

# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



**Jim Zenner**  
Director

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, January 21, 2026

### **Present:**

#### **Commissioners**

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

### **Absent:**

#### **Commissioners**

**County of Los Angeles**  
**Department Military and Veterans Affairs**  
Jim Zenner, Director  
Stephanie Guerrero, Executive Secretary

### **Call to Order**

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

### **SAFE Acknowledgement & Pledge of Allegiance**

Co-Chair Palmero, 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**

Seven (7) Commissioners were at the meeting during the roll; a quorum was present. Commissioner Jackson – Kelley and Commissioner Oppenheim joined virtually.

## **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Commissioner Follmer to approve the Minutes for January 21, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Barragan. A roll call was conducted and the motion passed with unanimous votes.

## **Chairman's Report**

Chair Crooks stated that the notice of the meeting was sent out on January 16, 2026, at 10:24 a.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.

## **General Public Comments**

Benjamin W. Moore, New York Life Insurance Counselor, expressed the importance of life insurance during service members' separation from the armed forces and their willingness to assist those interested in those services.

Sky Lanier, District 3 veteran, shared a recommendation on how to address the law enforcement response for veterans at the West LA VA Campus.

## **Guest Speaker**

Stephanie Fajuri, Program Director of the Center for Healthcare Rights gave an overview of her organization that focuses on providing free, unbiased Medicare and health insurance counseling and advocacy services to Los Angeles County residents who have Medicare or are 60 years or older.

## **Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report**

Jim Zenner, Executive Director, LA County Military and Veteran Affairs, provided an update regarding the 100-year Anniversary event at Bob Hope Patriotic Hall. Director Zenner also reiterated the importance of Senate Bill 694. He highlighted the importance of restructuring plan within MVA, the realities of the possible budget constraints facing the department, services for incarcerated veterans, and a reminder about the upcoming Women Veterans Summit on June 12, 2026.

## **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. Employee Development Department  | Services for Veterans                | Barragan |

## **Commissioner Announcements**

Commissioner McFadden announced that the commission is still waiting for responses from the Warrior Heritage Foundation. She also shared that veterans could stream the Winter Olympics for free on NBC.com. Commissioner also reminded the public to consider volunteering for the 2026 homeless count.

Commissioner Follmer encouraged veterans to visit the Sepulveda or West LA VA Bunker Social every Monday to connect with fellow veterans.

Commissioner Barragan provided an update on the housing project numbers at the West LA VA. He also notified everyone that VFW Post 3834 in San Fernando will be hosting job fairs in the near future.

Commissioner Szeto wished everyone a Happy Holiday season.

Commissioner Oppenheim introduced himself to the commission and provided an update for the Long Beach Area Veterans Collaborative (LBAVC).

Commissioner Palmero stated that more information on the 2026 homeless count can be found at [lahsa.org](http://lahsa.org).

## **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Kyle Orlemann, District 2, from the Vietnam Veterans of America Southbay Chapter 53 provided insight into her organization's opposition to the proposed civilian housing on public land. She also raised awareness of the eligibility disparities for the VA Comprehensive Program of Assistance for Caregivers

Jevon Montgomery, District 4 veteran, is seeking guidance on how to claim his VA disability compensation benefits.

Sky Lanier, District 3 veteran, commented on the various agencies overseeing safety and security at the West LA VA campus.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Hayden Velasquez, Staff Assistant II  
January 21, 2026