

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



Jim Zenner
Director

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Present:

Commissioners

Hugh Crooks
John Follmer
John Gutierrez
Jawana McFadden
Rocio Palmero
Chi Szeto
John Gutierrez
Patricia Jackson-Kelley

Absent:

Commissioners

Ashley Chavez
John Oppenheim

County Department

Military and Veterans Affairs

Jim Zenner, Director
Stephanie Guerrero, Executive Secretary

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gutierrez at 1:30 p.m.

SAFE Acknowledgement & Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Barragan, announced the Salute Armed Forces Everyday S.A.F.E. acknowledgment, requesting all active-duty service members and veterans to stand up during the flag salute and proceed to lead The Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Eight (8) Commissioners were at the meeting during the roll; a quorum was present. Commissioner Palmero joined virtually.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Follmer to approve the Minutes for December 17, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Barragan. A roll call was conducted and the motion passed with unanimous votes.

Chairman's Report

Chair Gutierrez stated that the notice of meeting was sent out on December 12, 2025, at 6:12p.m. via GovDelivery from MVA@subscriptions.lacounty.gov. To subscribe, please visit mva.lacounty.gov and click on the mail icon located at the top right of the webpage. The Chairman also informed everyone that this would be his last meeting as Chair. He announced the new Chair will be Commissioner Hugh Crooks accompanied by new Vice Chair Commissioner Rocio Palmero. Chairman Gutierrez expressed he will consult fellow commissioners for input regarding the annual report. The report is due February 1, 2026.

General Public Comments

Richard Lyons provided information about Veterans Longevity Services.

Guest Speaker

Ryan Bauman, Community Engagement Director of Our Community Salutes (OCS), provided an overview of their program that hosts a recognition ceremony for high school seniors and non-high school seniors around the country who are enlisting in the US armed forces. Bob Hope Patriotic Hall hosted a ceremony in May 2025. Currently, OCS is planning another ceremony in Los Angeles during Spring of 2026.

Update on Event Guidelines

The Warrior Heritage Foundation (WHF) provided a written response to the questions asked by the commission. The commission discussed their concerns and feedback.

Recommendation #10 - Recognition of the 35th Anniversary

Commissioner Barragan read the Los Angeles County Veterans Advisory Commission Recommendation #10 into the record. The recommendation proposes that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, coordinate with the Consulate General of the State of Kuwait to host a joint 35th anniversary ceremony honoring the actions of US Servicemembers during Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Desert Saber. The commission approves the recommendation.

Commissioner Follmer motioned to accept Recommendation #10, seconded by Commissioner Crooks. A roll call was conducted and the motion passed unanimously.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report

Esmeralda Alamillo Gadut, Program Manager Veteran Services, provided an update regarding the restructuring within the department.

Future Agenda Items

1. Veterans Benefits Administration	Transparency in Veterans Benefits	Follmer
2. Special Monthly Compensation	Recovery Journey	Follmer
3. Los Angeles Sheriff's Department	Safety Protocols and Protection Plan	Follmer
4. West LA Police Department	West LA VA Public Safety	Barragan
5. LA County Legislative Affairs	Veteran Initiatives and Legislation	Barragan

Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner Jackson-Kelley gave a friendly announcement that it is Commissioner McFadden's birthday.

Commissioner Follmer encouraged veterans to get involved in the community during the holiday season and to visit the Sepulveda or West LA VA Bunker Social every Monday to connect with fellow veterans.

Commissioner Barragan announced that VFW Post 3834 in San Fernando will be hosting a toy drive for the holiday season.

Commissioner Szeto wished everyone a Happy Holiday season.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Dan Ortiz, Desert Storm veteran, is in support of Recommendation #10, in recognition and remembrance of Desert Storm campaign and its veterans.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

Hayden Velasquez, Staff Assistant II
December 17, 2025