



Veterans Advisory Committee Minutes

March 19, 2026, 10 AM
Thorman Room City 3 & 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
Ron Baker
George Elsaesser
Gina Lewis
Donna Juarez
Melissa Harcrow

1. Roll Call

Members Absent: Ruben Ramirez (Mayoral Rep.) & Donald Brown (District 6)
A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Minutes – Motion: Approve the January 15, 2026 meeting minutes.

Motion made by: (Ron Baker).

Seconded by: (Donna Juarez).

Vote: No objections voiced; motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

3. Citizen Comment Period

Citizen comments provided by Shannon Sawyer, Sawyer Behavioral Health, regarding counseling services for veterans and families.

No action was taken.

4. El Paso VA Health Care System Update

Presenter: Amin Enriquez was absent. No presentation. No action was taken.

5. El Paso County Update

Presenters: Antoinette Hunt (El Paso County Veteran Service Officer) and Mike Barnes (El Paso County Veterans Advisory Board).

The Committee received an informational update regarding the proposed VA disability rating rule comment period, upcoming outreach events, and coordination with veteran organizations.

No action was taken.

6. Discussion – Community Update: Major Talent, Shannon Gales

The Committee received an informational presentation regarding the company Major Talent. Key discussion points included opportunities for veteran involvement, program outreach, and potential collaboration with community partners.

No action was taken.

7. Discussion – Community Update: Vital Mind Wellness, John Strickland

The Committee received an informational presentation on mental health and wellness services provided by Vital Mind Wellness. Discussion included services available to veterans, approaches to mental health care, and opportunities for collaboration with local organizations to better support veteran well-being.

Luther Jones – Veterans Program Coordinator

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No action was taken.

8. Discussion and Action – Excused Absence for Ruben Ramirez

Motion: Excuse absence for Ruben Ramirez for February VAC meeting.

Motion made by: (Ron Baker.)

Seconded by: (Melissa Harcrow.)

Vote: Motion carried by voice vote.

9. Discussion and Action – Homeless Subcommittee Chair

Motion: Table this issue until next meeting

Vote: Motion carried by voice vote.

10. Discussion – City Veteran of the Year

The Committee discussed the proposed Veteran of the Year program, including the importance of establishing clear selection criteria prior to implementation. Members emphasized the need for transparency and structure in the nomination and selection process before moving forward with formal approval.

No action was taken.

11. VAC Subcommittee Reports

The Committee received updates from subcommittees regarding ongoing efforts in areas such as mental health, employment, and veteran support initiatives. Discussions included continued coordination with community partners and identifying areas for future focus.

No action was taken.

12. City of El Paso Veteran & Military Affairs Update

Presenter: Luther Jones, Veterans Program Coordinator.

Update provided information upcoming community needs assessment, and staffing updates.

No action was taken.

13. Announcements

The Committee discussed upcoming veteran-related events and continued community engagement efforts.

No action was taken.

16. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The Committee discussed potential agenda items for the next meeting, including:

- Homelessness subcommittee chair selection
- VAC member absence excusals

No action was taken.

17. Next Meeting

Thursday, April 19, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

18. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: (Donna Juarez)

Second: (Ron Baker)

Vote: Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned.

Approved By:

Luther Jones

4/16/2026 1:39 PM

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