



Alameda County
Veterans Affairs Commission
General Meeting Minutes
 Monday, September 15, 2025

Alameda County
Social Services Agency
 6955 Foothill Blvd – Ste. 300
 Oakland, CA 94605
<http://alamedasocialservices.org>

CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting called to order at 10:02 am
- Roll Call, Quorum Achieved.

In Attendance: <i>(P=Present, E=Excused, A=Absent, O=Online Attendance)</i>	County Staff Present:
G. Owens (Chair) = P J. Loparo = E O. Farmer (Vice Chair) = P D. Boldt = P R. Forbes = P R. Cole = P F. Jaffin = online D. Reed = A J. McLvain = P S. Yohannes = P K. Warner = P A. Gordillo = P J. Phair = online M. Reed = A S. Dolgin = P D. Williamson = A M. Gilmore = P J. Jones = P N. Harrison = P D. Bitner = P L. Brunner = A	Jennier Stephens-Pierre Anthony Simpson Jonathan Montano-Flores Rhoda Turner Diarra Piggue Sonya Frost = online

AGENDA/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Item	Discussion/Recommendations
Adopt Agenda	Meeting agenda adopted by Commission as read.
Remote attendance under AB 2449 (Just Cause/Emergency Circumstances):	Commissioners Phair (Physical limitation/disability) and Jaffin (Emergency circumstances) provided just cause explanations for attending online. Motion to accept the online participation of Commissioners Phair and Jaffin in accordance with AB2449 Motion to approve: Commissioner Omar Farmer (M) Commissioner Dylan Boldt (S) Motion Passed
Approval of Meeting Minutes	Motion to accept meeting minutes from 8/18/2025: Motion to approve: Commissioner Michael Gilmore (M) Commissioner Omar Farmer (S) Motion Passed
Public Comment	None.

<p>County Updates:</p>	<p>Anthony Simpson, Veterans Service Officer stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are presently five active Veteran Service Representatives. ○ Outreach: Attended the Contra Costa Elk’s Outreach Fair this past weekend, will participate in the Stand Down this Friday, and plan to attend Veterans Day events. ○ Jennifer Stephens-Pierre, Director of AAA, announced that Diarra Piggue has been promoted and is now the liaison between the commissions
<p>Guest Speaker: LaShelle Burch, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs</p> <p>Topic: Veteran Suicide Prevention</p>	<p>LaShelle Burch, the Community Engagement Partnership Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint on Veteran Suicide Prevention. Discussion/Q&A followed.</p>
<p>Sub-Committee Reports</p>	<p>➤ Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran Suicide Prevention Forum: Held Sept 3 at the Hayward Veteran Memorial Building, strong turnout and discussion. • Operation Greenlight: Letter to Alameda County mayors to light public buildings green will be sent. Libraries will be explored for participation. • Emergency Preparedness Forum — Oct 18, San Leandro Public Library (registration link shared in chat by Ryan Hughes). • Suicide Prevention Training: September 25 from 12:00–1:00 p.m. virtually by the VA San Francisco. • San Mateo VSO Stand Down: Sept. 25, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. • Las Positas “2.2 for 22” Challenge — Sun, Sept 28; link shared by Edgar Reyes (Veterans First). • Mental Health First Aid training for Military Veterans & Families — San Mateo County Behavioral Health; QR code circulated. • Nomination Committee was added to ACVAC Subcommittee Assignments for 2025. Members: Shewee Yohanes, Bob Cole, Nate Harrison. • Extensive discussion re: eligibility/appearance of conflict on the Ad Hoc Nominating Committee. <p>Motion to accept the creation of the Nominating Committee Ad Hoc as presented in agenda.</p> <p>Motion to approve: Commissioner Omar Farmer (M) Commissioner Shewee Yohannes (S)</p> <p>Motion Passed</p> <p>➤ Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission met on August 29. Topics discussed included the upcoming Stand Down event, bylaws, the Navy birthday celebration, and the Nomination Committee.

➤ **Veteran Observance Days:**

- Commissioner Owens noted that the Veterans Observances in October were Navy Day on October 13 and the National Day of Deployment on October 26.

➤ **Veteran Memorial Building:**

- Commissioner Farmer noted they are working to locate the documentation on the Oakland Veteran Memorial Building's transfer from the county to the city to confirm the terms.
- Priority is to resolve issues with the Oakland Veteran Memorial Building before moving forward with the Action Plan to enforce state law.
- The next meeting will be held via Zoom next Friday.

➤ **PAL Legislation:**

- Commissioner Phair noted that the California Legislature has adjourned for this session, so no further bills will be considered.
- SB54 - Excludes VA disability pay from income calculations for court fee waivers (improves access for low-income veterans) passed.
- AB81 - A study of women veterans' mental health; funding still needed in next budget .
- SB694 - targeting deceptive practices by non-accredited benefit preparers, did not. We will revisit it next year and place it on the year-end agenda.

Comment: Anthony Simpson urged support for SB 694, emphasizing free accredited services, criticizing non-accredited fee-based groups, and noting accreditation is needed for proper VA claim representation.

- Commissioner Phair recommended placing SB 694 on the year-end agenda to consider a PAL request for Board of Supervisors support in the next legislative session (two-year bill).
Additional note (Jaffin/Phair): California military retirement income—first \$20,000 state-tax exempt (Governor's trailer bill); phase-out thresholds at \$125k single / \$250k joint federal AGI.

➤ **Stand Down:**

- Summit Estate Recovery Center has joined as a new partner, with their logo featured at the bottom of the revised flyer.
- The new flyer was presented, highlighting one of the new features: a raffle, shown at the bottom. Prizes will include phone cards, grocery cards, and gas cards. Commission members are encouraged to contribute if they would like to donate.

Comment: Jennifer mentioned that the CVSO will be donating gas cards.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner Farmer reported on Stand Down access, veteran homelessness, St. Vincent de Paul resources, and outreach. <p>➤ Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner Phair reported that one final member is awaiting swearing-in, which will bring the commission to 22 members. The appointment has already been approved by the Board of Supervisors.
ORAL COMMUNICATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS	Next meeting will be held at Las Positas in Livermore on October 20th
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.