



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 3, 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), and Steven Jackson

ABSENT: Commissioners Marcy Kostewa and Christie Slegers

STAFF: Chris Watson, Assistant Police Chief; Chris Coffee, Police Commander; Holly Peralta, Public Affairs Manager; Kira Peters, Deputy City Manager; Virginia Bermudez, Director of Strategic Initiatives; Sara Carsas, Management Analyst for the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section of the Strategic Initiatives Division of the City of Scottsdale Police Department

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Layman called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Members present as listed above.

2. Public Comment

Chair Layman read written public comments from Rudy Fisher, commending the City for their efforts in planning the Memorial Day event. AJ Gulley's comment informed the Commission about the Armor Project and the benefits the program provides to veterans. Chair Layman offered to follow-up with Mr. Gulley about presenting to the Commission.

Mike Phillips, President of Arizona Baseball Legacy and Experience, spoke about the organization and their goal to celebrate Arizona baseball heritage and educate people about the impact on the City. He said that Arizona Baseball Legacy and Experience has a permanent display at Frasher's Tavern that includes memorabilia from around the state. They have had temporary exhibits in Tempe, Mesa, Los Angeles, and at Scottsdale Stadium. In fall of 2026 they will display exhibits at Scottsdale Stadium, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the 1951 shot heard around the world playoff game and a display focusing on military veterans who played in the Cactus League. On November 11, 2026, Arizona Baseball Legacy and

Experience will sponsor a veterans Purple Heart baseball game, that will include players from the national teams.

3. Discussion and possible action to approve May 6, 2026 Commission meeting minutes

COMMISSIONER JACKSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 6, 2026 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES. VICE-CHAIR TEW SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, VICE-CHAIR TEW, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, AND JACKSON VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

4. Presentation and discussion: Michael Maisano, PsyD, Founder and Executive Director of the Silent Survivors Project and Arizona Frontline Theatre

Michael Maisano, Founder and Executive Director of Silent Survivors Project and Arizona Frontline Theatre, gave a presentation discussing the mission and fundraising mechanism for the non-profit. Their goal is to raise money and awareness to support other organizations and partners. He explained that the group puts on plays written by veterans and the productions are flexible and are put on in a variety of spaces. They hope to someday have the entire cast be made up of veterans. Mr. Maisano noted that they are partnered with the City of Surprise Valley Art Council and that their office space was donated by them.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions and made suggestions. Chair Layman suggested that the group look into using ASU's small south theater, Kerr Theatre, a music festival, and Ravencroft Jazz space, and Granite Reef Senior Center's stage space.

5. Discussion and possible action related to community veterans' events and activities

Chris Watson, Assistant Police Chief, thanked all who participated in the Memorial Day event, noting that they are already planning some improvements for next year. He shared an update regarding event and program funding. He clarified that City leadership has emphasized their ongoing support for veterans' events. The Police Department will support programs and events that have been supported in the past and plans to include Veterans' events funding as part of their FY 2027/28 budget process.

6. Discussion and possible action regarding the commission's start time

Discussion ensued regarding the Commission's start time and the meeting location. Staff and Commissioners all stated that they are flexible between a start time of 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Chief Watson said that since there are no preferences, he would suggest continuing the start time of 4:30 p.m. There were no preferences expressed about choosing between meeting at the Design Studio location or the Police Headquarters located on Indian School Rd.

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

On behalf of the Commission, Chair Layman thanked Holley Peralta for her hard work for the Veterans Advisory Commission during the transition. Chief Watson echoed the thanks to Ms. Peralta and also to Deputy City Manager Kira Peters for their assistance with the transition.

Chief Watson said that after speaking with City staff regarding feedback received from the Commission, it has been decided to move forward in a different direction with the Honor Grove. He will be researching possible options for the Honor Grove and a fitting memorial.

Chair Layman reminded staff that the issue of finding a vendor to update the Memorial for the Fallen is still pending. Kira Peters, Deputy City Manager, confirmed that funds that were left over from the original installation of the memorial are being held in a special revenue account and are available for use for this project.

Commissioner Tew announced that Home Base will be opening in the Scottsdale area in two weeks. The organization works in partnership with ASU School of Medicine to focus on providing mental health for veterans. They developed an intense two-week counseling program that is free to veterans and their family members. They will also be providing veteran activities and wellness programs at ASU's downtown campus.

Chair Layman noted that Ms. Peralta will remain in charge of the Scottsdale Salutes program. Ms. Peralta said that information and applications are available all year on the City website and there will be a marketing push starting in August/September.

Chief Watson introduced Virginia Bermudez and Sara Garza from his staff.

Future Agenda Items could include:

- Update on the Honor Grove
- Memorial for the Fallen update
- Report from a legislative liaison about Veterans issues
- Veterans Day program update
- Scottsdale Salutes

Chair Layman congratulated Commissioner Tew for her recent appointment as Director of the Military Partnership at Honor Health.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, 2026.

8. Adjournment

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With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

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