

Meeting Minutes

Military and Veterans Affairs Commission

Work Session

August 11, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.
Saguaro Room, Chandler Museum
300 S. Chandler Village Dr., Chandler AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Simon at 12:11 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission Attendance

Michael Simon
Vice Chair Jacob Dort
Commissioner Robert Dalpe
Commissioner Shane Levinson
Commissioner Carol Farabee

Staff Attendance

John Sefton Jr., Community Services Director
Corey Povar, Staff Liaison
Tawn Kao, Deputy City Attorney
Julie San Miguel, Recording Secretary
Beth Chepelsky, Organizational Development
Sr. Program Manager

Discussion

1. Military and Veterans Affairs Commission Objectives

Strategic planning and development of the Military and Veterans Affairs Commission's objectives: Advise, Educate, Collaborate & Coordinate, Acknowledge & Honor

Commission Goals / Annual Report / Other Items

- Review Commission goals throughout the year: Advise, Educate, Collaborate & Coordinate, Acknowledge & Honor
- Identify gaps in veteran services that may warrant recommendations to Mayor and Council
- Review and expand veteran resources available on the City website and informational materials
- Explore joint meetings or collaboration with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities and Council on Aging
- Develop an annual report with photo year book highlighting Commission activities, participation, accomplishments, and community impact
- Include year-to-year comparisons when available

- Staff explore using available City AI tools and prior meeting minutes to help compile the report for John Sefton Jr or Ryan Peters to present as annual report
- Refresh existing event planning calendar/checklist
- Provide work session information to incoming Commissioners after appointment
- Consider photography notice on marketing materials for Military Bound and Veterans Day events

Military Bound 2026 – Event Review – Saturday, May 2, 2026, Hamilton High School

- Morning event time was a change from the traditional evening format
- Significant no-show rate due to prom and other weekend events; evening weekday format preferred for future events
- Overall program and speakers received positive feedback
- Recruit staging and lineup did not work as smoothly as planned
- Recruiters should participate in an advance walkthrough/dry run for future events
- Certificate organization created delays due to additions, no-shows, and changes in recruit order
- Challenge coins were presented to each recruit on stage
- Red Robin donated gift cards for recruits

Military Bound 2027 – Wednesday, April 21, 2027, Chandler Center for the Arts

- Return to evening event format; approximately 6:00 p.m.
- Commissioner Dalpe will contact Gilbert regarding possible participation
- Begin recruiter outreach earlier in the planning process
- Commissioner Levinson will begin contacting military recruiters
- Maintain regular recruiter communication leading up to the event
- Conduct recruiter walkthrough/dry run before the event
- Continue to give challenge coins for participating recruits
- Commissioner Dalpe will follow up regarding Red Robin gift cards
- Present empty certificate folders during ceremony; provide certificates to recruiters for distribution afterward
- Review opportunities to improve recruit staging and lineup process

Salute to Service 5K – Sunday, October 25, 2026, Veterans Oasis Park

- Registration capped at approximately 200 participants
- Two laps around Veterans Oasis Park equal approximately 3.2 miles; participants may complete one lap if preferred
- Registration proceeds will support maintenance and improvements at the Veterans Memorial
- Clearly state how proceeds will be used in marketing materials
- Invite military branches/recruiters to participate in post-run activity area
- Commissioners to assist with military branch outreach
- Commissioners attending may assist with water stations and event support

- Kona Ice planned for participants
- Consider additional giveaway/activity items through Recreation or Library
- Continue marketing and registration outreach

Veterans Day – Sunday, November 8, 2026, Veterans Oasis Park

- Keynote: Tom Eisiminger, retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, West Point graduate, Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame inductee
- Conduct event walkthrough/dry run before event
- Confirm sound, seating, flag placement, and program logistics
- Include recognition of Veterans Honor Wall honorees
- Add Honor Wall names to event program
- Ask Honor Wall honorees in attendance to stand and be recognized
- Promote Honor Wall applications during event
- Distribute special 250th anniversary challenge coins to veterans
- Consider announcement regarding photography at event or on marketing materials

Veterans Appreciation Breakfast – Friday, November 13, 2026, Senior Center

- Commission will continue supporting the Veterans Appreciation Breakfast in partnership with the Senior Center
- Commissioners value the opportunity to personally serve and interact with veterans
- Catering feedback: provide more meat protein and fewer eggs. Bacon and sausage were popular; significant amount of eggs remained
- Consider a small, branded giveaway for veterans attending the event
- Approximately 120 items would be needed based on event capacity
- Commission discussed providing an item at each seat rather than a larger raffle item
- Maintain Commission's supporting role and avoid expanding the scope of involvement beyond the existing partnership

Parade of Lights – Saturday, December 5, 2026, Downtown Chandler

- Community Services/MVAC entry application has been submitted
- Prospective new commissioner offered use of Vietnam-era military Jeep
- Display Military and Veterans Affairs Commission banner on vehicle
- Corey will coordinate with Vanessa/Marketing on banner
- Possible lights and patriotic decorations
- Determine which Commissioners are available to participate
- Finalize vehicle and participant logistics as event approaches
- Explore whether additional military vehicles may be permitted

Veterans Honor Wall

- Continuing outreach for Honor Wall submissions
- Commissioner Dalpe will contact notable local veterans, including Medal of Honor recipients

- Consider special designation for Medal of Honor recipients on the Honor Wall
- Add Honor Wall recognition to Veterans Day program

Naming of a Naval Vessel

- Continue exploring effort to have a future Navy vessel named for Chandler
- Develop letters of support and identify community/government partners

Calendar

2. The next Military and Veterans Affairs Commission Work Session will be held Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers Conference Room, 88 E. Chicago Street, Chandler, AZ 85225.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.


Julie San Miguel, Secretary

Michael Simon, Chair