

**San Mateo County Veterans Commission
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 11, 2020**

Present: Fred Baer;; Ron Dickson; Brandon Jones; Mark Leach; Kai Martin; Linda Meyer; Francisco Olivia; Hank Scherf; George Smith; Donna Vaillancourt; Ben Renda

Absent: Jacob Pletcher, Alfred Banfield

Staff: John Nibbelin, Chief Deputy County Counsel; Marci Dragun, Supervisor Warren Slocum’s Office; Selina Toy-Lee, Human Services Agency (HSA); Ed Kiryczun, County Veterans Services Office (CVSO)/HSA; Matt Wilson, CVSO/HSA; Darren Adkinson, CVSO/HSA

Public Comments by: No public comments

Topic	Discussion	Action/Next Steps
Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting called to order at 6:40pm. Pledge of allegiance and roll call taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional actions or steps
Approval of November and January Minutes and Adoption of Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the online meeting structure, all votes will be taken by roll call by Ed Kiryczun, who will be calling names and recording votes for each item. Actions will still require Commissioners to make a motion, with a corresponding Second, before roll call voting is taken. Minutes from the November 2019 and January 2020 meetings were approved Agenda for tonight’s meeting was approved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ed Kiryczun will post November 2019 and January 2020 meeting minutes on the Veterans Commission website.
Public Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No public comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional actions or steps
Veterans Commission Business	<p>A. County Veterans Services COVID Operations Update: Ed Kiryczun, the County Veteran Services Officer, provided an update on the operations of the Veterans Services office in light of COVID-19. CalVet has expedited the use of Fingerink for electronic signatures, increasing the ability to process claims remotely. Since the beginning of Shelter in Place, there have been 738 veterans served, and 701 calls to the front desk to date. The office has at least 1 staff each day, to check mail and receive items that are dropped off. All other staff are working from home and have continued to serve many veterans. The use of a digital barcode has been implemented for electronic signatures. There is no update on when face to face services will resume. The office is also part of a new regional group with other CVSO’s, including Santa Clara County, Alameda County, Contra Costa and Santa Cruz.</p> <p>B. County Veterans Services Outreach Update: Darren Adkinson, CVSO Outreach Worker, provided a presentation of current and new outreach efforts. A summary of VSO outreach and events was shared, including regular meetings with Canada College, the College of San Mateo, and Skyline College. Virtual meeting were held with Libraries in Half Moon Bay, Redwood City, and South San Francisco related to the VetConnect initiative. Photos from the March 10 Board of Supervisor’s recognition of Lt. Art Wong were shared, including VSO website updates https://hsa.smcgov.org/veterans, including a demo on pages dedicated to VSO services, and employment opportunities and links. Lastly, the GovDelivery email outreach was shared, including how to subscribe to emails (From the Veterans page, there is a box to enter an email address to subscribe to be notified about news and updates regarding veterans services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional actions or steps CVSO Outreach presentation will be posted on the Veterans Commission webpage.

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Veterans Commission Business (continued)	<p>C. 2020 Veteran of the Year Luncheon: Commissioner Hank Scherf, the Chair of the Veteran of the Year Awards Event, reported out on the proposed plan for this year, due to the COVID-19 and the risk and unknown status of being able to host large gatherings in the Fall. The Committee will proceed with nominations and selection of Awardees for 2020, and HSA will prepare videos for those selected. The intent is to be able to host the event next year in 2021. Some suggestions were made that depending on the situation at the time, a small ceremony in a large space could be considered, or that the event could be a professional production pre-recorded and televised. There will be some expenses, but much less than hosting an on-site luncheon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner Hank Scherf will follow up with County staff to develop a proposal and presentation structure for this year's awards.
	<p>D. American Legion Project Support: Romie Basseto presented a request from the Redwood City American Legion Post 105, requesting a letter of support for the Post's Development Project, which would include the development of a new post and include new affordable housing units. The Commissioners voted to approve the issuance of a Letter of Support to be submitted to the City of Redwood City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission will submit a letter of support for the Redwood City American Legion Post 105 Development Project.
	<p>E. Role of the Veterans Services Office: Commission Chair Kai Martin opened up the discussion and acknowledged Ed Kiryczun's role as the new leader for the Veterans Office, and Darren Adkinson's work on outreach. Commissioner Martin received feedback on items that worked well and asked the Commission on how things would be improved. Commissioner Smith thanked Ed and Darren for the tremendous job they have done, despite the learning curve in their new roles.</p> <p>The Commission would like to understand how to get more veterans served, and feel they could help to market services. A question was asked if CVSO staff could devote more time to support the workplan. A brief update on the Veterans Needs Assessment RFP was provided that due to COVID, the RFP was placed on hold, but work will resume shortly. Ed Kiryczun reinforced that the primary role of the Veterans Services Representatives are to be available to file claims for veterans, but that if the Commission is able to identify specific tasks, Ed would identify resources to be able to fill those needs. A short discussion was also held on how staff positions are funded, and for what functions. Funding has not decreased due to staff working remotely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Chair Martin and CVSO Ed Kiryczun will have more frequent communication to keep up to date on office activities.
	<p>F. Sub-Committee Updates</p> <p>Goal 1 – Commissioner Vaillancourt reported out that the RFP was placed on hold due to COVID per the previous agenda item, and work will resume and the RFP is expected to be released in the following month.</p> <p>Goal 2 – Commissioner Baer shared potential collaboration with community colleges. Will meet with Outreach coordinator to develop strategies for non-in person assistance to veteran students</p> <p>Goal 3 – Commissioner Oliva stated that he will connect with CVSO Ed Kiryczun on this goal. Will meet to discuss possibility of standalone outreach RFP with CVSO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional action.

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	Goal 4 – Commissioner Scherf reported that this item was covered in a previous agenda item.	
Announcements from Veterans Commissioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No updates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional actions or steps
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting adjourned at 7:56pm 	The next Veterans Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 13th, 2020, at 6:30pm
Addendum Consent Votes	<p>Consent vote to approve November 2019 minutes For: 8 Nay: 0</p> <p>Consent vote to approve January 2020 minutes For: 9 Nay: 0</p> <p>Consent vote - Adoption of Agenda For: 10 Nay: 0</p> <p>Consent vote to approve Commission Letter of Support for RWC Legion Post 105 Housing Project For: 11 Nay: 0</p>	