



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

Community Design Studio  
7506 E. Indian School Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

**PRESENT:** Vice Chair Land Anderson; Commissioners Mark Ashley, Justin Layman, Patrick Mazzarella, Pete Palmer, and Joe Stempil

**ABSENT:** Chairperson Steven Jackson

**STAFF:** Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director  
Lonna Minardi, Scottsdale Human Services Department

**GUESTS:** Robert Garcia, Arizona OEO

**1. Call to Order/ Roll Call**

Vice Chair Land Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Members present as listed above.

**2. Public Comment**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

**3. Discussion and possible action to approve September 6, 2023 Commission meeting minutes**

COMMISSIONER STEMPIL MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2023 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER PALMER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). VICE-CHAIR ANDERSON AND COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, LAYMAN, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND STEMPIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

#### **4. Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendations: Veterans Employment Programs, Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity**

Robert Garcia, Arizona OEO, provided an overview of the program, which is to serve as the State's workforce coordinator and to provide support for the Workforce Arizona Council. This in turn supports better workforce services for Arizona veterans and transitioning service members. Factors that drive initiatives include data and research; Governor's Initiatives; workforce planning and strategies, and Arizona work model of the Workforce Arizona Council.

In response to a request from Commissioner Palmer on methods for capturing veteran census counts in the City and particularly younger veterans, who may not be counted via typical methods, Mr. Garcia stated that he would look into finding the best team to provide data specific to Scottsdale. He clarified that the data OEO collects is not public data. They have signed a nondisclosure agreement with the Department of Labor (DOL) and census coordinators to collect and compile data.

Mr. Garcia stated that OEO takes a project management approach to all its initiatives. Steps include policy revisions, audits, and changes and practices within the workforce services. The Workforce Arizona Council originates from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). It is a DOL initiative that assists states with their workforce systems in eliminating barriers to employment and providing services. The Arizona Workforce Council provides guidelines and policy guidance to the State's 12 local workforce development boards. The Arizona Military Ecosystem includes five major bases throughout the state. The system helps guide veterans into the workforce via programs and transition assistance. There are a number of programs currently supported, including the Skilled Reach Program, Be Connected Program, VR & E Program and Disabled Outreach Program, which are recognized with their association to the workforce. Resources and partnerships were reviewed.

In response to a question from Commissioner Palmer, Mr. Garcia stated that National Guard members are covered under both WIOA funding as well as Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG).

Mr. Garcia stated that the overall goal is not merely to assist with employment opportunities but to assist with the establishment of careers and teach companies how to engaging veteran employees. These opportunities are not posted on a website, but are derived from relationship building between the State and the companies. It is projected that Arizona will see a labor shortage in the near future in semiconductor and technical industries. As such, it is important to make Arizona a better living destination for veterans. A survey conducted with the assistance of the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Arizona Coalition of Military Families identified several veteran-preferred living conditions, including: Weather, economy, housing, jobs, location from other states and cost of education.

Commissioner Stempel asked about the first action that a transitioning veteran needs to take and how they find out about OEO. Mr. Garcia said this is the primary challenge for every veteran, as there is no single source of information. It is likely that the veteran, through his or her transition assistance group, is put in touch with the Department of Veterans Services, subsequently referred to the Be Connected Program and employment services. Veterans who wish to navigate the

system independently can access the Arizona at Work Job Services One-Stop to begin the process or they may access services through the community college system.

## **5. Discussion, update and possible recommendations: City of Scottsdale SkillBridge Program**

Lonna Minardi, Scottsdale Human Services Department, stated that the program was formed in August 2021. In the first year, there were 79 inquiries from service members who were preparing to exit service. Two service members went through the program and one subsequently entered and remains in a full-time position. In 2022, there were 62 inquiries and two trainees. One is currently in the program, scheduled for completion on October 27th. A second trainee completed the entire process, including interview, selection and offer letter to begin the program. He was scheduled to begin on September 24th. The request was ultimately denied as a result of the stop movement, wherein U.S. Senator Tuberville has actively forced a halt to all military promotions and filling of positions. For the current session, there have been a significant drop, with a total of only 44 inquiries. The opportunities at this time are specific to a water treatment plant operator trainee and instrument and control trainee. Staff is working on the development of a City of Scottsdale SkillBridge website for candidate access and information.

Commissioner Stempil asked about methods of advertising. Ms. Minardi stated that currently, an informational flyer is posted onto the Department of Defense and SkillBridge website available for access at military installations worldwide. In response to a question from Commissioner Stempil, Ms. Minardi stated that the program does not specifically do local advertising. Commissioner Stempil encouraged her to make contact with Paula Pedene, who publishes a weekly article in the Scottsdale Republic with a focus on veterans issues.

Commissioner Palmer stated that it would be interesting to have a case study regarding the impacts of Senator Tuberville's stop movement.

Commissioner Palmer inquired about a possible vision to expand SkillBridge beyond the water resources aspects to other specialties. Ms. Minardi confirmed that they will be presenting to the City's leadership team about creating a Citywide program.

COMMISSIONER ASHLEY MOVED TO EXPAND THE SKILLBRIDGE PROGRAM. VICE-CHAIR ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). VICE-CHAIR ANDERSON AND COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, LAYMAN, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND STEMPIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

## **6. Discussion, updates, and possible recommendation: Scottsdale Salutes program**

Mr. Corsette stated that nominations have been closed on the Salutes program with 35 new nominations. There are also a number of carry-over nominations from last year. The 47 designated banners will be displayed on November 3rd and taken down on November 17th. The Scottsdale Salutes reception will be held at the Design Study at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 9th. This will be followed by a live performance by the United States Army Jazz Ambassadors at 6:00 p.m. at the amphitheater at City Hall.

In coordination with the American Legion, the City will be hosting a Veteran's Day

Commemoration at 10:30 a.m. on November 11th at the Civic Center Memorial Lawn.

Commissioner Palmer announced the Veteran's Recognition Ceremony on November 10th at the waterfront at 5:00 p.m. and invited Commissioners to attend.

**7. Discussion, updates, and possible recommendation regarding the Veterans Advisory Commission Work Plan**

Commissioner Stempil referenced an article in the newspaper titled, "VA cuts could imperil ambulance rides for vets and others." The article author, Moses Sanchez, is a Navy veteran and small business owner.

**8. Commissioner reports, staff updates, and suggestions for future agenda items**

Future meeting agenda items could include:

- Veteran's Day events at Civic Center Plaza and possibility of participation by Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov 1, 2023.

**8. Adjournment**

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). VICE-CHAIR ANDERSON AND COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, LAYMAN, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND STEMPIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

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