



Veterans Advisory Board Agenda

The following Agenda will be considered at a regular meeting of the Veterans Advisory Board to be held August 29, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall, Council Chambers, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

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

Documents:

[07-25-23 VAB MINUTES.PDF](#)

5. Recognitions
 - 5.1 Veterans Corner-Chair
6. Board Member Reports
 - 6.1 Board Reports
 - 6.2 City Staff comments
7. Public Participation
 - 7.1 Public comment (3 minutes)
 - 7.2 Alaina Johnson- Comfort Keepers
8. Old Business
 - 8.1 Veterans Memorial Park parking lot expansion-request for bid timeline.
9. New Business
 - 9.1 Comments on Veterans Day Parade
 - 9.2 Update on the Veterans Board roster.
10. Reminders

- September 4 - Labor Day
- September 11 - Patriot Day (Half-Staff)
- September 17 - Constitution/Citizenship Day
- September 26 - Next meeting

11. 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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CITY OF LAS CRUCES

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

July 25, 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
Victor Eres, USMC
Lawrence "Sam" Bothern, DAV #10
Patrick Ramirez, VFW 10124
Hector Sanchez, Member at Large No. 2
James Turner, Member at Large No. 1

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

John Poland, American Legion #10

STAFF PRESENT:

Larry Nichols, Director Community Development 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.

ALL STAND FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

A quorum was determined to be present.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Motion to accept the agenda was made by Patrick Ramirez; seconded by Rod Gajewski. Motion passed.

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

2
3 Motion to accept the amended minutes was made by Rod Gajewski; seconded by
4 James Turner. Motion passed.

5
6 **4. RECOGNITION**

7
8 **4.1 Veterans Corner-Chair**

9
10 **4.2 Certificates of Appreciation**

11
12 Larry Nichols presented Certificates of Appreciation for Board Members
13 completing their term or stepping down. Mike Cano, Rod Gajewski, Hubert
14 Gay, John Poland, Patrick Ramirez, James "JR" Turner. Each certificate
15 stated, "With the greatest of appreciation the City of Las Cruces and the
16 Veterans Advisory Board presents their appreciation for your unwavering
17 support, unrelenting guidance for leading the City Veterans on a path to
18 success. You are honored and much respected and with gratitude." Signed
19 by the Veterans Advisory Board Chairperson and the staff liaison.

20
21 **5. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

22
23 **5.1 BOARD REPORTS**

24
25 **Hector Sanchez - Member at Large No. 2** - Nothing to report other than
26 only three weeks away from the start of the NMSU fall term, classes start
27 August 16.

28
29 **Victor Eres - Marine Corps League (USMC)** - They did seven funeral
30 services for fallen veterans the past month. Also participated in two color
31 guards for the City of Las Cruces parade and the fireworks display. Also
32 gearing up for Marine Corps Ball Friday, November 10th (which also falls
33 on the Marine Corps birthday), which will be held at the Elks Lodge.

34
35 **Daniel Ansbach - Special Forces #80** - Nothing at this time.

36
37 **Lawrence "Sam" Bothern - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) #10** -
38 Remind everyone about the Benefits Workshop on August 29th states at
39 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Mesilla Community Center. At least two
40 national service officers from Albuquerque and some local service officers
41 to help veterans with their claims.

42
43 **Rod Gajewski - Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)** - They have
44 lost two members just recently, Eddie Gamboa a Korean War Veteran,
45 Purple Heart Veteran. Rudy Gutierrez a Vietnam Veteran, family own Los
46 Compos restaurants. Rudy Gutierrez viewing on August 1 at Getz Funeral

1 Home at 7:00 p.m., and service at Immaculate Heart of Mary on Espina on
2 August 2, 10:00 a.m. Services for Eddie Gamboa have not been set yet.

3
4 **Patrick Ramirez - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 10124** - Every third
5 Sunday of the month there is a Post breakfast at 11:00 a.m. with haircuts
6 for a donation. District meeting to be held on the 30th, Sunday, at 12:00
7 p.m. Every Friday night have Karaoke with dinner for a nominal fee. This
8 is his last meeting after eight years; two terms. It has been an honor and
9 privilege for him to serve. Thanked the Board and all those who support
10 the Board.

