



VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING
May 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order: 6:02 p.m. by Chairperson Charlip
Location: Virtual via WebEx
City Liaison(s): Jamie LaDuke - Aurora Learn Supervisor
Alicia Romero – Aurora Learn Training Specialist / Military Liaison

A. Standing Business (Agenda at Atch 1)

1. Call to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance
Chairperson Ralph Charlip called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., offered the invocation and led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll Call (Attendance at Atch 2)
 - a. Present Commissioners: Ralph Charlip, Watik Aleem, Gregory Echols, CW Fox, Cynthia Francis, Jeremy Lammon and Robert Chase
 - b. Absent Commissioner(s): Melissa Sayouthasad
 - c. Quorum: Yes
3. Approval of April 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Meeting Minutes at Atch 3)
Motion to approve the April 8, 2021 meeting minutes at 6:07 p.m. by CW Fox, second by Watik Aleem. Approved unanimously.
Amendments: None
4. Financial Report – Quarterly Only (January, April, July and October)
 - a. Status of 2020 and 2021 Funds (Budget Report at Atch 4)
Jamie LaDuke provided an update on the budget, referencing an email she sent to Chairman Charlip on April 26, 2021. The Veterans Affairs Commission has two accounts within the City of Aurora budget. The first is titled Veterans Affairs Commission and is funded from the General Fund. The budgeted amount is \$3,649 per year. The second account is titled Veterans Affairs Commission Gifts and Grants, which currently has a balance of \$2,587 from various fundraising efforts since 2013. Jamie stated that the request that the commission made in January, to have the funds distributed was not completed. The commission can now discuss how to proceed. A motion was made at 6:21 p.m. by CW Fox, to provide \$500 from the Gifts and Grants account to the newly established Veterans Court program through the Aurora Municipal Courthouse, second by Jeremy Lammon, approved unanimously. Cynthia Francis did want it notated in the meeting minutes that the commission should think about the state’s veteran housing program later in the year, if funds are still available. Jeremy Lammon stated that his wife was recently elected as the President of the Aurora Rotary Club, and there may be some opportunities to partner with them in the future. Jamie LaDuke will make the request to the budget office to have the funds transferred. (Open: Staff)



b. Phone Line Recording

Jamie stated that she has entered an IT Ticket to have the voice mail recording changed. She has not received a response but will follow-up with the IT department next week. (Open: Staff)

5. Public Comment(s) – Maximum Three (3) Minutes per Person

No public comments

6. City Liaison Report:

a. Veteran Population Study

Jamie stated that due to the number of current projects that the city has committed to completing in 2021 and 2022, it has been difficult to find a department that can take on a project of this size. The Housing and Community Services Department is currently going through a realignment, with the addition of new staff and programs. Deputy City Manager, Nancy Freed has announced her retirement and Human Resources Director, Dianna Giordano has announced her upcoming departure from the city. Currently, there is no city department that has the available staff to undertake such a large project. Chairman Charlip stated that he would reach out to various colleges and organizations to see if anyone may be interested in taking on this project as a graduate program project. Jamie stated that this was the best way forward at this time. (OPEN: Charlip)

b. Ordinance Change (Guard/Reserve/AD/NOAA/PHS)

Jamie stated that the ordinance change is scheduled to go before City Council at the May 17 Study Session. Jamie does not anticipate any challenges. Once approved through the Study Session, it will be scheduled for a full City Council Meeting in June. (OPEN: Staff)

7. Vice Chair Report (VAC Commission Roster at Atch 5)

a. Updated Roster – Phone Number Verification

Updated Nathaniel Graff's contact information. Jeremy will reach out to Michael Spatter and Melissa Sayouthasad, to verify their contact information. (OPEN: Lammon)

8. Chair Report

a. Diversity-Equity-Inclusion session with Janice Napper and Courageous Conversations

Chairman Charlip stated that he attended a training on May 12, provided by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Janice Napper is the individual that oversees the Office, and she invited multiple individuals to take part in this training. The training was facilitated by Courageous Conversations, a third-party that the city has contracted to assist with building and expanding the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. (INFO)

b. Seniors Commission: Chairman Charlip met with the Senior Commission leadership and will be inviting them to speak to the VAC in June. (INFO)

c. Youth Commission

The Aurora Youth Commission presented at the policy committee on April 28. They did a good job and Chairman Charlip believes there may be a way to partner with them in the future. He will send staff an email, requesting the contact information for that commission. (OPEN: Charlip)

d. Public Relations, Communications, Tourism, Libraries, Boards and Commissions and Citizen



