



VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING
February 11, 2021 @ 6 PM

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order: 6:03 PM by Chair Charlip

Location: online via WebEx

City staff: Claudine McDonald, Manager, Community Relations Division and Jamie LaDuke, Alicia Romero, Aaron Koenigseker

A. STANDING BUSINESS

1. Call to Order: Chair Charlip called the meeting to order at 6 PM, offered the invocation and led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. City Liaisons: Claudine McDonald wished the VAC well and expressed her support for the new city liaison staff from the City’s Human Resource’s office who each introduced themselves.
 - a. Jamie LaDuke: is a Human Resources Supervisor, managing training and organizational development for the city of Aurora and her father is a veteran.
 - b. Aaron Koenigseker is a training specialist for the city and is a retired Army officer.
 - c. Alicia Romero is a training specialist for the city and is a military spouse.
3. Roll Call was conducted (See Attachment 1)
 - a. Present: Commissioners Charlip, Echols, Sayouthasad, Aleem, Francis, Chase, Dallas, Fox, Lammon.
 - b. Absent: Commissioner Savage. Quorum requirements were met.
4. Previous Meeting Minutes Review: Because of discrepancies in the January meeting minutes that were distributed earlier in the evening, Chair Charlip asked that the Commission postpone reviewing the minutes until he and the City staff have a chance to make corrections. There were no objections and Chair Charlip moved to table approval of the January minutes until the March Commission meeting. Commissioner Francis seconded the motion and it passed without objection.
5. Guest Speakers. There were two guest speakers.
 - a. Chair Charlip introduced Bill Holen who is an Army veteran and an elected member of the Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners. Commission Holen discussed the joint Arapahoe-Aurora-Adams County veteran service office being established and the services it will offer. He also discussed the variety of services offered by the Arapahoe county VSO office in Littleton which are the model for the new joint office. He also discussed the various veteran-oriented programs offered by his county including:
 - (1) VA and Human Services assistance program
 - (2) Opportunities for employment, training, grants and counseling
 - (3) Works with ESGR in hosting veteran job fairs
 - (4) Distributing almost 8 million dollars to small businesses
 - b. Chair Charlip introduced Charles Gilford III who is the Chairperson of the City’s Human Relations Commission. Chair Gilford discussed the history and purpose of the commission and expressed a desire to work with the VAC on common-interest items.



6. Financial Report from City Staff: The next report is due in April 2021. (INFO)
7. Public Comment: There were no members of the public present. (INFO)
8. City Staff Report: Mrs. LaDuke advised the VAC that City staff will be taking five furlough days this year, tomorrow (12 Feb 21) will be a furlough day for her and her team. Problems with the City web site have been resolved and the full site is available. (INFO)
9. Sub-committee Reports
 - a. *Coffman Homeless Veteran Project*: Chair Charlip attended a joint City-Adams county meeting with City staff, the Mayor, and Adams county officials on Feb 10, 2021 and the outcome of that meeting included:
 - (1) The pilot will be for one-year and include 8 veterans who live in both Aurora and Adams County.
 - (2) Draft resolution is being worked on by City Attorney's Office. When the draft is ready, there will be a follow-up meeting between the two municipalities.
 - (3) Staff from the County and City are now working together on this project.
 - (4) The VAC will receive periodic reports on the pilot and will make a recommendation to City Council at the end of the pilot regarding whether to continue the program.
(OPEN: Charlip)
 - b. *Outreach, Social Media, Web Site*. Commissioner Sayouthasad updated the Commission on outreach activities:
 - (1) She completed a review of the VAC website and the changes have been updated
 - (2) Sent a news release to recruit new commissioners to the City
 - (3) Has begun working on VAC mission briefing for all the commissioner's use.