11
12 **James Turner - Member at Large No. 1** - The Garrison Flag dates, this
13 Thursday for Korean War Armistice Day, and the other for Purple Heart Day
14 August 7th. Join at the park for these two events, raise the flag at 8:00 a.m.
15 and lower at 5:00 p.m. More people the better, easier to fold the flag with
16 twenty instead of three or four.

17
18 **Christine Sautter, Military Officers Association of America** - They had
19 their an annual picknick on Saturday evening at Good Sam and was well
20 attended. Seeking new members.

21
22 **Karen Woods - UMW of Southwest -**

23
24 Chair Woods stated at the last meeting she queried the Board for response
25 to the City Council decision concerning the bench and tree for the child in
26 Veterans Park. Page attached at end of minutes is the full letter.

27
28 **5.2 CITY STAFF COMMENTS**

29
30 **6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

31
32 Lester Dale Palmer stated that in the letter they are blaming the City. Stated it is
33 more likely they are blaming us.

34
35 Heidi Blare has a speech she is giving at the library this afternoon at 1:00. There
36 are a total of 10 seats available. She did bring a registration form for this speech.
37 She is getting courses onto her website that will be "Everyone Communicates, few
38 Connect," "The Laws of Growth," and eventually moving onto leadership and
39 moving through all the other Maxwell Leadership course available to her.

40
41 Jason Bernal with Workforce Connection. He is the local veteran employment
42 representative. He placed fliers on the table. They are having a recurrent event
43 at the Workforce Connection office on Thursday, July 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00
44 p.m. for Amber Care for which they are hiring for certified nurse's aide, home aid,
45 caregiver, and quality insurance specialist. Also a few other fliers for what

1 Workforce is doing. He is working on something for veterans for an apprenticeship
2 program, further details will be forthcoming.

3
4 Montevis Price stated with the Veterans Outreach program they have six
5 participants; one recently graduated and doing well, continuing with school and
6 looking to purchase a house. They continue to establish a collaboration with the
7 DA's office and hope to get a meeting them. They have a working relationship
8 with the public defender's office. The coordinator for the veterans treatment corps
9 which is Ms. Rachel.

10
11 Rachel Rudialis, the veterans treatment program coordinator with the district court.
12 She works with Mr. Price and have a veterans team. They work with the municipal
13 court. And had contact with Mesilla municipal court and connect with the DA's
14 office. They helped a veteran get stairs for his trailer. They recently had their fifth
15 anniversary.

16
17 Crystal Sweeney with Cruces Culture Magazine, she pitched to the magazine a
18 November cover for veterans. There is a cost. She hopes to get as many local
19 veteran communities to contribute to that cost to do that cover. The cover would
20 be \$2,000. Rod Gajewski stated it would be best to present this to each
21 organization to be counted as a budget item.

22
23 Bruce Fonnest states he wholeheartedly endorses the letter, and more of his
24 members do endorse it also.

25
26 Dale March stated he gave a pamphlet out, Mending the Line, shown at the
27 Fountain Theater in Mesilla, started last Saturday and running to the 27th. Based
28 on a true story, it is about Afghanistan veteran and his story.

29
30 Chad Pilkington wanted to voice concern for City Council decision against the
31 Veteran Advisory Board's recommendation installing the memorial.

32
33 Beverly Drum stated she appreciates the letter. She supports 100% the Board's
34 decision in getting the letter sent.

35
36 **7. OLD BUSINESS**

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38 **7.1 VAB APPOINTMENTS**

39 **JASON FERGUSON - MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART**

40 **FRED MADRID - VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**

41 **JOHN POLAND - AMERICAN LEGION POST 10**

42 **JAMES (JR) TURNER - VFW POST 10124**

43
44 Larry Nichols stated on the City Council meeting July 17th, the Mayor did
45 announce the appointments for the Veterans Board. Those appointments
46 are required by some members reaching their terms and terming out, others

1 were from resignations from the board. Four appointments were made
2 official and announced publically, as listed above. Their effective date is
3 August 1st. Those members at the meeting today can go with him to the
4 City Clerk's office and they will be given an oath by the City Clerk for their
5 board appointment. Other arrangements will be made for any that are not
6 present.

