

1 **VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD**

2
3 **April 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.**

4
5 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

6 Karen Woods, UMW of Southwest - Chair
7 Rod Gajewski, MOPH
8 John Poland, American Legion #10
9 Victor Eres, USMC
10 Lawrence "Sam" Bothern, DAV #10
11 Patrick Ramirez, VFW 10124
12 Hector Sanchez, Member at Large No. 2-Student
13 James Turner, Member at Large No. 1
14 Michael Cano, Member at large No. 3

15
16 **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

17 Jesse Addison, VFW 3242
18 Daniel Ansbach, Special Forces #80
19 Christine Sautter, MOAA

20
21 **STAFF PRESENT:**

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

24
25 **OTHERS:**

26 Beverly Drum
27 Palmer LD
28 Travis Rogers
29 Patrick Cahill
30 Andres Rivera
31 Montevis Price

32
33 **1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

34
35 Chair Woods called the meeting to order. A quorum was determined to be
36 present.

37
38 ALL STAND FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

39
40 **2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

41
42 Motion to accept the agenda made by John Poland; seconded by Rod Gajewski.
43 Motion passed.

44
45 **3. VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES - March 28, 2023**

1 It was suggested that on the minutes the person who made the motion and the
2 person who seconded should be noted. Staff agreed and will update the
3 minutes.

4
5 Motion to accept the minutes made by Patrick Ramirez; seconded by John
6 Poland. Motion passed.

7
8 **4. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

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10 **4.1 BOARD REPORTS**

11
12 **Mike Cano - Member at Large No. 3** - Nothing to report.

13
14 **Rod Gajewski - Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)** - Still about
15 16 openings for the Candlelight Ceremony held on May 29. Those
16 sponsoring candles will arrive around 7:00 and then align people up and
17 the ceremony will begin at 8:00. Next year Purple Heart will be
18 sponsoring and helping. Mesilla Valley Hospice will probably be taking
19 over the responsibility of the ceremony. They will do that for part of their
20 Level 5 veterans. The contact for that is Lorraine Padilla, CFO at Mesilla
21 Valley Hospice. For May the American Legion, Joe Quesenberry Post 10
22 is the park clean up. June will be United Women of the Southwest.

23
24 **John Poland - American Legion Post 10** - The American Legion
25 National Commander will be at Post 10 today after noon. Looking forward
26 to cleaning up Veterans Memorial Park next month. May 19th feeding
27 300+ riders who are coming through town on the Run for the Wall, they
28 have their own road guards for traffic with concurrence from the police
29 department. The plan for them is to be in place by 0730 at the park. May
30 13th, American Legion District 7 meeting in Silver City. End of June
31 hosting the State Annual Convention, with a lot of current planning. May
32 28th, placing flags at veterans grave sites at St. Joseph's Cemetery on
33 Espina starting at 7:30 a.m. Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico and El
34 Paso leaves for Washington, DC this Thursday, meeting at Memorial
35 Medical Center at midnight Wednesday. There are 33 veterans, three
36 from Korean War era, rest are Vietnam Veterans. Another Honor Flight
37 will be at the end of September.

38
39 There was a problem with Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans parking on
40 the roadway, with an officer requesting moving the cars off the road.
41 Usually LCPD escorts the riders to the park and then block the westside
42 lane (outside lane). In years past the LCPD has escorted the riders to the
43 park and then escort them out of town also. There is a POC, Art Ambriz,
44 who is coordinating all of the Run for the Wall, and the American Legion is
45 serving breakfast. Things will be double checked for safety as that is
46 paramount, particularly on Roadrunner Parkway. Larry Nichols

1 volunteered for Veterans Park at 0730, work with LCPD on traffic control,
2 and help with speakers. The City would like to welcome the Run for the
3 Wall group.
4

5 **Lawrence (Sam" Bothern - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) #10 -**
6 May 27th putting flags on cemetery at Doña Ana, current use cemetery.
7 This will be at 8:00 leaving the old K-Mart on Del Rey. There are about 60
8 graves.
9

