



# Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Minutes

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**January 16, 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

Brian Kanof  
Ron Jackson  
George Elsaesser  
Donna Juarez  
Donald Brown  
Ruben Ramirez  
Melissa Harcrow

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1. **Call to Order.** 11:22 AM
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call.** 7 of 9 - Quorum met.
4. **Discussion and Action:** Election of Officers for the 2025 Calendar Year.
  - a. Secretary: George Elsaesser was elected Secretary by motion and second from Brian Kanof.
  - b. B. Vice Chair: Donna Juarez was elected Vice Chair by motion from Ruben Ramirez and second by George Elsaesser.
  - c. C. Chair: Ron Jackson was elected Chair.
5. **Discussion and Action:** To approve the minutes of November 21, 2024, Approved.
6. **Citizen Comment Period:** No specific comments or emails were submitted for public record.
7. **El Paso VA Health Care Clinic Update – Amin Enriquez**
  - a. Preparedness for Government Shutdown: Services will remain unaffected.
  - b. VA Health Connect: Introduction of 24/7 health-related assistance.
  - c. My-Healthy-Vet Updates: Reminder for veterans to complete secure sign-in accounts.
8. **El Paso County update- CVSO Antoinette Hunt**
  - a. Women's PACT Act Clinic scheduled for March 15 at the Beast.
  - b. Emphasis on collaboration between VAC and VAB.
  - c. Updates on GI Bill eligibility for additional benefits.
9. **Service Dog Nation Presentation – Darci Enriquez**
  - a. Overview of efforts to provide service dogs for veterans.
  - b. Education on ADA laws and the misrepresentation of service animals.
  - c. Discussion of nonprofit status and collaboration opportunities.
10. **Establishment of Subcommittee Chairs:**
  - a. Employment: Melissa Harcrow elected Chair.
  - b. Homelessness: Donald Brown elected Chair.



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- c. Mental Health: Donna Juarez will remain Chair.
- 11. Monthly Subcommittee Updates:**
- a. Employment: No updates as the committee did not meet.
  - b. Homelessness: Updates on local homelessness initiatives.
  - c. Mental Health: Discussion of gaps in services, resource website deep dive, 988 issues, and efforts to map mental health resources.
- 12. Proposed Changes to VAC Bylaws:**
- a. Term limits, attendance policies, and compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act were confirmed as previously approved.
- 13. Proposed Name Change for the Committee:**
- a. The committee voted to change its name to "Veterans Advisory Committee" to avoid confusion with the VA.
  - b. Motion passed 7-1.
- 14. Annual Council Update Scheduled for April 28, 2025**
- a. Discussion of updates and guidance for the annual briefing to City Council.
  - b. Encouragement to review the 2024 presentation and collaborate with subcommittees.
- 15. Military and Veterans Affairs Division Update**
- a. Upcoming participation in the Military Spouse Employment Program in Washington, D.C.
  - b. Enhancements to the veteran resource website and integration of Fort Bliss events on the Visit El Paso app.
  - c. Announcement of the Borderplex Veterans Expo on March 21-22, 2025, at the Starlight Event Center.
- 16. Announcements:**
- a. Upcoming events- Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> year ending event, Four Chaplains Ceremony on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and National K9 Day on March 13, women veterans events, and more.
  - b. Ongoing efforts to raise awareness of veteran mental health and suicide prevention resources.
- 17. Future Agenda Items**
- a. Presentation by Team Red, White & Blue.
  - b. Invitation to representatives for mental health services discussion.
  - c. Review of upcoming calendar events for veterans and military affairs.
- 18. Next VAAC Meeting:** Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 10:00 AM MDT Hybrid- in person.
- 19. Adjourn.** 12:55 PM.

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Approved By: