

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



Jim Zenner
Director

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Present:

Commissioners

Hugh Crooks
John Follmer
John Gutierrez
Jawana McFadden
Alfonso Noyola
Rocio Palmero
Chi Szeto

Absent:

Commissioners

Ashley Chavez
Patricia Jackson-Kelley

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 1:41 p.m.

SAFE Acknowledgement & Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Follmer, 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.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Noyola to accept the Minutes for July 16, 2025. One amended item was requested by Commissioner Follmer. He seconded the motion to include the amendment. A roll call was conducted to accept the amended Minutes, and the motion passed with unanimous votes.

Chairman's Report

Chair Gutierrez stated that the notice of meeting was sent out on August 15 at 11:58 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. The Chairman explained the format for public comments.

General Public Comments

Howard Hernandez provided a general comment on Medicare cuts and its effect on older veterans.

Guest Speaker – Gregor Brake and Dr. Schumacher with Foster Warriors

Gregor Brake, Executive Director and Dr. Matt Schumacher, Mentor of Foster Warriors, provided an overview about the Foster Youth Mentorship program and its positive effects on the foster youth and their veteran mentors.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report

Allan Ochoa, Interim Chief Deputy Director, provided the departmental update regarding the budget changes for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Future Agenda Items

1.	Department of Veterans Affairs	Antelope Valley Women's Health Clinic	Chavez
2.	Animal Care and Control	Pet Services for Veterans	Follmer
3.	Warrior Heritage Foundation	Building Guidelines follow up	Crooks
4.	Veterans Benefits Administration	Transparency in Veterans Benefits	Follmer
5.	Aging and Disabilities	Medicare cuts effecting Veterans	Gutierrez
Tabled Agenda Items			
1.	Department of Veterans Affairs	Veterans Garden Whole Health	Follmer
2.	Food Equity	LA Food Equity Fund	Follmer
3.	The Veterans Collective	West LA VA Housing	Palmero
4.	Department of Veterans Affairs	Care Treatment & Rehabilitation Services	Jackson-Kelley
5.	Department of Veterans Affairs	West LA VA Master Plan	Noyola

Commissioner Follmer made a motion to remove the West LA VA agenda items from the list and Commissioner McFadden agreed to second the motion after a discussion. The Commissioners engaged in a discussion to make changes to the Future Agenda Items list.

Commissioner McFadden added an amendment to the existing motion to keep a list of tabled items with dates and comment section for record keeping purposes and to show that an effort was made.

Chair Gutierrez called for a roll call vote to accept the amended motion to make changes to the Future Agenda Items. The motion passed with unanimous votes.

Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner Crooks made an announcement that former commissioner Dave Culmer had passed away. The Calvet Board meeting will be held on Friday, August 22nd and is accessible online.

Commissioner Noyola made an unexpected announcement of his retirement and that this would be his last meeting with commission. He thanked the commission, the veteran community, and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Commissioner McFadden gave a friendly reminder that Friday, August 22nd, the American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion National Convention, will be held in Tampa, Florida. There is information online for the event.

Chair Gutierrez shared the details for the San Gabriel Valley Stand Down on September 12th and 13th at Whittier Narrows Park. He thanked Commissioner Noyola for his service. He ended the meeting, in honor of former commissioner Dave Culmer.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Todd Tortorici, Management Analyst
Administrative Services Division
August 20, 2025