10 **Hector Sanchez - Member at Large No. 2-Student** - There is the Cord
11 Ceremony happening in less than two weeks, May 5th, 6:00 p.m. at
12 Corbet Center in the auditorium on the second floor. A program will be
13 sent out. Vice-President Renay Scott will attend, as well as the Provost of
14 the University. This year a total of 41 veterans graduating from NMSU, 16
15 veterans graduating from DACC. Seven of the NMSU graduates are
16 graduating with high honors. The veterans at NMSU overall have a higher
17 GPA at 3.3, than the general student is 3.1. A lot of companies, some
18 local and some national, call their office as they want to hire veterans,
19 which is encouraging. The companies are contractors that want veterans
20 that particularly have security clearances.
21

22 **Victor Eres - Marine Corps League (USMC)** - Five funerals participated
23 in from March 28 to today. Two Color Guards include the competition on
24 April 21st, placed first in the large unit, second pace in the large unit. Did
25 field two units. Placed first in flag folding small team. They do place flags
26 at the Masonic Cemetery, they start early, 0800.
27

28 **Patrick Ramirez - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 10124** - Having a
29 celebration of life for George L. Norris Friday, April 28th from 1:00 - 4:00
30 p.m. Located at 709 S. Valley Drive, across from Caliches, next to the
31 veterinarian. After that there will be the Friday dinner for a nominal
32 charge, and karaoke states at 7:00. May 13th, have a band from 5:00 -
33 8:00, but have a fish fry starting at 4:00 p.m.
34

35 **James Turner - Member at Large No. 1** - Brought some garrison flag
36 schedules. He has been doing the garrison flag custody for over 10 years.
37 Try to get as many people as to come out in the mornings to raise the flag
38 and then in the evening for retreat. Important to spread the word, in
39 addition to them doing it, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, ROTC. The fire
40 department does attend, which is appreciated. Need more people, big
41 flag and talks more than four or five people to fold it. Next function at the
42 Veterans Park in addition to garrison flags there is a dedication of the
43 Afghanistan and Iraq Memorial has been placed just to the left of the
44 Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Official dedication on May 20th at 8:00 right
45 after the flag raising for Armed Forces Day. Part of the group here for the
46 flag dedication is the mother of Mr. Rodriguez that is on the memorial.

1 There was a golf tournament last year, and again this year, although fairly
2 expensive, if you are a veteran you play for \$25.

3
4 Concerning the flag raising, Fire Chief Smith indicated that he wanted
5 another copy, and he indicated he has two fire stations and would do more
6 diligent efforts being sure to have fire personnel, if no emergency calls, at
7 both the raising and lowering of the flag.

8
9 **Karen Woods - United Military Women of the Southwest** - This Friday,
10 April 28th, spaghetti dinner for \$5 at the El Caldito Soup Kitchen, take out
11 or eat in. There are tickets being presold. May 5th car show at Organ
12 Mountain High School at 8:00 a.m. registration. There is a \$25 fee. They
13 also have a swap meet that charges \$20. Going to have a Youth Boxing
14 Tournament. There is an Olympic hopeful and one going to Golden
15 Gloves up in Philadelphia. And one that just recently joined the Army and
16 she is only doing boxing. This teaches discipline. (A flyer was passed out
17 for the event.) This event is a bit costly at \$4,000 - \$6,000. All the money
18 goes to the boxing association. The United Boxing Federation pays for
19 the boxer but not the chaperone. This will be boxing within the state and
20 outside the states. Some young men will also be fighting.

21
22 **4.2 CITY STAFF COMMENTS**

23
24 Larry Nichols stated there will be additional vacancies coming up for the
25 board. Two of the terms are expiring after serving eight years or more and
26 ineligible for reappointment, this would be Rod Gajewski and Patrick
27 Ramirez. Rod Gajewski stated that Jason Ferguson has already
28 submitted his paperwork to take his position in July, which should be
29 checked on. James Turner stated he is a Member at Large, but also a
30 member of 10124, and wondered if he could transition into Patrick
31 Ramirez's position, leaving the Member at Large open for anybody
32 interested. He also questioned whether the tenure still role at the time or
33 will it start from scratch. Larry Nichols will pass all information to the
34 Mayor to bring it up in City Council meeting. Also mentioned that Hubert
35 Gay resigned and Fred Madrid was mentioned for that position. Larry
36 Nichols stated Fred Madrid turned in to the City some of his background
37 documents and announced that the Veterans Advisory Board had selected
38 him to be the replacement for Hubert Gay. All paperwork will be forward
39 to the City Clerk and the Mayor. Jesse Addison was mentioned as having
40 missed some meetings.

