



Alameda County Veterans Affairs Commission

Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 21, 2026

10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

In-Person Location: County Veterans Service Office, 22225 Foothill Blvd – Freedom Hall Conference Room, Hayward, CA 94541

Virtual Attendance: Microsoft Teams

1. Call to Order

Chair Shewee Yohannes called the meeting to order.

2. Roll/ Call / Quorum Established

Chair Yohannes conducted the roll call of Commissioners. The attendance of Commissioners, including virtual participation, is reflected below. A quorum was established.

Commissioner	Status	Commissioner	Status
Shewee Yohannes (Chair)	Present	Joseph C. LoParo	Absent
James F. Phair (Vice Chair)	Present	Jack McIlvain	Present
Robert R. Cole	Present	Greg Owens	Present
Stephen M. Dolgin	Present (online)	Keisuke Warner	Present
Omar Farmer	Absent	Diane Williamson	Present
Ronald Forbes	Present	Madeleine Reed	Absent
Michael Gilmore	Present	Don Reed	Present
Alfred P. Gordillo	Absent	Daniel K. Bitner	Absent
Nathaniel Harrison	Present	Robert E. Hart	Absent
Frederick Jaffin	Absent	Dylan M. Boldt	Absent
Lisa Brunner	Present		

3. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the July 20, 2026, meeting minutes. No amendments were offered.

Action Taken

The July 20, 2026, meeting minutes were approved. No abstentions were recorded.

4. Salute Colors-in-Place

The Commission observed Salute Colors-in-Place.

5. Pledge of Allegiance

The Commission recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

6. Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed in honor of POW/MIA Service Members and Veterans lost by suicide.

7. Public Comment

A Marine Corps Veteran from Hayward requested information about Veterans' events and services. Staff and Commissioners directed him to the CVSO and Veterans service organizations for resources and opportunities to participate.

8. Staff Update

Assistant Agency Director Faith Battles announced plans to relaunch the CVSO newsletter by the end of October and invited Commissioners to submit articles by October 1. She also addressed agency branding, photo consent, and digital accessibility.

Anthony Simpson provided a CVSO update on outreach through the VA mobile enrollment unit, Coast Guard transition briefings, and community events. He also acknowledged the Patriot Day program and recent suicide prevention forum.

9. Finance and Budget Training

The Finance and Budget Training was postponed because County Finance staff had not been confirmed. Faith Battles indicated that training would be requested for the October 19, 2026, meeting, covering purchasing, invoices, reimbursements, and documentation requirements.

10. Commission Budget Update

The Commission discussed the FY 2026–27 budget of \$15,000, including outstanding reimbursements, prior-year commitments, and the need to track expenditures, pending costs, and available balances. Staff emphasized County accounting and procurement requirements.

The approved budget allocates \$500 to Ceremonial Awards, \$3,000 to Veterans Observance Day, \$5,000 to Commemorative Veterans Displays, and \$6,500 to Veterans Stand Down. Commissioners discussed possible reallocations following cancellation of the September Stand Down. No new budget transfer vote was confirmed. Treasurer responsibilities will be revisited following Finance training.

11. Suicide Prevention Month Presentation

Eric Wick of The Overwatch Network provided a presentation on Veteran suicide prevention, including available data, lethal-means safety, peer support, and outreach resources. Commissioners discussed mental health needs, family impacts, and ways to share prevention information. No action was recorded.

12. Subcommittee Reports

Executive Subcommittee

Commissioners discussed budget oversight and Commission operations.

PAL Legislation Subcommittee

Commissioners reported that AB 2219, the Fast Service for Veterans Act, had advanced to the Governor and discussed potential benefits for CVSO coordination. Previous Commission support was referenced; no new motion was recorded.

Ceremonial Awards / Commemorative Veterans Program

Commissioners reported on the Veterans banner unveiling and discussed event photographs and locating the Commission banner.

Veterans Memorial Buildings

Commissioners discussed reported changes to Veterans memorial building commissions, representation, meeting notices, and accessibility concerns at the Oakland Veterans Memorial Building, including an inoperable elevator.

13. Veteran Community Outreach Event Coordination

Commissioners discussed coordinating outreach with the VA mobile health care enrollment unit to increase awareness of the Hayward CVSO and connect Veterans with benefits assistance. No formal action was confirmed.

14. New Business / Announcements

Commissioners announced upcoming Veterans events, including Gold Star Family observances, a September 26 suicide prevention fundraiser at Las Positas College, Fleet Week, Veterans Day ceremonies, and Operation Green Light.

15. Agenda Building

The Commission identified Finance and Budget Training and continued budget oversight as priorities for the October 19, 2026, meeting. Commissioners were encouraged to submit event flyers for future meeting packets.

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:03PM.

Prepared By:

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Secretary II

Alameda County Department of Adult & Aging Services