She shared an idea for the web site and solicited input from Commissioners before the next meeting - add a page that lists discounts available to veterans. (OPEN: Sayouthasad)
 - c. *Veterans Court*: Commissioner Aleem reported that the Veteran Court is operational, and the staff is working on marketing the court to veterans and others. There are currently three veterans enrolled in the program. The Court is looking for veterans who would like to serve as mentors to enrollees. If you are interested, you can contact Commissioner Aleem. (OPEN: Aleem)
 - d. *Vice Chairperson Report*: Vice Chair Lammon was not available to provide his report (OPEN: Lammon)
 - e. *Chairperson Report*: Chair Charlip reported:
 - (1) Commissioner Terms of Appointment: He is working with City staff who are working with the City Clerk's office to obtain an official listing of commissioners, the date they were sworn-in and the end date of their term.
 - (2) Council and City Management Listening Sessions: He completed his listening sessions with the Mayor, all Councilmembers, the City Manager, Michael Bryant (Communications), Janice Napper (Diversity) and Greg Hays (Budget). Common themes include homelessness, unemployment and youth outreach.
 - (3) Townhall: He attended two town hall meetings (Johnston & Bergen).
 - (4) He will be inviting Councilmembers to attend the VAC meeting.
 - (5) He worked with Joint Community Forces and the chairperson of the Adams County



Veterans Advisory Council to market both commissions.

(6) He notified members that Commissioner Sayouthasad’s phone number in the VAC roster is incorrect – please change the last four numbers to 4655 and to let Vice Chair Lammon know if there are any other changes or discrepancies. NOTE – the sworn-in and term end dates in the roster (Attach 3) have not been validated and should not be considered accurate.

(7) The US Department of Veterans Affairs has established a Covid vaccine appointment line: 888 336 8262 (INFO: Charlip)

B. OLD BUSINESS

1. 2020 Census Recognition: The US Census Bureau recognized the VAC for its support of the 2020 Census (Attach 4). A lion share of the credit goes to Commission Francis who originated the idea for the VAC to support the census and then spent a great deal of time ensuring that the census properly counted veterans. Chair Charlip recognized Commissioner Francis for her hard work and dedication to the census. (CLOSED)
2. Ordinance and By-Laws Change: Chair Charlip discussed the limitation in the VAC’s charter ordinance that does not allow active duty personnel, traditional guardsman/reservists and Individual Mobilization Augmentees to serve on the VAC. After a brief discussion, the VAC agreed to make a recommendation to Council to expand eligibility to include these groups. Chair Charlip will prepare changes to the Ordinance and By-Laws for review at the March VAC meeting. (OPEN: Charlip)
3. Veteran Population Study: The proposal (Attach 5) will be provided to the Staff for processing through the steps necessary to get the proposal to City Council (OPEN: Staff)
4. Backpack Distribution: Commissioner Aleem explained that the backpacks are still available and her recommended, and the Commissioners agreed, to hold them until the Heritage Christian Center conducts a stand-down later this year and then donate them to the Center for the stand down (OPEN: Aleem)
5. Web Site Review at the request of City Communications: See 9b (1). (CLOSED)
6. 2021 Projects: After reviewing the project list (Attach 6), Commissioner Aleem moved that the list be adopted, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Chase. The motion passed unanimously. (CLOSED)

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Commission Vacancies: Chair Charlip reported that there are no pending applications in the City Clerk’s office for appointment to the VAC. He encouraged Commissioners to promote the opportunity to their colleagues. (OPEN: Charlip)
2. 2020 Performance Review: Due to the time, Chair Charlip tabled the discussion until March (OPEN: All)
3. Commission Help Line: Over the last four months, the VAC has received one phone call for assistance – so it is not being utilized. Additionally, commissioners who answer the calls have different degrees of expertise and may not be able to assist the individual. Chair Charlip suggested that the line be closed, and something be placed on the VAC web site indicating who to contact for



assistance. After discussing the idea, two options were identified: 1) close the line and 2) create a recording for the line that indicates who callers should contact for assistance. Commissioner Sayouthasad will collect ideas from commissioners about what the recording should address – Commissioners should send her suggestions. (OPEN: Sayouthasad)

D. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:38PM. The draft agenda for the March meeting is at Attach 7. Future Meetings:
2021: 11 March, 8 April, 13 May, 10 June, 8 July, 12 August, 9 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 December
2022: 13 January, 10 February

Meeting Minutes transcribed by:
Chair Charlip

Attachments

1. Feb Meeting Agenda



Feb Agenda.docx

2. Attendance



Attendance.xlsx

3. VAC Roster



VAC Commission
Roster 9 Feb 21.doc

4. Census Bureau Recognition Certificate



Census Digital
Certificate.pdf

5. Population Study



Veteran Pop Study
Final.docx

6. Approved 2021 Project List



Master Multivote
Scoresheet.xlsx

7. Draft March Meeting Agenda.



Mar Agenda.docx