



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 1, 2026
Scottsdale Community Design Studio
7506 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

- PRESENT:** Chair Justin Layman; Vice-Chair Donna Tew; Commissioners Mark Ashley, Stephen Casares (MS Teams), Marcy Kostewa, and Christie Slegers
- ABSENT:** Commissioner Steven Jackson
- STAFF:** Holly Peralta, Public Affairs Manager; Brandon Chapman, Volunteer Coordinator
- GUESTS:** Tom Shannon, Scottsdale Fire Chief

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Layman called the meeting to order at 4:31 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 March 4, 2026, commission meeting minutes

COMMISSIONER KOSTEWA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 4, 2026, VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER ASHLEY SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, VICE-CHAIR TEW, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, KOSTEWA, AND SLEGGERS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSIDENTING VOTES.

4. Presentation and discussion: Scottsdale Fire Department recruitment efforts, including outreach to veterans, desired firefighter qualifications, current attrition trends, and future workforce outlook

Tom Shannon, Scottsdale Fire Chief, gave a presentation outlining recruitment efforts, required applicant qualifications, attrition trends, and the outlook for the future. As part of his presentation, Chief Shannon reviewed the history of the Scottsdale Municipal Fire Department, which was created in 2005. Prior to July 1, 2005, Scottsdale fire services were provided by Rural Metro. He noted that 160 people joined the pension system at that time, which leaves the department in a position where it will likely see a big turnover of workforce, because all have reached at least the 20-year retirement mark, or more if they transferred service.

Chief Shannon reviewed planned recruitment efforts, the goal of filling positions with a mixed demographic, including veterans, and necessary applicant requirements. He said approximately 10 percent of current recruits are veterans. All recruits are required to obtain an emergency medical technician certificate, which is typically a four-to-six-month process. Efforts are being made to work with the Department of Health Services to determine what can be counted as course equivalent skills for military members. Chief Shannon talked further about what is being done to educate veterans and members of the military, noting that military personnel typically do well because the job structure focuses on teamwork.

Chief Shannon anticipated that, of the 106 employees who are eligible, most will retire over the next three to five years. Some retirement-eligible employees have retirement dates that are set for a certain date. The overall goal of the department is to be precise, recruit heavily over the next three to five years, and work with Department of Health Services on reciprocity for those who can qualify. He stressed the importance of getting assistance from groups like the Veterans' Commission in getting the word out to current military members and veterans.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Chief Shannon explained that during the last 20 years, a third party private ambulance service has been used. All 911 emergency service calls are directed to the fire department. Much like the military, the department is constantly training replacements in order to maintain the necessary skillsets. He provided an overview of the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System.

Discussion ensued about the different options available for EMT training, reciprocity, National Registry certification, regional training centers, and the percentage of applicants who successfully complete the Academy. Chair Layman spoke about the City of Scottsdale SkillBridge program. Chief Shannon mentioned that the Scottsdale Fire Department is in the process of building an internal EMT and paramedic program, which could be an opportunity to incorporate credentials that military members already have.

Brandon Chapman, Volunteer Coordinator, gave an update on the Skillbridge program. He said that he has recently learned that the City of Scottsdale SkillBridge program no longer has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Defense. There are currently new stipulations regarding vacant PCMs and a requirement for a certain percentage of people to get hired over a period of time. The City's legal department reviewed the new stipulations of the MOU and determined that the City is unable to continue participating.

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

Holly Peralta, Public Affairs Manager, said that she is still looking for a company willing to add names to the memorial. The original production team has reservations about doing the work.

Commissioner Slegers gave an update and feedback on the Vietnam Veterans Day program that was held on Sunday, March 29, 2026. Discussion ensued regarding the registration process, and suggestions were made for making directions to the event and parking areas more clear.

Future meetings could include:

- U.S. flag disposal update
- Presentation from Scottsdale Police Chief
- Fiscal Year priorities
- Update on the status of the Honor Grove and memorial plaque

The next meeting will be held on May 6, 2026.

6. Adjournment

VICE-CHAIR TEW MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER ASHLEY SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, VICE-CHAIR TEW, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, KOSTEWA, AND SLEGGERS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Recorded and Transcribed by eScribers, LLC.