



## Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission January 8, 2025

Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, in a hybrid format via Microsoft Teams and in-person at Tempe Public Library.

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

Beno Thomas, Chair  
Melanie James, Secretary  
Juan Garcia  
William “Dennis” Gorman  
Gwendolyn “Gwen” DeNeal  
Phil Kraft  
Aaron McBride

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

Jim Lange, Vice-Chair  
Jose Moreno  
Ryan Swearingen  
Romaldo Gonzales

**City Staff Present:**

Dr. Jacqueline Webster, Deputy Community Health and Human Services Director – Social Services Division  
Rachael Brickner, Community Health and Human Services Administrative Services Manager

**Public Appearances**

There were no public appearances.

**Guest Appearances**

Kristen Scharlau, Community Health and Human Services Manager, attended the meeting as a guest speaker to provide a CARE 7 update.

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order**

**MOTION:** Commissioner J. Garcia moved to CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 6:02 p.m.

**SECOND:** Motion Seconded by Commissioner W. D. Gorman; Motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 2 – Attendance**

Vice-Chair J. Lange and Commissioners J. Moreno, R. Swearingen, and R. Gonzales were absent from the meeting.

**Agenda Item 3 – Call to the Audience for Public Appearances**

There were no public appearances.

**Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of December 11, 2024, Tempe Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** Commissioner P. Kraft moved to APPROVE the November 19, 2024, Minutes.

**SECOND:** Motion Seconded by Commissioner M. James; Motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 5 – Chair’s Remarks**

Chair B. Thomas wished everyone a happy new year and gave a brief overview of the upcoming agenda.

**Agenda Item 6 – Community Health and Human Services Department Update**

Dr. J. Webster informed the Commissioners that the City of Tempe is still planning on filling the position of Veterans Services Coordinator.

Dr. Webster advised that the City of Tempe is currently recruiting candidates for the position of Community Health and Human Services Manager to oversee the Community Supervision and Counseling Services programs.

Dr. Webster advised that the City of Tempe is currently recruiting candidates for the position of Community Health Manager.

### **Agenda Item 7 – CARE 7 Presentation**

Ms. K. Scharlau informed the Commission Members about the City of Tempe's CARE 7 programs and services.

Ms. Scharlau advised that CARE 7 was created to assist with providing social services for crisis situations in the community and evolved to include case managers to assist with more long-term solutions for community members.

Ms. Scharlau mentioned the City of Tempe's CARE and HOPE phone line (480-350-8004), which is a centralized number for community members to call and speak to someone who can triage their situation for immediate social services referrals.

Ms. Scharlau advised that the CARE and HOPE line took over 10,000 calls last year.

Ms. Scharlau informed the Commission Members about the crisis response team, which is designed to attend calls with the fire department and police department to assist people who have been victimized and connect them with the Family Advocacy Center and other social services programs.

Ms. Scharlau advised that the Family Advocacy Center was the result of advisement and proposals from the Family Justice Commission and is designed to be a confidential location and supportive environment where victims can decompress from the trauma they have experienced and provides a safe space to engage with law enforcement if they choose to do so.

Ms. Scharlau noted that victims are welcome to visit the Family Advocacy Center forever, and do not have to stop seeking support services from the center unless they choose to do so.

Ms. Scharlau informed the Commission Members about the Youth Specialist program, which provides CARE 7 social services employees who are embedded in the Tempe schools to help students develop coping skills, maintain healthy relationships, and connect students to trauma recovery, homeless outreach, and mental health resources.

Ms. Scharlau advised that CARE 7's programs assist anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Tempe, but will also work with surrounding local government partners to cover neighboring jurisdictions, as needed.

Ms. Scharlau informed Commission Members that every victim of a crime in Tempe is given information to connect with CARE 7 and outreach efforts are also made to victims to make them aware of the CARE 7 resources and services.

Ms. Scharlau advised that the City Council will be doing a proclamation regarding awareness of human trafficking and noted that CARE 7 has an advocate dedicated to assisting victims of human trafficking.

