

# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



**Jim Zenner**  
Director

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, April 15, 2026

### **Present:**

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

### **Absent:**

Chi Szeto  
John Oppenheim

**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 1:31 p.m.

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

Vice Chair Palmero, announced the Salute Armed Forces Everyday S.A.F.E. acknowledgment and requested all active-duty service members and veterans to stand up during the flag salute and led The Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

No public comments.

### **Roll Call**

Seven (7) Commissioners were at the meeting during the roll; a quorum was present.

## **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Commissioner McFadden to approve the Minutes for March 18, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Jackson-Kelley. 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 April 10, 2026, at 2:07 p.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.

## **Guest Speaker**

Cory Hyde, Co-Executive Director, Power 2 Workers, shared the mission of their organization which primarily functions as a job coordinating agency that focuses on recruiting from the local community. The workers come from various underrepresented areas to include the veteran's community.

Robert Alvarez, Legislative Affairs, LA County Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (MVA) provided an update on Senate Bill 888 (SB 888). He recommended to the committee that they conduct deeper discussions with their supervisors if they are considering supporting the bill. Mr. Alvarez also informed the committee that he is now the point of contact/liaison for the Warrior Heritage Foundation. Vice Chair Palmero and Commissioner McFadden asked for a follow-up on the committee questions sent to the foundation earlier in the year.

## **Commissioner Report**

Commissioner Raul Barragan, 3rd District, discussed the Major Richard Starr Act and the BAH Restoration Act or HR Bill 1956. Commissioner Follmer urged the committee to consider recommending the Major Richard Starr Act.

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

Updates provided by Jim Zenner, Director, LA County Department of Military and Veteran Affairs:

- Provided the budget update for fiscal year 2025-2026 and 2026-2027
- Disclosed that the building is navigating water damage which is impacting partners within Bob Hope Patriotic Hall and he intends on using all available resources to support those affected
- Informed about the concerns of kitchen / pantry usage at Bob Hope Patriotic Hall
- Requested a briefing by Operation Song at an upcoming commission meeting
- Notified about curtailments to the partnership with Inner City Law Center

## **Future Agenda Items**

- |                                     |                                  |           |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. LA County Aging and Disabilities | Department Overview and Services | Oppenheim |
| 2. Public Health Department         | Contaminated Land WLA VA         | Barragan  |

3. Legislation	H.R. 1956 BAH Restoration Act	Barragan
4. Operation Song	Music and the Arts	Follmer
5. Los Angeles National Cemetery	Veterans / History Research Project	Gutierrez
6. Woodlawn Celestial Gardens Cemetery	Community Support	Palmero

### **Commissioner Announcements**

Commissioner Jackson Kelly expressed her gratitude on the event supporting the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Association of Black Military Women hosted by the National University in West LA.

Commissioner John Follmer recommended that Operation Song is placed on future agenda items. He mentioned that the Memorial Day Walk on May 25<sup>th</sup> is beginning in Santa Monica.

Commissioner Barragan asked that the committee review the details of the Major Richard Starr Act before having a discussion.

Chairman Crooks asked that they revisit the Warrior Heritage Foundation questions posed by the committee in the future.

Commissioner Gutierrez announced the Wheels for Warriors Community Concert on May 3<sup>rd</sup> in Antelope Valley. Commissioner Gutierrez would like to invite the researcher who examined the National Cemetery in West LA to learn more about their findings.

Commissioner Palmero asked the committee to consider support options for the Woodlawn Celestial Gardens Cemetery.

### **General Public Comments**

John "Jack" Houston, Your Image 20/20, expressed his concerns with the systems in place to support older veterans.

Mason Prescott, Your Image 20/20, shared his positive experiences as a member of the organization.

Trice, Your Image 20/20, expressed her gratitude for the positive impact that the organization has had on her life. She asked for support to keep the organization open to continue to serve veterans who to experiencing hardship.

Jay Morales, veteran, informed the committee of the dire need to create parking solutions to Bob Hope Patriotic Hall.

John Hernandez congratulated MVA on the success of the celebration of Bob Hope Patriotic Hall. He also informed the committee that the VFW of California voted in support of creating a Pacific Ranch National Veterans Park.

Sky Linear, veteran, shared about the feelings of some veterans that reside at West LA VA, VSO accountability issues, and suggested that the West LA VA consider providing non-clinical rehabilitation support services.

Hayden Velasquez, Staff Assistant II  
April 15, 2026