



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

**Scottsdale Fire Station 602 Community Room
7522 E. Indian School Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

PRESENT: Chairperson Pete Palmer; Vice-Chair Denise Pulk; Commissioners, Land Anderson, Mark Ashley, Deborah Dominick, Steven Jackson, and Joel Stempil

STAFF: Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director

1. Call to Order/ Roll Call

Chair Palmer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members present as listed above.

2. Discussion and possible action to approve December 1, 2021 commission meeting minutes

COMMISSIONER STEMPIL MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 1, 2021 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER DOMINICK SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ASHLEY, DOMINICK, JACKSON, AND STEMPIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

3. Nomination and election of Chair

Mr. Corsette recalled that during the December meeting, Chair Palmer nominated Denise Pulk for the position of Chair. There were no additional nominations.

DENISE PULK, HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY NOMINATED, WAS ELECTED CHAIRPERSON OF THE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION WITH A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ASHLEY, DOMINICK,

JACKSON, AND STEMPLIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Chair Pulk immediately took over the position of Chair for the remainder of the meeting. She thanked Pete Palmer for his leadership during the last two years.

4. Nomination and election of Vice Chair

Mr. Corsette noted that there had been a change in the nomination for the Vice Chair position since the December meeting. Commissioner Dominick would not be able to fulfill the duties of the position, and Steven Jackson was recommended for the position in advance of this meeting.

COMMISSIONER PALMER NOMINATED STEVEN JACKSON FOR THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIR OF THE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION. COMMISSIONER STEMPLIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ASHLEY, DOMINICK, JACKSON, PALMER, AND STEMPLIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

5. Discussion and possible action to approve the Veterans Advisory Commission 2021 Annual Report

COMMISSIONER STEMPLIL MOVED TO APPROVE THE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION 2021 ANNUAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER DOMINICK SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PULK, VICE-CHAIR JACKSON, COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ASHLEY, DOMINICK, PALMER, AND STEMPLIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

6. Presentation, discussion and possible recommendation regarding the Arizona Veteran Suicides Report

Charles Katz from ASU Center for Violence Prevention gave a presentation, outlining statistics from a study for the State of Arizona, administered by the CDC, called the National Violent Death Reporting Program. The study looks at data on all suicides, homicides, homicides by legal intervention, and deaths of undetermined intent. The presentation focused on Arizona statistics, based on data collected from death certificates, medical examiners' offices, and sheriffs' departments, and municipal law enforcement agencies statewide.

Mr. Katz focused on statistics for veterans in Scottsdale and the state of Arizona. He showed veteran status data ranging from 2015 to 2019 on proportion of veterans by Arizona population and number of suicides; suicide rates per 100,000 population by veteran status; by veteran status and age group; by race/ethnicity and veteran status; suicides in Scottsdale by zip code; location of injury resulting in death among suicide victims by veteran status; method of death by veteran status; marital status; mental health circumstances; substance abuse/addiction circumstances; and life stressors. He reviewed the list of major findings of the study. He highlighted the fact that veterans in Scottsdale are at greater risk for suicide than the rest of Maricopa County.

Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the findings. It was noted that many veterans in Scottsdale are older and could have medical issues unrelated to their veteran status. They discussed ways to change certain incorrect perceptions about veterans, such as those

surrounding mental health and substance abuse and how to reach out to veterans and families of veterans who might be at risk for suicide. Commissioner Dominick noted that the VA works with families of patients with substantial health risks, including having conversations about removing weapons from the home.

Commissioner Palmer noted that the statistics show approximately 5 to 15 veteran suicides per year in Scottsdale, which is not high in terms of numbers. Commissioners briefly discussed possible solutions, which could include listing help line information on the website or other forms of media. It was noted that a national three digit hotline number will be coming out in July, which will likely be marketed nationally.

Mr. Corsette suggested that it would make sense to work regionally, with neighboring communities if the City was interested in forming a program focused on veteran suicide prevention. Mr. Katz offered to provide regional comparisons to the Commission.

7. Update, discussion and possible direction regarding the VAC Work Plan

Chair Pulk noted that historically, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission have met with staff the Monday before each meeting to talk about the agenda, updates, and concerns. She suggested that it would be beneficial to have a facilitated work study to review the VAC work plan in the coming months. Commissioner Palmer asked that the meeting include information on programs being done by other Commissions that could be relevant to the VAC's work plan.

Mr. Corsette will agendize a facilitated discussion for either the February or March meeting.

8. Commission members' reports, updates and suggestions for future agenda items

Future meeting agendas could include:

- Work plan work study session
- Veterans' financial education

Commissioners were encouraged to suggest organizations or individuals to be scheduled to present during VAC meetings.

Mr. Corsette said that Commissioner Dominick has been transferred out of state, leaving an opening on the Commission. He is unsure when City Council will appoint a new commissioner.

It was suggested that information about new veterans' license plates that are available be included on the website.

It was noted that COVID vaccines are available at the following locations:

- The VA
- Mountain View Park
- Eldorado Community Center
- Scottsdale Community College
- Scottsdale Stadium
- Granite Reef Senior Center
- Mustang Library

Mr. Corsette said that the County Health Department has made rapid home tests available on a limited supply at County libraries.

Mr. Corsette announced that the State of the City address scheduled for January 18th has been cancelled. Mayor Ortega will release a video version of the State of Scottsdale via YouTube in February.

Next Meeting is Wednesday, February 2, 2022

9. Adjournment

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PULK, VICE-CHAIR JACKSON, COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ASHLEY, DOMINICK, PALMER, AND STEMPIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

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