Groups Policy Committee meeting

Chairman Charlip stated that he and Commissioner Fox attended the policy committee on April 28. He stated that there were no concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Ordinance. (INFO)

e. VAC Annual Report to Policy Committee – 23 June

The Veterans Affairs Commission is scheduled to present to the policy committee on June 23. Chairman Charlip stated that he will be presenting and anyone from the commission is welcome to join. He anticipates discussing the changes to the Ordinance and its importance going forward. (Open: Charlip)

f. Aurora Housing Authority

The AHA is being invited to speak to the VAC in August and will address what they do as well as the new veterans housing that is currently under construction. (INFO)

g. Veteran Oral History Project

Chairman Charlip been thinking about a veteran oral history project and has spoken with several museum authorities in the city. He said he is still researching the idea but would welcome feedback from the commissioners. He also said that once he has completed his research, the full Commission will decide whether to proceed with the idea. (OPEN: Charlip)

9. Project Reports

a. Coffman project

There was a meeting on May 10 with Mayor Coffman, city staff, Arapahoe County representatives and staff members from Bayaud. Chairman Charlip was invited to attend and participated. The basic overview states that the project will begin July 1, 2021. Instead of the city of Aurora managing this project, agreement and relationships, it was decided that Arapahoe County would be better suited to manage the project since they currently have an agreement with Bayaud. A meeting will take place soon to discuss the next steps. (OPEN: Charlip)

b. Outreach, Social Media, Web Site

Melissa Sayouthasad was not in attendance. However, an expanded list of discounts offered to veterans will be posted on the VAC web site. Also, if commissioners would like copies of the new VAC flyer, contact Jamie LaDuke. (OPEN: Sayouthasad)

c. VSO Engagement

Watik Aleem will serve as a liaison to the United Veterans Coalition of Colorado. He also stated that he has reached out to TREA and the American Legion and is waiting to hear back from each. He plans to invite these organizations to a commission meeting in the future. (OPEN: Aleem)

d. Water Bill Insert

Jeremy Lammon was able to connect with Julie Patterson in Communications. Jeremy was able to confirm that the Veterans Affairs Commission information will be in the June water bill insert. (OPEN: Lammon)

e. Promote Military Service

CW Fox has started networking with nine high schools in the Aurora area. The objective is to communicate military options and information to high school students. He has created a presentation that he would like feedback on from the commission (Attachment XX). Commissioner Fox intends to actively engage these high schools in the Fall, when school



resumes, hopefully in-person. Since the school year overlaps calendar years, this project will carryover in 2022 – there were no objections to continuing the project in 2022 from the commissioners. (OPEN: Fox)

f. JROTC Collaboration

Commission Chase indicated that he had tried to contact the JROTC contacts several times with no success and will continue to try to do so. (OPEN; Chase)

g. Standdown with HCC

On Saturday, May 15, 2021, Commissioners Aleem, Chase and Francis will be pick up 118 backpacks to support the Heritage Christian Center’s veteran standdown scheduled for later this year. (CLOSED)

10. Liaison Updates:

a. Aurora Defense Council

Greg Echols stated that there are currently eight reservations for the annual Aurora Armed Forces Lunch scheduled in August. Eight attendees will fill one full table and two additional seats. The total cost thus far is \$850, which will be paid from the Veterans Affairs Commission appropriated fund budget. If City Council members decide to attend the luncheon, they will purchase their own table with their funds. If you have not notified Greg of your intentions to attend the luncheon, please contact him as soon as possible. No updates regarding the Aurora Defense Council meetings. (OPEN: Echols)

b. Veterans Court

Commissioner Aleem reported that there are two participants enrolled in the program with a third enrollee starting soon. After a lengthy discussion, the VAC agreed to donate \$500 from the Grants and Gifts fund to the Veterans Court program. One challenge that the program is facing, is the mentor/mentee relationship, due to COVID and the inability to meet in person. (OPEN: Aleem)

c. JCF

Commissioner Chase reported that he had briefed the JCF about the VAC and was planning to do so again in 2022. (OPEN: Chase)

d. Colorado Freedom Memorial

Commissioner Echols provided some history for the new applicants. In the past., on Memorial Day each year, the Veterans Affairs Commission would host an event open to the public at the Aurora Municipal Center. A few years ago, the city of Aurora partnered with the Colorado Freedom Memorial to provide an event the Saturday before Memorial Day. Previously, a few members of the commission would participate in the ceremony. Jamie LaDuke stated that the city has already fully planned this year’s event. (INFO)

