announced yesterday.
3

4 **8.2 NEW VAB BOARD APPOINTEES**

5
6 Larry Nichols stated all applications and information has been provided to
7 the City Clerk's office. There will be four Board appointments made at the
8 next City Council meeting (July 3). The names are J.R. Turner, John
9 Poland, Fred Madrid, and Jason Ferguson. Chair Woods will check with
10 the City Clerk to see if Jesse Addison was removed. She also mentioned
11 Mr. Wayne Rossman would like to be on the Board, and with J.R. sliding to
12 Patrick's spot (VFW 10124), she would like to recommend Mr. Rossman for
13 an At Large position. Larry Nichols stated the protocol is for people to
14 submit their application so the City Clerk can prepare for Mayor to make the
15 appointment.
16

17 **8.3 DRAFT VAB BYLAWS**

18
19 Larry Nichols stated that the Chair had requested a draft bylaws for this
20 Board. He will initiate that. Rod Gajewski stated there are bylaws in place
21 and he remembers a modification when Purple Heart was added,
22 approximately seven-eight years ago. Larry Nichols mentioned there is an
23 ordinance to establish the composition of the Board and described basic
24 duties of the Board, but not sure if that was the bylaws requested by the
25 Chair. He will look into this.
26

27 Dolores Archuleta stated all this information is in an ordinance, not separate
28 bylaws for this Board. Chair Woods mentioned that Parks and Rec have
29 bylaws and suggested this Board need a set of bylaws.
30

31 Dan Ansbach asked about the family that wants the bench and tree for their
32 daughter, is the City paying or the family? Larry Nichols stated the family
33 has the responsibility for paying for the memorial. The City will have
34 responsibility for installation for any type anchorage required.
35

36 Christine Sautter felt that at the City Council meeting was not run as it
37 should have been. Mr. Gonzales was allowed to speak way over the time
38 that any of the veterans were allowed to speak. And did not appreciate
39 his comments. She feels the letter is a good thing and go on record telling
40 the City Council they do not agree with their decision.
41

42 Chair Woods stated a comment was made by Mr. Gonzales or one of the
43 Council members, they said "the VAB does not know what they're talking
44 about, we're just too old."
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46 **9. REMINDERS**

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- 9.1 JULY 4TH - INDEPENDENCE DAY**
- 9.2 JULY 27 - KOREAN VETERANS ARMISTICE DAY**
- 9.3 JULY 25 - NEXT VAB MEETING**

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