**Monterey County**

MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Sid Williams, Chairperson

2620 1st Ave

MARINA, CA 93933

TEL: (831) 647-7613

FAX: (831) 647-7618

**Meeting: 07/12/2023**

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Williams

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Roll Call by Chair Sid William, Quorum Established** | Voting members present:  District 3 – Mark Hartunian  District 5 – Phillip Butler  BoS – Louise Goetzelt  BoS – John Gay, Vice-chair  BoS – Bennie Cooper  BoS – Dan Presser  BoS – Sid Williams, Chair  Representing County Supervisor  1st District Supervisor, Luis Alejo  In attendance:  Representative from 1st District Supervisor’s Office, Javier Gomez  Representative from 1st District Supervisor’s Office, Linda Gonzalez  Representative from Senator Caballero’s office, Marisa Hernandez  Representative from Senator Laird’s office, Justin Tran  Representative from Assemblymember Addis’ office, Alexis Garcia-Arrazola  Representative from Assemblymember Rivas’ office, Dominic Dursa  Military and Veterans Affairs Office, Staff Liaison, Adam Errahebi |
| **Pledge of Allegiance** | Led by Bennie Cooper |
| **Public Comment** | None |

**Report from the Chair:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Chair Williams:** | * Welcomed Bennie Cooper as the newest member of the Commission. * The Heroes Open will be on October 28th. We are looking for donations for the auction. * The Sam Farr and Jack Stewart Awards are also due on September 27th. These awards are for non-Veterans or Businesses who are supportive of Veterans. You may submit a nomination at UVC-MC.com. |

**Approval of the Minutes:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Approval of the Minutes** | * May 10th,   + Motion by Mark Hartunian   + Second by Vice-Chair, John Gay * Ayes, unanimous |

**Committee Reports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Veteran Home Update,**   * Jack Murphy: | * Asked Dominic Dursa the outlook for Hazel Hawkins Hospital (a potential site for the Veterans Home if shut down).   + Dominic responded: The hospital has gone through some financial issues in the recent year. They have gone through several cost savings measures to keep operations going. Many rural hospitals are going through the same thing. We can talk more offline as far as it being a potential site for a Veterans home. |
| * Supervisor Alejo: | * We are very honored to have a local Assemblymember become Speaker of the State Assembly (Asm. Robert Rivas). Many of us went to participate at his ceremony. We should look to set up a meeting with Asm. Rivas during the interim for future legislation. It will remain a County of Monterey priority. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Veteran of the Year Program Report,**   * Vice-chair John Gay reported: | * Nothing to add, covered in the Chair’s comments. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **State Legislation Report**   * Adam Errahebi reported: | * **AB 46: Personal Income Tax Exclusion Military Services Retirement and Survivors Benefit**: passed through the Senate Governance and Finance Committee (7-0) on June 14.  The Bill will next be heard in the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, where our friend and fellow Veteran Senator Bob Archuleta is the Chair- so we’re very optimistic it will be supported.  The next big hurdle will be the Senate Appropriations Committee. * **AB 684 Veteran Service Officer Expansion Act:** Provides State funding for County Veteran Service Officers to have dedicated personnel serving active-duty installations. The bill is currently held in suspense. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Federal Legislation Report**   * Adam Errahebi reported: | * We have recently met with Representative Panetta and Lofgren’s Office respectively in reference to key issues in the area such as the Pharmacy and Vet Home. * Jack and other members of the community met with the VA Health Administration Undersecretary last week at the Gourley clinic and discussed key issues referencing healthcare in our local area. * Supervisor Alejo comment: The County of Monterey has been the only County to support AB 46 since the very beginning. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Military and Veterans Affairs Report,**   * Adam Errahebi reported: | * Adam explained MVAO’s Fiscal Year to Date report, see attached: * Adam thanked the Commission and Supervisor Alejo for the support in our budget augmentation request. It was approved. * Adam explained MVAO’s hiring of Nancy Hood as Veteran Services Representative. She is trained and is starting to see clients. We should start to see some relief in the wait time for appointments. * MVAO extended an offer to an Office Assistant candidate this week. We are hoping they will join us shortly. * Doug Chandler was selected for promotion to Veteran Services Representative III. This will allow our office to select another Representative from the eligibility list in the near future. * The Veteran Service Officer job posting has closed and the State is moving forward to the next process. * The 08/10/2023 PACT Act retroactive deadline is fast approaching. Please file your claims or come see us for an intent to file soon. * The Housing Authority of Monterey County has made a change to the housing voucher recipient timeline. This affects the HUDVASH program as Veterans need to utilize the housing vouchers within 60 days. We did have a meeting with the Housing Authority to express our concerns. * The Retiree Appreciation Day is this Saturday at the Stillwell Community Center. It starts at 8:00AM and ends at 1:30PM. * Our office is working with CALVET and CALTRANS on a highway sign indicating where the Central Coast Veterans Cemetery is located. We are currently in contact with CALVET and CALTRANS representatives for a future meeting to change/update the language in the State guidelines.   + Supervisor Alejo comment: Suggested getting in contact with Senator Laird and Asm. Addis’ respective offices to obtain some clarity on the issue. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Central Coast Veteran Cemetery Update,**   * Chair Williams reported | * Eric Chaney is still on Leave of Absence. * The Cemetery just hired a technician recently. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VA Clinic Report,**   * Chair Williams reported: | * COVID restrictions have been relaxed. You do not have to wear a mask in the clinic anymore. * Appointments are available. * The Business Management Office can assist in filing for travel reimbursement. * The Clinic hired three additional healthcare providers. This should reduce the wait time for appointments. |

**New Business:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **Veteran of the Year Selection,** * Chair Williams reported: | * Provided the instructions for the voting process. The following nominations were selected:   + District 1: Joseph Farotte-Kruchas   + District 1: Abraham Mora   + District 2: Yadira Hobby   + District 2: Maria Machado-Sanchez   + District 3: Vicenta Dansby   + District 3: George Worthy   + District 4: Allan Cooksey   + District 4: Shane Strong   + District 5: Glen Harrison   + District 5: Gerry Paratore   + At Large: Francisco Narewski   + At Large: Craig Pierce |

**Commission Member’s Comments:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * None |  |

**Adjournment:** Chair Williams

Graphical user interface

Description automatically generated