Ms. Scharlau informed the Commission that CARE 7 has employees who are also veterans and can help veterans navigate services and programs for veterans specifically and have the experience to relate to this population.

### **Agenda Item 8 – Veterans Commission T-Shirt and Hat Discussion**

Dr. J. Webster advised that the City of Tempe's Communication and Marketing Office requires the shirts and hats to follow the city's logo and color guidelines.

Dr. Webster mentioned that the Commission members would need to locate a funding source for the shirts and hats.

Chair B. Thomas proposed that the Commission members look at design samples to begin to develop an estimated cost.

Ms. R. Brickner offered to seek clarification on whether the Commission can have the shirts and hats printed through their own connections or if the Communications and Marketing Office requires the use of a city-approved vendor.

Ms. Brickner offered to send the City of Tempe's style guide to the Commission Members.

Chair Thomas asked the Commission Members about the preference for shirts or hats and determined that the Commission Members overwhelmingly preferred shirts and decided to proceed with polo shirts.

### **Agenda Item 9 – Finalize Details for Town Hall**

Commissioner W. D. Gorman advised that March 22, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. is the confirmed date and time for the Town Hall event.

Commissioner Gorman noted that Commissioner R. Gonzales offered to ensure that refreshments are available for the event.

Commissioner Gorman proposed that Mayor Woods and other City of Tempe leadership can be invited to the event.

Commissioner Gorman advised that the main topic of discussion for the Town Hall will be resources for aging veterans.

Commissioner Gorman mentioned that the Town Hall will take place at the American Legion Post #2, where the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) group currently has their meetings and noted that their Veteran's Services Officer may be able to attend the Town Hall.

Chair B. Thomas proposed to invite CARE 7 to attend the Town Hall.

Chair Thomas proposed to market the event by including the event in the City of Tempe Newsletter.

Ms. R. Brickner suggested that the Veterans Commission invite Tempe's public information officer, Susie Steckner, to the next Commission meeting to discuss marketing the Veterans Town Hall event.

Commissioner Gorman proposed that the Commission Members distribute flyers for the Town Hall to the local American Legion and VFW groups.

Commissioner Gorman offered to contact the Tempe Tribune and The Wrangler to inquire about promoting the Town Hall event.

Chair Thomas suggested that the communications team from the local Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center may be good points of contact to promote the Town Hall event.

Commissioner G. DeNeal suggested that Veterans Commissions in neighboring cities, like Scottsdale, may be good points of contact to help promote the Town Hall event.

Commissioner P. Kraft suggested that the Tempe Chamber of Commerce may help promote the Town Hall event.

#### **Agenda Item 10 – Future Agenda Items**

Chair B. Thomas proposed to invite Abe McCann to come speak to the Veterans Commission about his new position at Home Base Arizona.

Commissioner W. D. Gorman proposed that the Commission invite CARE 7 specialists, Sean Green, and Michael Garrison to speak to the Commission about services and needs specifically for veterans in the community.

The Commission Members resolved to invite City of Tempe's public information officer, Susie Steckner, to the next Commission meeting to discuss marketing the Veterans Town Hall event on March 22, 2025.

Chair Thomas suggested that the Commission Members discuss the design of the flyer for the March 22, 2025, Town Hall event.

Commissioner J. Garcia proposed to have Julie Mowitz of the First Command Education Foundation speak about scholarships and educational opportunities for active members of the military, military family members, and veterans.

Commissioner P. Kraft suggested that the Commission invite Robin Arredondo, former City Council Member and Current President and CEO of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, to meet with the Commission.

#### **Agenda Item 11 – Adjournment**

**MOTION: Commissioner W. D. Gorman motioned to ADJOURN the Meeting.**

**SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commissioner J. Garcia; Motion passed unanimously**

Chair B. Thomas declared the meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

Minutes Prepared by: Nicole Galvan

Reviewed by: Dr. Jacqueline Webster

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Beno Thomas, Chair  
Tempe Veterans Commission