B. Old Business

1. Role and Responsibilities (Commission Roles and Responsibilities at Atch 6)

Chairman Charlip stated that he has provided the role and responsibilities document to all commission members. The only feedback he received was from Melissa Sayouthasad, stating that there should be a minimum number of hours per month dedicated to the commission. After discussing the idea of including an estimated number of hours in the document, it was decided that the hours devoted to the VAC would reflect the project(s) being worked by the commissioner and no change to the document needed to be



made. The document will be made into a VAC Working Instruction. (OPEN: Lammon))

2. Candidate Questions

Chairman Charlip stated that he sent a list of candidate questions to the commission and has not received any feedback and the document will be made into a Working Instruction. (OPEN: Lammon)

3. 2022 Projects and City Budget Alignment (Aligning VAC Projects and Funding at Atch 7)

Chairman Charlip stated that the commission should keep this in mind. If or when the commission receives special funding from the city for specific projects, progress would be reported regularly, and the project would be completed from start to finish. Chairman Charlip has asked Jeremy Lammon to turn this into a policy for future use. (OPEN: Lammon)

4. Policy Review

- a. Working Instruction Template 2020-01
No comments received. (CLOSED)
- b. Annual Working Instruction Review 2020-02
No comments received (CLOSED)
- c. Governing Documents 2020-03
Changes will be made based on the changes to the Ordinance and Bylaws. (OPEN: Lammon)
- d. VAC Phone Line (VAC City Phone Line at Atch 8) 2020-23 (Updated)
No comments received (CLOSED)

C. New Business

1. UVC Membership

Watik Aleem will continue to be a liaison between the commission and UVC. The commission can not officially join due to restrictions outlined by Council. (CLOSED)

2. Veteran Recognition Program

At the April meeting, Gregory Echols discussed an awards program and identifying an award for the August luncheon. In June, Jamie LaDuke and Chad Angell (Volunteer Program Coordinator) will discuss with Chairman Charlip, how the commission can integrate with the city’s volunteer recognition program. (OPEN: Staff and Charlip)

3. Defense Council August Awards Lunch

Discussed earlier. (OPEN: Echols)

4. Project Ideas

Chairman Charlip asked commissioners to identify any projects for 2022, so that the VAC could begin collecting those ideas and discussing how/if it wants to approach the projects before 2022. Commissioner Fox suggested that the commissioner that brings the project forward should oversee the project to completion or if the sponsoring commissioner leaves, the newest commissioner should take ownership of the project – the commission agreed. (INFO)

5. Veterans Day Celebration

Charlip

Chairman Charlip stated that he would like to partner with the city to recognize city employees that are also veterans. Alicia Romero stated that she would ask around, to see if there was a specific group of employee veterans that we can work with to organize something. (OPEN: Charlip)

6. Monthly Policy Review (OPEN: Lammon)

Lammon

- 2020-11 Commissioner Additional Duties (at Atch 9) No changes
- 2020-12 Wearing VAC Shirts (at Atch 10) No changes



2020-13 Selection of Commissioners – (at Atch 11) No changes

Adjournment

Motion at 7:26 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

Next Meeting: 10 Jun

Future 12 Meetings:










- 2021: 10 June, 8 July, 12 August, 9 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 December
- 2022: 13 January, 10 February, 10 March, 14 April, 12 May

Meeting Minutes transcribed by:

Jamie L. LaDuke

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Attendance
3. April 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes
4. VAC Budget Report
5. VAC Commission Roster
6. Commission Roles and Responsibilities
7. Aligning VAC Projects and Funding
8. VAC City Phone Line
9. Commissioner Additional Duties
10. Wearing VAC Shirts
11. Selection of Commissioners
12. VAC Discounts

					
May 13, 2021 Meeting Agenda.pdf	Commissioner Attendance_5.13.21.xls	April 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes.pdf	VAC Budget Report May 2021.pdf	VAC Commission Roster.docx	Commission Roles and Responsibilities.docx
					
2020-23 VAC City Phone Line (jr1 5-5-21)	ALIGNING VAC PROJECTS AND FUN	2020-11-Commissioner Additional Duties.rtf	2020-12-Wearing VAC Shirts.rtf	2020-13-Selection of Commissioners.rtf	VAC Discounts.docx