7
8 Chair Woods stated Jesse was supposed to send her a letter to be removed
9 from the board and that is still outstanding. J.R. is going to switch to 10124,
10 and she has a gentleman interested to go to the Clerk's to fill J.R.'s current
11 spot. Larry Nichols stated the Clerk needs something from Mr. Gay as well.
12 It was mentioned that if a board member does not attend 75% of the
13 meetings that that person is then removed from the board, so no need for a
14 resignation. The resignation letter is at the request of the City Clerk. There
15 was some discussion of a person who had done the paperwork that got
16 misplaced and was found.

17
18 **8. NEW BUSINESS**

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20 **8.1 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK EVENT PERMITS**

21
22 Larry Nichols stated that several months ago they went before the Parks
23 and Recreation Board to get that Board to designate the Veterans Memorial
24 Park as a Special Use Park under their park master plan. The City has
25 approximately 92 parks, with two that are now Special Use Parks. The
26 veterans wanted that designation so that their events would have priority.
27 This has been approved by that Board and this Board. The policy now is
28 for Veterans Memorial Park events, such as candlelight ceremony, run to
29 the wall, etc. that a permit is required, issued by Park and Recreation so
30 the City knows there is an event and notify public safety (police, fire). No
31 charge. The City's risk management office has asked to address the
32 insurance component of that. Larry Nichols is working with the risk
33 management office to find a way to have an annual letter of insurance. This
34 item will be brought back to the Board.

35
36 **8.2 CITY TRANSIT TICKETS FOR VETERANS**

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38 Larry Nichols stated he is having a meeting this week with the transit
39 department to get feedback. It was asked if the veteran needs to provide
40 ID on transit.

41
42 Dolores Archuleta stated she started the candlelight ceremony with
43 permission from Colonel Roach. And then shew was requested to see if
44 the City would sponsor. It is not the Mayor, but a City sponsored event.

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46 **9. REMINDERS**

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JULY 27 - KOREAN VETERANS ARMISTICE DAY
AUGUST 7 - PURPLE HEART DAY
AUGUST 29 - NEXT VAB MEETING

J.R. Turner addressed these items under Board Reports.

9. ADJOURNMENT (10:25)

Motion to adjourn made by Patrick Ramiez; seconded by Rod Gajewski. Motion passed.

Chairperson

July 24, 2023

To: Mayor Ken Miyagishima

From: Veterans Advisory Board, Chair

Subj: City Council Board meeting, June 5, 2023 resolution No. 23-132

On June 5, 2023 at the City Council meeting a decision was made in reference to Resolution No. 23-132 to approve the request for placement of a Commemorative Memorial in Veteran Park.

The Veterans Advisory Board strongly opposes the City Council decision to put a bench and tree to commemorate a non-veteran who was killed in Veteran's Park parking lot.

The monuments in Veterans Park is a way to honor those men and women who have defended our country and continue to do so today, A.K.A. "Veteran". In some cases, paying the ultimate sacrifice. Veterans gave their life's so others can enjoy theirs. Parents have the responsibility of nurturing and protecting their children not relaying on others to do that for them.

A question that was not addressed by the City Council, where were the parent(s)? Why is the City of Las Cruces responsible for the inactions of the parent(s)? City Resolution 02-002 and Parks and Recreation policy states the criteria necessary to place a monument within Veterans Memorial Park.

Veterans are trained to enforce military directives, policies, and procedures whether they agree or disagree with the policy. If a violation occurs, it is reviewed and if warranted, appropriate discipline is awarded. This is one reason the Veterans Advisory Board has difficulty understanding why the City Council made their decision when City Resolution 02-002 and Park and Recreation policy specifically addresses this issue.

The City Council members made their decision based on their emotions rather than enforcing city policies. Decisions should be based on facts relative to the situation. A question to the City Council if it were anyone but a child, would you still have come up with the same decision? If your answer is no then where is the equality? Veterans Advisory Board members have expressed they feel disrespected by the members of the City Council. The City Council and Veterans Advisory Board should have to abide by one standard (City ordinance, resolutions and policies).

Taking no action at all, or putting a bench/tree in the park, either or, the fact remains that a child lost her life, way too early. No one is a winner here.

Sincerely,

Veterans Advisory Board Members