



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 1, 2024
Scottsdale Community Design Studio
7506 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

PRESENT: Chair Land Anderson, Vice-Chair Justin Layman, Commissioners Mark Ashley (MS Teams), Steven Jackson (arrived at 5:06 pm), Pete Palmer, and Joel Stempil

ABSENT: Commissioner Patrick Mazzarella

STAFF: Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director

GUESTS: Jordan Richbourg, VSHIELD Chair

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Members present as listed above.

2. Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

3. Discussion and possible action to approve April 3, 2024, commission meeting minutes

CHAIR ANDERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 3, 2024, VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER JACKSON SECONDED THE

MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR ANDERSON, VICE-CHAIR LAYMAN, AND COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, JACKSON, PALMER, AND STEMPILO VOTED

IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. COMMISSIONER MAZZARELLA WAS NOT PRESENT. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

4. Discussion and possible recommendations: VSHIELD — Veterans of Scottsdale Helping Individuals through Empowerment, Leadership, and Development (City of Scottsdale employee resource group for veterans and military advocates)

Jordan Richbourg, Chair of VSHIELD, led a discussion sharing the current status and goals of the group. They are seeking veterans who are current City staff workers to collaborate in combining resources and creating a community of service members and their families. The goal is to create a place for resources where veterans can access education and aid in navigating various services and programs available to them. Mr. Richbourg outlined a goal of creating a fitness-oriented piece, including community-based items, to unite service workers in a fun and collective environment. Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director, gave an overview of the employee resource groups in the City, noting that they are designed to build camaraderie. All City employees are invited to join a group that resonates with them. Mr. Corsette shared that, in efforts toward building a supportive network, they recently hosted a "Lunch and Learn" about VA benefits and are looking at hosting additional events, including one featuring education benefits in coordination with the ASU Pat Tillman Veterans Center. Ultimately, they would like to help the City present itself as a military-friendly employer.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Corsette discussed the potential overlap in audience and the beneficial partnership opportunity between the Veterans Advisory Commission and VSHEILD for events and programs. He confirmed that there have been no specific conversations with City Council; however, they should already be aware of the employee resource groups. Vice-Chair Layman discussed the veteran-specific program in development, which will allow City employees and veterans to get an education at Scottsdale Community College and be hired directly into the City. Chair Anderson requested the VSHEILD meeting schedule for the VAC members.

5. Discussion and possible recommendations Scottsdale Salutes program options

Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director, discussed the potential to expand the Scottsdale Salutes criteria to allow someone who has a substantial connection to the community through their work in Scottsdale. Currently, the program eligibility is restricted to individuals who live or have lived in Scottsdale. Vice-Chair Layman and Commissioner Jackson support the change to include City staff and agree that there will need to be specific guidance on eligibility. Discussion ensued regarding possible criteria, which could include a minimum time of employment with the City of Scottsdale or a Scottsdale business, proof of good employment standing, and a nomination process requiring applicants to include support from their employer with a letter of recommendation. The criteria can prioritize residents and designate a certain number of Scottsdale employee applications. Commissioner Stempel suggested working with the Chamber of Commerce to distribute information. Commissioner Jackson expressed interest in reserving a spot for a non-resident National Guard member stationed at Papago, as they shop and spend time in Scottsdale. Chair Anderson opined that the Papago connection is not the same as a private-sector employee. He suggested items to be considered, including:

- Time Criteria
- Verification
- Publication to businesses
- Prioritization of residents
- Quota for guard services

Commissioners expressed concern that there may be too many applicants and asked about the possibility of expanding the number of banner locations. Mr. Corsette noted that the Office of Communication's budget and the cost of printing the banners would have to be considered, and there would need to be a conversation with the Tourism Department, as they manage the program. It was suggested that an allocation of different group criteria be established to recognize more veterans, and if a quota is filled, applicants could be rolled over to the next year. Commissioners support eligibility of City employees with a minimum of 5-years history.

Mr. Corsette and Commissioner Jackson will develop language for defining the program applicant qualifiers with the goal of keeping flexibility indicating some spots are available for people working in Scottsdale. Mr. Corsette clarified that individual businesses will not be directly contacted. Marketing efforts for the program will include the program criteria. The Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce Veterans and Military Affairs Committee will be utilized to connect to the business, and community participants from previous years will be asked to make recommendations.

6. Discussion and updates to the Veterans Advisory Commission Work Plan

Vice-Chair Layman gave an update on Scottsdale Community College's work/learn program for veterans, which will offer students an opportunity to intern with the City of Scottsdale. He noted that the Scottsdale Community College Veterans Center is opening tomorrow, on May 2nd.

7. Commissioner reports, staff updates, and suggestions for future agenda items

Vice-Chair Layman recently visited Southwest Veterans Chamber of Commerce, which is a good resource for small business owners. Links for the organization are available on the Veterans Resource page.

Commissioner Palmer said that he plans to attend the Veterans Mental Health Forum that Senator Sinema is hosting in Phoenix.

Commissioner Stempil said that he has completed his training at Hospice of the Valley and will be working with their veterans' program.

Future meeting agenda items include:

- Scottsdale Salutes qualifications

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 5, 2024.

8. Adjournment

CHAIR ANDERSON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR ANDERSON, VICE-CHAIR LAYMAN, AND COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, JACKSON, 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 5:58 p.m.

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