

Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission, Subcommittee
3839 N. 3rd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85012

March 23, 2022

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners Present

Joan McDermott, Chairwoman (virtual)
Gene Crego, Vice Chair (virtual)
Kathryn Gallowitz, Commissioner (virtual)
Edward Logan, Commissioner (virtual)
Michael Noble, Commissioner (virtual)

AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Lupita Santellano, Executive Assistant (virtual)
Valen Harris, Administrative Assistant (virtual)

Guests

Call to Order – The Arizona Veterans' Services Advisory Commission (AVSAC) Subcommittee Meeting, via Google Meets: <https://meet.google.com/psu-cscj-uzd>; dial-in (US) +1 617-675-4444, PIN: 488 623 490 2020#. Chairwoman Joan McDermott called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

Chairwoman McDermott lead the AVSAC Subcommittee in the pledge of allegiance.

Old Business

Second Letter to the Governor – Chairwoman McDermott explained to the subcommittee the need to narrow down topics previously discussed to be incorporated into the second letter to the Governor. She also asked for other ideas not previously mentioned. She stated the week of March 21, 2022- March 25, 2022, is the last week for the House of Representatives and the Senate to hears bills. Appropriations begin the week of March 28, 2022, leaving a short time frame for the Commission to address issues the commission would like to address. She reminded the subcommittee the next Commission meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2022.

Chairwoman McDermott listed topics that have been previously suggested for the letter to the Governor such as: support of the Arizona Coalition for Military Families and Be Connected Faith Based Network, make Arizona a more veteran friendly state, competitive education and employment for military and veteran spouses, educational benefits for children of veterans. Increase veteran employment; veterans currently hired by the State of Arizona to state services is at an 8.5%, the goal is 15%. Reach out to veteran owned businesses to hire more veterans and determine barriers faced by veteran owned businesses, waive professional licensing fees to veterans; see HB2747, which addresses occupational licensing for initial waivers. Request to remove interment fees to spouses of veterans. Also, multiple bills have

been introduced for veteran housing, tax exemptions for veterans, and waiver of fee for hunting and fishing licensing for veterans.

Commissioner Gallowitz summarized her three most important topics for the letter to the Governor, which are attracting veteran talent to the state, considering how to expand purple start schools in public schools for military youth, work to expedite military medic training into civilian nurses. She would also like to emphasize the importance of housing. She also mentioned suicide prevention remains an important topic.

Commissioner Logan would like to determine barriers experienced by veteran owned businesses that may be addressed by the Governor's office via a state conducted survey. He would also like to support small businesses in the hiring of veterans. He would also like to support veteran entrepreneurs.

Commissioner Noble asked the subcommittee if there are incentives received by small businesses to hire veterans. He is interested in conducting a survey that would determine the type of incentives that would benefit small businesses. He would like to help support small businesses so that they are able to hire more veterans. He would like to determine if small businesses have access to veterans eligible for hiring or leaving the armed forces, do they have special training needs that the state can help them with, what are their critical skills that they are missing.

Commissioner Gallowitz suggested the commission propose concepts/ideas not solutions to the Governor's office. She also suggested the veteran hiring practices of small businesses will impact a bigger portion of the veteran community.

Vice Chair Crego reminded the commission subcommittee of the problem Arizona faces with affordable housing.

Chairwoman McDermott suggested Vice Chair Crego meet with Director Wright to provide her input on the ideas proposed during the meeting and ask for guidance on how to best approach some of the proposed ideas, as well as discuss what may already be happening in the state or have been introduced to the legislature.

The AVSAC subcommittee decided Commissioner Gallowitz will write a paragraph about attracting veteran talent to Arizona and recommend the creation of a veteran Ombudsman. Commissioner Noble will write a paragraph on incentives for small businesses to help them be veteran ready for hiring. Commissioner Logan will write a paragraph on how to fund veteran entrepreneurship and determine barriers to veteran owned businesses.

Commissioner Gallowitz suggested the opening sentence in the letter to the Governor can be something general such as "The commission thinks it's really important to continue emphasizing affordable housing and suicide prevention as well as some of these concepts to

not only improve quality of life for our veterans but to strengthen our work force and our economy...”

Open Discussion for the Good of the Order

Chairwoman McDermott asked that all paragraphs for the letter to the Governor be submitted to her via email no later than April 1, 2022. She will be responsible for putting the letter together and will send a draft out to the Commission for review at the next Advisory Commission meeting.

Commissioner Noble asked if there were any funding issues with Veteran Programs such as Be Connected. Chairwoman McDermott suggested he speak with Director Wright to determine if the department is experiencing any funding issues with Veteran Programs. She also suggested Commissioner Noble may ask for this topic be added to the agenda at the next Advisory Commission meeting.

Chairwoman McDermott called for a motion to adjourn the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services Advisory Commission Subcommittee meeting. Commissioner Logan moved to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chair Crego second the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:57 pm.