



## Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission March 12, 2025

Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, in a hybrid format via Microsoft Teams and in-person at Tempe Public Library.

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

Beno Thomas, Chair  
Jim Lange, Vice Chair  
Aaron McBride  
Juan Garcia  
Gwendolyn "Gwen" DeNeal  
Phil Kraft  
William "Dennis" Gorman

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

Melanie James, Secretary  
Romaldo Gonzales  
Jose Moreno  
Ryan Swearingen

**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  
Susie Steckner, Public Information Officer – Communication and Marketing Office

**Public Appearances**

There were no public appearances.

**Guest Appearances**

Julie Malwitz of the First Command Educational Foundation attended the meeting as a guest.

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order**

**MOTION:** Commissioner J. Garcia moved to CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 6:05 p.m.  
**SECOND:** Motion Seconded by Commissioner W. D. Gorman; Motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 2 – Attendance**

Commissioners M. James, R. Gonzales, J. Moreno, and R. Swearingen absent.

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

There were no public appearances.

**Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of February 12, 2025, Tempe Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** Commissioner P. Kraft moved to APPROVE the February 12, 2025, Minutes.  
**SECOND:** Motion Seconded by Commissioner W. D. Gorman; Motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 5 – Chair's Remarks**

Chair B. Thomas stated he was looking forward to the Veteran's Town Hall event and recognized Commissioner W. D. Gorman for his work on the event.

### **Agenda Item 6 – Finalize Details for Town Hall**

Commissioner W. D. Gorman noted the locations where flyers for the event were distributed, and the outreach efforts made to promote the event.

Commissioner Gorman gave an overview of the event's speakers and mentioned that the event location has plenty of parking. Commissioner Gorman stated he was optimistic the event will be well attended.

Ms. S. Steckner, City of Tempe Public Information Officer, mentioned the ways in which the event was being marketed by the City of Tempe's Communications and Marketing Office.

Chair B. Thomas thanked Ms. Steckner for the marketing efforts and collaboration in working with the Veterans Commission to ensure a successful event.

Chair Thomas listed and discussed the final details for the Town Hall event.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Community Presentation: First Command**

Commissioner J. Garcia introduced Julie Malwitz of the First Command Educational Foundation.

Ms. Malwitz informed the Commission that the foundation provides financial education and scholarships to members of the military community.

Ms. Malwitz noted that the foundation has worked with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce to award a junior Reserve Officers' Training Core (ROTC) scholarship.

Ms. Malwitz informed the Commission that the foundation works with organizations to double the amount of funds given to scholarship recipients.

Ms. Malwitz informed the Commission that organizations are allowed to set their own criteria for scholarship awards and the foundation will match the funds awarded to recipients.

Ms. Malwitz mentioned the financial education courses available for veterans on the foundation's website.

Commissioner Garcia mentioned specific examples of when the foundation was able to fund local scholarship programs for veterans and recognized the lives that were touched by the foundation's matching funds.

### **Agenda Item 8 – Community Presentation: Southwest Veterans Foundation**

Agenda item deferred due to the guest speaker being unavailable to attend the meeting.

### **Agenda Item 9 – Community Outreach Opportunities**

Ms. R. Brickner, City of Tempe Community Health and Human Services Administrative Manager, informed the Commission of the Tempe Health and Human Services Day/Care Fair from 9 a.m. to noon on March 29, 2025.

Ms. Brickner asked if the Commission Members were willing to staff a table at the Tempe Health and Human Services Day event and Chair B. Thomas volunteered to staff a Veterans Commission table for the event.

Ms. Brickner informed the Commission Members of the Community Salutes event on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at Tempe Center for the Arts. Ms. Brickner noted that the event honors future military services members and their families, recognizing Tempe Union High School District's graduating seniors who have committed to serving in the military.

Chair Thomas proposed that the Community Salutes event serve as the Tempe Veterans Commission's May regular meeting and the Commission Members unanimously agreed.

Commissioner P. Kraft mentioned the Commission's ongoing efforts to find a way to honor the former Veterans Commission Member, Robin Arredondo-Savage, for becoming the new President and CEO of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce.

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

Chair B. Thomas noted that the April meeting will include a guest appearance from a local veteran-owned cleaning service.

Ms. R. Brickner mentioned that the Tempe Park Rangers can come speak to the Commission at a future meeting.

Commissioner W. D. Gorman proposed that the Commission advise the city to shine orange lights on the Mill Avenue Bridge and City Hall on August 10, 2025, in recognition of Agent Orange Awareness Day.

Commissioner Gorman noted that April 30 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and mentioned local events honoring the occasion, including an event on April 26 from 9 a.m. to noon at the City Hall Courtyard in Chandler.

Ms. Brickner suggested that a Proclamation can be given to Robin Arredondo-Savage at a future Veterans Commission meeting.

### **Agenda Item 11 – Adjournment**

**MOTION: Commissioner G. DeNeal motioned to ADJOURN the Meeting.**

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

Chair B. Thomas declared the meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.  
The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 9, 2025.

Minutes Prepared by: Nicole Galvan  
Reviewed by: Dr. Jacqueline Webster

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Beno Thomas, Chair  
Tempe Veterans Commission