

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



Jim Zenner  
Director

## MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, May 21, 2025

### Present:

#### Commissioners

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

### Absent:

#### Commissioners

Ashley Chavez

**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 1:33 p.m.

### SAFE Acknowledgement & Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Alfonso Noyola, 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

Nine (9) Commissioners were at the meeting during the roll; a quorum was present.

### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Commissioner Palmero to accept Minutes for April 16, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Crooks. A roll call was conducted to accept the Minutes and the motion passed with unanimous votes.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chair Gutierrez stated that the notice of meeting was sent out on May 16, 2025 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. Chair Gutierrez also recognized the significance of Memorial Day and the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribute to Veterans and Military Families hosted by Supervisor Barger, Fifth District on May 24, 2025.

### **General Public Comments**

Dennis Anderson, 5<sup>th</sup> District veteran, spoke about the proposal of Pacific Branch National Veterans Park.

Raul Barrigan, VFW District 7 Commander, stated that his district held their Annual Convention on May 3, 2025 where they voted in support of the proposal for a Pacific Branch National Veterans Park.

Krystal Rains, U.S. Air Force veteran expressed some concerns about the New Directions Program on the Greater Los Angeles VA system property.

Mike Aguilera Gaudette, 3<sup>rd</sup> District congratulated Commissioner McFadden on her award of the Meritorious Service Medal. They served together in the 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Joe Bello provided his stance about his full support of the Pacific Branch of the West LA VA Campus.

Donald Zelaya, Department of Consumer and Business Affairs commented about a pet equity ordinance applicable to rent controlled units.

George Rivas, U.S. Marine Corp veteran, shared his thoughts on the Pacific Branch and restoring and building a better future for the veterans community.

### **Guest Speaker**

Jonathan Kraus, Legislative Affairs Analyst, provided an overview of Assembly Bill 53 and gave an update on the status of the bill.

The following Commissioners had questions:

- Szeto - regarding resources used for financial projections.
- Emmons - regarding the benefits of the bill being discussed.

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

Chief Deputy Santana provided the following updates:

- Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) Veterans Services Division claims output and call center data, Homeless Services Division, Veterans Peer Access Network (VPAN), Justice-Involved Veterans, and visitor traffic.

- MVA awaiting approval of \$10.32M Care First Community Investment Funding and fiscal update
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Women Veterans Summit June 14<sup>th</sup>

The following Commissioners had questions:

- Follmer asked about claim stats from submission to decision.
- Palmero asked about rejected claims and data.
- Jackson-Kelley asked about a women's veterans' event that was rescheduled.

Public Comment on Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report:

Krystal Rains, U.S. Air Force veteran, thanked Chief Deputy Santana for hosting the Veteran Women's Summit and complimented the advertisement for it.

### **Future Agenda Items**

1. TBD	ADA Clinic	Chavez
2. VA GLA Healthcare	West LA VA Farm (Garden)	Emmons
3. Animal Care and Control	Veterans 90-day Programs	Follmer
4. Food Equity Director	LA Food Equity Fund	Emmons

### **Commissioner Announcements**

Commissioner Crooks, SD 1 – a reminder of the 27th Annual Tribute to Military and Veterans Families event on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Palmero, SD 1 – speaking at Riverside Community College Veterans graduation.

Commissioner Jackson-Kelley – provided information for the American Legion meeting in Sacramento on legislation. Commented she is interested in seeing a better turnout next year. Mentioned the VA Community Engagement fair June 2.

Commissioner Follmer – Memorial Day announcement for a Walk to Remember from Santa Monica pier to Los Angeles Memorial Cemetery and a barbeque on the West LA Campus on May 26<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Gutierrez – a reminder of the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribute to Military and Veterans Families event on May 24<sup>th</sup>. He thanked the commissioners for working on the Women Veterans Summit.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Todd Tortorici, Management Analyst  
Administrative Services Division  
May 21, 2025