41
42 Lester Palmer stated he may have between three to five years left from his
43 previous board attendance as Member at Large No. 2. Offered to attend
44 again for quorum purposes.

1 Larry Nichols stated there was a request from the Gonzales family for a
2 memorial in Veterans Memorial Park. This Board heard the request and
3 made a recommendation to City Council. It is going before City Council
4 May 15th. at 1:00 p.m. The agenda will be posted seven to 10 days
5 before the meeting, the agenda includes title, background, and
6 attachments. The resolution requires the requester of the memorial or a
7 monument to submit a description of what they are requesting in writing.
8 That request was not received in writing, only verbal.
9

10 John Poland stated his terms expires in July but he wants to continue and
11 what is the process. Pass basic information to Larry Nichols with the
12 statement of desire to continue the appointment to the Board. Those
13 eligible for reappointment in July 2023 are John Poland and James
14 Turner.
15

16 **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
17

18 Montevis Price of Veterans Justice Outreach Program. No updates. There are
19 four participants currently, and trying to get more. Five are pending approval
20 from the DA office. There were two that graduated last month and his office does
21 follow up. There is currently one female and one that is signing paperwork today.
22

23 Beverly Drum has information about PGA HOPE (Helping Our Patriots
24 Everywhere). This is where disabled veterans learn to play golf. Per Dan Hon,
25 the May 11 class is full but there are still openings for September 2, which has
26 five signed up. The point of contact is Jason White at NMSU Golf Course (575)
27 646-3219. It was mentioned that PGA HOPE is for any veterans, not just
28 disabled, and advise was to contact Jason White.
29

30 Andres Rivera of Marine Corps League. He is with the Marine Corps Honor
31 Guard and they have an annual competition in Albuquerque. This is an Honor
32 Guard Burial Conference which is a class by the different branches of service on
33 how to conduct a funeral, folding the flag, playing Taps, three volleys for rifle file.
34 The teams compete against each other. He hoped to have eight or nine teams in
35 Las Cruces. When the competition was here in Las Cruces last year, only one
36 team from Las Cruces participated. He has had to say no family, cannot do
37 military honors due to same day same time, and only one team. He is asking to
38 fill another team, as one is not enough. You do have to go through the training
39 for the certification. There is also a \$500 stipend for a uniform. Chair Woods
40 asked if someone is interested in serving honors, why do they need to be
41 certified. The certification and class are to do it properly. The trainings can be
42 acquired anytime.
43

44 Patrick Cahill of Home Based Primary Care Team with the VA. Nothing to report.
45

46 **6. OLD BUSINESS**

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2 **6.1 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK - PARKING LOT EXPANSION UPDATE**

3
4 Larry Nichols stated there was a presentation last month by David Viarreal
5 from Public Works. This project is still on schedule. Design is to be
6 completed by end of May. Out to bid in June. After selection of
7 contractor, the construction will begin shortly thereafter hopefully.
8 Construction would continue through the end of the year. Objective to
9 have the parking lot expansion completed by January 2024.

10
11 **7. NEW BUSINESS**

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13 **7.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

14 **7.2 JEREMY CHINO (CEPC)**

15
16 **8. REMINDERS**

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18 **8.1 NEXT VAB MEETING - MAY 23, 2023**

19 **8.2 MOTHER'S DAY - GARRISON FLAG CEREMONY - MAY 14, 2023**

20 **8.3 ARMED FORCES DAY - GARRISON FLAG CEREMONY - MAY 20,**
21 **2023**

22 **8.4 MEMORIAL DAY (HALF-STAFF UNTIL 1200 HOURS) - GARRISON**
23 **FLAG CEREMONY**

24
25 Michael Cano will be unable to attend next month's meeting.

26
27 John Poland and Larry Nichols asked to be excused to attend other functions.

28
29 **9. ADJOURNMENT (10:01)**

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31 Motion to adjourn made by Lawrence (Sam) Bothern; seconded by Patrick
32 Ramirez. Motion passed.

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37 _____
38 Chairperson