



Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission June 2, 2020

Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, June 2, 6:00 p.m., via Microsoft Teams.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Jeremy Farr, Chair
William "Bill" Blair
Phillip Kraft
Michelle Lopusky
David Lucier
Timothy Rogers
Alfred Trevino
Abe McCann
Cameron Johnson

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Antonisha Dorsey
Courtney Smythe

Staff Present:

Octavia Harris, Deputy Human Services Director
Melissa Placencia, Administrative Assistant II

Guests Present:

Laura Gilford, Student

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Chair Jeremy Farr called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Attendance

Agenda Item 3 – Public Appearances

Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of February 4, 2020 Minutes

MOTION: Motion to APPROVE February 4, 2020 minutes by Commission Member William "Bill" Blair

SECOND: Motion seconded by Commission Member Timothy Rogers

AYES: Chair Jeremy Farr, Commission Members Bill Blair, Phillip Kraft, Michelle Lopusky, David Lucier, Timothy Rogers, Alfred Trevino, Cameron Johnson and Abe McCann

ABSENT: Commission Members Antonisha Dorsey, Abe McCann and Courtney Smythe

Agenda Item 5 – Chair's Remarks

Chair Jeremy Farr wished the Commission's families good health during COVID. Moving forward, Jeremy would like to utilize this agenda item to check-in with members.

Agenda Item 6 – Welcome Newest Commission Member – Cameron Johnson

New member, Cameron Johnson thanked the Commission for his recent appointment. Cameron currently works for Arizona Department of Veterans' Services as a Program Coordinator. Cameron retired from the Air Force in June 2019 after twenty-three years of service working in maintenance operations. Shortly after retiring he volunteered his time at the Military and Veteran Success Center

Agenda Item 7 – Vice-Chair Election

Abe McCann was nominated and elected as the new Vice-Chair

Agenda Item 8 – Review 2020 Commission Goals

The Commission reviewed the following 2020 Commission Goals submitted in the 2019 Annual Report:

Council Priority: Strong Community Connections

- Organize a 2020 Veterans Day event
 - Given the current pandemic, this year's ceremony will likely look different
 - This event is not hosted by the City of Tempe.
 - David would like to see the Commission work with Mayor-elect Woods and incoming Councilmember. Octavia asked that she be notified if any meetings with Councilmembers take place.
 - Bill suggested enhancing the existing breakfast the city hosts honoring City of Tempe employees who are Veterans.
 - Bill also suggested collaborating with the city's Human Resources Analyst in charge of overseeing identifying Veterans.
 - Michele suggested we recommend ways to collaborate and engage the Veterans Commission on this event with the new Mayor
 - David identified himself as the point of contact for this and will draft a proposal for 2021. Octavia asked to submit this write-up to her to then pass along to Human Services Director, Naomi Farrell.
- Create an award honoring Kyle Brayer.
 - The Commission collaborated with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee and presented at this year's 2020 Red, White and Blue Ceremony.
 - This award will be an annual public service award.
 - David noted he asked the Tempe Fire Department for a \$1,500 scholarship in the name of public safety and was told this would be feasible. David also reached out to Veterans Upward Bound to award two \$750 scholarships to an Arizona State University (ASU) Veteran.
- Create a quarterly Veterans Newsletter.
 - Tim suggested the Commission highlight a Veteran from Tempe and host a podcast for this year's Veterans Day event.
 - Jeremy feels this could tie in with a quarterly communication/newsletter.
 - Octavia will connect with Communications Manager Nikki Ripley to see what resources could be put towards this.
 - Tim volunteered to be the point of contact for this
- Support Veteran Supportive Organizations from Tempe to be connected more with SkillBridge.
 - Cameron will reach out to the Arizona Coalition to invite Randy Salazar to present on SkillBridge at next month's meeting

Agenda Item 9 – Survey Questions for Tempe Forum

Questions submitted by the Commission:

- What funding is there available to help address additional training that Veterans may need to rejoin the workforce after the COVID quarantine lifts?

- Do you know where to find out if you are eligible for VA benefits?

Jeremy asked the Commission to submit more questions ahead of the July meeting based on their engagement and/or experience. Melissa will send out a platform where Commission Members can submit their question with anonymity.

Agenda Item 10 – Veteran Website Review

Jeremy asked that members review the website content and submit edits ahead of July's meeting

Agenda Item 11 – Proposed Temporary New Meeting Time for Virtual Meetings

The Commission agreed to change their meeting time from 6pm-7:30pm and continue meeting on the first Tuesday of every month.

Agenda Item 12 – Commission Member Updates/Announcements

Michelle Lopusky:

- Michelle has assumed her role as the Assistant Director of Outreach & Engagement for ASU's Pat Tillman Veterans Center.
- ASU is scheduled to return to school in the Fall

Agenda Item 13 – Future Agenda Items – July 7, 2020 July 22, 2020

- SkillBridge Presentation – Randy Salazar, Arizona Coalition for Military Families
- Review Survey Questions for Tempe Forum
- Commission Member Updates
 - Review Proposal for 2019 Virtual Veterans Day Event – Timothy Rogers
 - Review Proposal for future Veterans Day Event/Veterans Commission collaboration – David Lucier
- Veteran Website Review – Pushed to August due to guests/presenters for June

Agenda Item 12 – Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Next meeting will be on ~~July 7, 2020~~ July 22, 2020

Minutes Prepared by: Melissa Placencia

Reviewed by: Octavia Harris

Jeremy Farr, Chair
Tempe Veterans Commission