



Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Minutes

May 15, 2025 Microsoft Teams Live

Streamed via City's website:

<http://www.elpasotexas.gov/videos>

Television on City 15

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofelpasotx/videos>

MINUTES

Members Present

Ron Jackson

George Elsaesser

James Green

Melissa Harcrow

Ruben Ramirez

1. **Call to Order.** 10:05 AM
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call.** 5 of 9 - Quorum met.
4. **Discussion and Action:** To approve the minutes of April 17, 2025, Motion and second. Approved
5. **Citizen Comment Period:** Dave Garcia (Disabled American Veterans) – requested City letter of support for Texas Comptroller's \$50 million reimbursement to counties for 100% disabled-veteran property-tax losses. Mariana Reyes (Simplicity Homecare for Veterans) – announced 15 % "Dine -to-Donate" fundraiser 20 May 2025 at Union Draft House benefitting Borderplex Veterans Coalition.
6. **El Paso VA Health Care Clinic Update – Mr. Enriquez**
 - a. Clinic operations unchanged under new federal executive orders.
 - b. 24-hour VA Health Connect nurse line: 1-800-672-3782 (opt 3).
 - c. Whole Health program overview; contact 915-564-6100.
 - d. Reminder to renew 10-year VA ID cards.
 - e. 2025 Summer Youth Volunteer Program (ages 15-18), application deadline 29 May.
 - f. Women Veterans Boutique – accepting donations through 12 June.
 - g. VA 2K "Walk & Roll" for homeless veterans – 21 May, 11 AM-1 PM, WBAMC track.
7. **El Paso County Update – Mike Barnes**
 - a. Veteran-of-the-Year nomination rubric in development; online resource guide nearing completion.
 - b. Recap of "Veterans at the Park" family day at Ascarate Park (free, donor-funded).
 - c. Planning continues for future outreach events.
8. **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Community Update – Ashley Lamel, Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program (IPVAP)**
 - a. Reviewed VHA Directive 1198 (2019, updated 2024) establishing IPVAP.
 - b. Shared risk statistics, health impacts, and services (screening,

Paul Albright - Chief Military Officer

City 1 | 300 N Campbell St. | El Paso, Texas 79901 | (915) 212-1447



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safety-planning, referrals).

- c. **Highlighted Strength-at-Home group (veterans who use IPV) beginning 3 June and RISE individual therapy (veterans who experience IPV).**
- d. **Hotlines: National DV 1-800-799-SAFE, Veterans Crisis Line 988 Press 1.**

9. **Monthly Subcommittee Updates:**

- a. **Employment:** Partnering with Texas Veterans Commission & Western Tech to host trades-focused job fair later this year. Tracking federal & Texas legislation on veteran/spouse employment & childcare.
- b. **Homelessness:** No report given- Chair absent.
- c. **Mental Health:** No report given- Chair absent.

10. **Discussion on Annual Council Update Presentation:**

- a. Target date for presentation to City Council moved to 18 August 2025 to allow refinement.
- b. Possibility of special VAAC work session in July to finalize content.

11. **Discussion / Action on Member Absences**

- a. Melissa Harcrow – motion to excuse (Juarez), approved 5-0.
- b. Donald Brown – motion to excuse failed; absence recorded as unexcused.

12. **Veterans and Military Affairs Division Update – Luther Jones (for CMO Paul Albright)**

- a. City leadership attending Fort Bliss Town/Base Summit with Command group & Mayor.
- b. Memorial Day ceremony at Concordia Cemetery – 26 May, 10 AM.
- c. City collecting canned goods for September Homeless Veteran Stand-Down.
- d. El Paso becomes first municipality to join national Face the Fight veteran-suicide-prevention coalition; first coalition meeting 4 June.
- e. Women Veterans Month (June) – supporting multiple events 11-14 June.
- f. City coordinating summer point-in-time count for homeless veterans (Aug/Sept).
- g. Introduced James Green as new VAC District 4 representative (sworn in).

13. **Announcements:**

- a. **West-Side “Vets at Breakfast” (4th Tuesday of the month, 4825 Doniphan).**
- b. **Coffee with Veterans – 5 June, 8:30-10:30 AM, American Legion Post 36.**
- c. **Women Veterans Week events:**
 - 11 Jun 11:30 AM – Amistad Women Veteran Luncheon.
 - 11 Jun 7 PM – Wreath Laying, Old Glory Memorial.
 - 12 Jun 9:30 AM – VA Women Veterans Recognition Ceremony.
 - 12 Jun 11 AM – Senator Blanco Women Veterans Honors, EPCC.
 - 14 Jun 7 AM – “Take a Walk in Her Boots” 5K, Old Glory.
- d. **Memorial Day and VA 2K flyers distributed.**

14. **Future Agenda Items**

- a. A proposal was made to add James Green (District 4) to one of the



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existing subcommittees. This will be reviewed and considered as a future agenda item.

15. Next VAAC Meeting: *No regular meeting in June (Juneteenth holiday).*

Next scheduled meeting: **Thursday, July 17, 2025**, 10:00 AM MDT hybrid- in person.

16. Adjourn. 11:17 AM.

Approved By:
