



VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING
August 12, 2021 / 6 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order: 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Ralph Charlip
Location: Virtual via WebEx
City Liaison(s): Jamie LaDuke – Training and Development Manager
Chad Angell – Volunteer Program Coordinator

A. Standing Business (Agenda at Atch 1)

1. Call to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance
Chairperson Ralph Charlip called the meeting to order at 0:00 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, CW Fox, Cynthia Francis, Jeremy Lammon, Melissa Sayouthasad, Nathaniel Graff, Michael Spatter and Robert Chase
 - b. Absent Commissioner(s): Greg Echols
 - c. Quorum: Yes
3. Approval of Month/Date Meeting Minutes (Meeting Minutes at Atch 3)
Motion to approve the July 8, 2021 meeting minutes, approved unanimously.
Amendments: None
4. Guest Speaker(s) – Dayna Ashley-Oehm - Aurora Housing Authority (Presentation at Atch 4)
Dayna Ashley-Oehm with the Aurora Housing Authority provided a presentation to the Commission about their new veteran apartments called Liberty View. Dayna provided an overview of the Aurora Housing Authority, founded in 1975, it consists of a seven-member board appointed by the Mayor. The Aurora Housing Authority has a \$55 million operating budget and a staff of sixty-employees. The Authority provides rental assistance, housing assistance, vouchers for the community and is responsible for on-going housing projects. The newest project is called Liberty View, consisting of 59 units near 30th and Peoria on the Fitzsimons campus. The project will also consist of community spaces, community garden, computer lab, exercise room, laundry facilities, outdoor area, walking paths and is close to public transportation. (CLOSED)
5. Public Comment(s) – Maximum Three (3) Minutes per Person
No public comments
6. City Liaison Report:
 - a. Financial Report – Quarterly Only (January, April, July and October)
 - b. Veterans Court Funding Process



Training and Development Manager Jamie LaDuke provided an overview of how the Veterans Court is funded. It is referred to as the Armed Forces Treatment Court. It is part of a few treatment courts under the Judicial division, and they are funded as part of the city budget. Currently, the treatment courts receive \$9.50 of the \$50 court surcharge that is imposed on all fines. In addition, one of the youth programs is now receiving separate funding under the Aurora Police Department, therefore the treatments courts will begin receiving \$12.50 of the court surcharge. Jamie stated that the city is currently in the budget process for 2022 and if she is provided with the funding total for 2022, she will share it with the commission. The 2022 budget will be presented to Council later this month and posted to the public in September. (OPEN: Staff)

7. Vice Chair Report

An updated Commission roster is at Atch 5. (INFO)

8. Chair Report

a. Community Meeting July 27

Chairperson Ralph Charlip stated that he was unable to attend the meeting on July 27. His wife suffered a stroke and he has been taking care of her. Commissioner Watik Aleem was able to catch some of the information while he was driving. Commissioner Watik Aleem stated that there was a good exchange of information and that they plan to meet again on September 2. The objective is to house all resources for veterans in one location. There is a similar model in Grand Junction. (CLOSED)

b. Armed Forces Lunch expenses - \$830 vs \$750

There was one additional guest added to our reservation. There were no concerns or objections to spending \$830 for the Armed Forces Lunch. Commissioner Mike Spatter stated that he was no longer attending, therefore the individual could utilize his ticket. The event is August 20 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Double Tree. Commissioner Cynthia Francis also had a change; she is unable to attend. Commissioner Watik Aleem stated his wife must have surgery, he will not be able to attend. Currently, we have five tickets available for use. There was some concern about the Delta variant and the enclosed space for the event -- this may not be the best time for a vulnerable population to be gathering. Commissioner Jeremy Lammon stated that he and his wife may attend. Commissioner Nathaniel Graff will see if the VA's new Veteran Experience Officer, Greg Crenshaw would like to attend. It was also mentioned that someone from the Heritage Christian Center may be interested, since they are taking on more veteran related projects. Commissioner Watik Aleem stated that he can reach out to them, he also stated that we could ask Judge Shawn Day if he or a member of the Armed Forces Treatment Court staff would like to attend. (OPEN: Echols)

9. Projects

a. Coffman project

No updates.

b. Outreach, Social Media, Web Site



Ongoing Presence at VAMC: Commissioner Melissa Sayouthasad and Commissioner Watik Aleem reserved a kiosk/table at the VAMC, they stayed for an hour and handed out flyers and business cards. It was good, they were able to speak with a lot of new individuals. If anyone is interested in volunteering, the opportunity is available on Friday mornings. Commissioner Melissa Sayouthasad will forward the sign-up sheet to City Staff Member Alicia Romero and Training and Development Manager Jamie LaDuke for distribution. (OPEN: Sayouthasad)

No updates to the website, if you have resources, pass them on to Commissioner Sayouthasad for review.

c. VSO Engagement

Commissioner Watik Aleem has arranged a speaker from the United Veterans Coalition of Colorado to speak at the October VAC meeting. (INFO)

d. Promote Military Service

Commissioner CW Fox has contacted 18 schools in Aurora by voicemail or email. He gave his presentation that will be used for the program to the VAC and minor changes were identified. The VAC approved the release of the presentation to the schools. (OPEN: Fox)

e. JROTC Collaboration

Commissioner Robert Chase has not been able to do anything with the JROTC but will get with Commissioner CW Fox and Commissioner Melissa Sayouthasad since school will be starting soon. (Open: Chase)

10. Liaison Updates:

a. Aurora Defense Council

No updates

b. Colorado Freedom Memorial

Chairperson Ralph Charlip spoke with Rick Crandell, and there is a follow up call next week. (OPEN: Charlip/Echols)

c. Veterans Court

Commissioner Watik Aleem reported that the Armed Forces Treatment Court implemented offering coffee and donuts during the fourth week, to assist in recruiting mentors. There is a fishing event scheduled for Veterans in September, Commissioner Watik Aleem will provide the flyer to staff liaison Jamie LaDuke for posting. Equipment is provided and there is space for 40 individuals and their families. Lunch will be provided by the Lazy Dog. (WN Fishing Excursion Flyer at Atch 9)

d. UVC

A speaker from the UVC will meet with the VAC in October. (Open: Aleem)



- e. JCF
Joint Community Forces just had a meeting and sent the presentations to the participants. The VAC is not officially listed in their resource book. Commissioner Robert Chase is listed in the state-wide publication as the liaison. (Info)

B. Old Business

- 1. Veteran Recognition Program
Agreed to rename it Service Member and Veteran Volunteer of the Year, to remain consistent with the revisions to the ordinance. There would be three categories, Active, Reserve/Guard and Retired. Nominations would have to come from the non-profit or organization they volunteered at; individuals cannot self-nominate. The commission recommends a minimum of 100 hours volunteered. The volunteer work needs to benefit veterans, and/or families of veterans that are active duty or guardsmen. The commission receives the nominations, reviews and submits winners to the city’s Volunteer Program Coordinator. There was a debate about discharge status, specifically as it relates to dishonorably discharged. The discussion included as to whether the commission should/can ask for discharge information. Staff Liaison’s Jamie LaDuke and Chad Angell were asked to research if other boards/commissions do volunteer awards and the requirements. No resolution or vote was made, discussions will continue. (OPEN: Spatter/Graff)
- 2. Defense Council August Awards Lunch
Previously discussed see paragraph 8a.
- 3. Veterans Day Celebration
No update.
- 4. Rotary Service Project Partnership
The Aurora Rotary Chapter has a project each month, the commission just needs to agree on a project/month. Vice Chairperson Jeremy Lammon will attempt to identify a project. (Open: Lammon)
- 5. Certificate to Recognize a Veteran’s Passing
Commissioner Watik Aleem stated that the subcommittee will discuss and decide if this is a project the commission is willing to take on. It was purposed that this item be tabled until we have more commissioners. (Tabled)

C. New Business

- 1. Policy Review
 - a. 2020-42 Website
 - b. 2020-43 VAC Publications (VAC Publications at Atch 7)
 - c. 2020-23 VAC Phone Line (VAC City Phone Line Revised at Atch 8)No comments received; each policy passed. (Closed)
- 2. VAC Logo (VAC Logo at Atch 6)
The logo was created for future use and the VAC approved the logo. (Closed)



D. Adjournment

Commissioner Cynthia Francis stated that Heritage Christian Center is looking to host a seminar for veterans with disabilities in partnership with the Disabled American Veterans and Veterans Association. The event will take place October 13 or 16, is there an interest for the commission to have a table at the event. Commissioner Cynthia Francis will keep the commission informed of the official date/time. (Open: Francis)

Motion at 7:30 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

Next Meeting: September 9, 2021

Future 12 Meetings:

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

E. Tabled

1. Veteran Population Study

Meeting Minutes transcribed by:










Staff Liaison's Jamie L. LaDuke and Chad Angell

Approved: _____

Date: _____

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Attendance
3. July 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes
4. Liberty View PowerPoint
5. Roster
6. VAC Logo
7. 2020-43 VAC Publications
8. 2020-23 VAC City Phone Line Revised
9. WN Fishing Excursion

 Aug Agenda.docx	 VAC Attendance 8.12.21.xlsx	 July 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes.pdf	 Liberty View PP Aug 2021.pptx
 VAC Commission Roster 6 Aug 21.docx	 VAC Logo.pdf	 2020-43-VAC Publications.rtf	 2020-23 VAC City Phone Line Revised.rtf
 WN Fishing Excursion.pdf			