



Veterans Advisory Committee Minutes

June 18, 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 Baker
Ron Jackson
George Elsaesser
Gina Lewis
Melissa Harcrow
Debo Wakefield

1. Roll Call

Members Absent: Donna Juarez and Don Brown
A quorum was established.

2. Discussion and Action to Approve Minutes of: May 21, 2026

Motion: Approve May 21, 2026 meeting minutes.

Motion made by: Ron Baker.

Seconded by: George Elsaesser.

Vote: Motion carried by voice vote.

3. Citizen Comment Period

Representatives from Right at Home and Rebuilding Together introduced their organizations and discussed their mission to provide in-home care, transportation coordination, respite services, rehabilitation, sober living, and wraparound support for veterans.

No action was taken.

4. El Paso VA Health Care Clinic Update

No presentation was provided.

No action was taken.

5. El Paso County Update – Veterans Assistance Program

Presenter: Mike Barnes, Chair, El Paso County Veterans Advisory Board.

The Committee received an update regarding legislative priorities, House Bill 2894, veteran property tax reimbursement, financial assistance resources, and coordination with community partners to support veterans and their families.

No action was taken.

6. Discussion: Community Update – El Paso VA Homeless Program

Presenter: Kristen Mitchell, Homeless Program Manager.

The Committee received a presentation regarding the VA Homeless Program, outreach efforts, emergency shelter and transitional housing services, HUD-VASH, employment services, current challenges, future housing needs, and community partnerships supporting homeless veterans.

No action was taken.



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7. Discussion: Community Update – Jose Barron, Forge Now

The Committee received a presentation regarding Forge Now's accelerated skilled trades training programs, employment placement services, veteran education benefits, and workforce development opportunities for transitioning service members and veterans.

No action was taken.

8. Discussion and Action: Vote to Excuse Absence of Ron Jackson from May VAC Meeting

Motion: Excuse absence for Ron Jackson from the May VAC meeting.

Motion made by: Ron Baker.

Seconded by: Debo Wakefield.

Vote: Motion carried by voice vote.

9. Discussion and Action: Vote to Add Don Brown to the Veteran Homelessness Subcommittee

Motion: Appoint Don Brown to the Veteran Homelessness Subcommittee.

Vote: Motion carried by voice vote.

10. Discussion: Monthly Update from VAC Subcommittees

a. Employment- The Employment Subcommittee provided an update regarding legislative recommendations, veteran transportation initiatives, employment opportunities, childcare accessibility, housing grant opportunities, and preparation for the August City Council presentation.

b. Homelessness- The Homelessness Subcommittee reported on upcoming recommendations supporting housing grants, funding for the Welcome Center, and preparation for the August City Council presentation.

c. Mental Health

No report was provided.

No action was taken.

11. City of El Paso Veteran and Military Affairs Update

Presenter: Luther Jones, Veterans Program Coordinator.

The Committee received updates regarding the 2026 Veteran Needs Assessment Survey, Strategic and Legislative Affairs' review of the Employment Subcommittee recommendations, expansion of veteran transportation initiatives, SkillBridge opportunities, hiring progress for the Veteran & Military Affairs Liaison position, and upcoming Coffee with Veterans events.

No action was taken.

12. Announcements

Announcements included Veterans Breakfast Club, Pop Goes the Fort, Women Veterans Day events, and other upcoming veteran and military community activities.

No action was taken.

13. Discussion on Proposed Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The Committee discussed excusing Donna Juarez's absence, assigning Debo Wakefield to a VAC subcommittee, preparation for the upcoming City Council briefing, and inviting Warriors Journey to provide a future presentation.

No action was taken.

14. Next VAC Meeting

Thursday, July 16, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

15. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.



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Vote: Unanimous.
Meeting adjourned.

Approved By:
