



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

October 22, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lawrence "Sam" Bothern, DAV #10 - Chair
James (JR) Turner, VFW 10124 - Vice-Chair
Beverly Drum, UMW of Southwest
Victor Eres, USMC
Jason Ferguson, MOPH
Fred Madrid, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chap. 431
John Poland, American Legion #10
Hector Sanchez, Member at Large No. 2
Brandon Robinson, Member at Large
Brian Morrow, Member at Large

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Daniel Ansbach, Special Forces #80
Christine Sautter, MOAA
VACANT, VFW 3242
VACANT, MEMBER AT LARGE

STAFF PRESENT:

Larry Nichols, Director Community Development Department
Chris Faivre, Community Development

OTHERS:

Bill Hawkins
Montevis Price
Mr. Chavez
Dolores Archuleta

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chair Bothern called the meeting to order. A quorum was determined to be present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ALL STAND FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

1 Motion to accept the agenda made by Victor Eres; seconded by John Poland.
2 Motion passed unanimously.

3
4 **4. VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES - September 24, 2024**

5
6 Correction to minutes, for 8.1 change "posterior information" to "poster
7 information." Page 2, line 44, "paying of taps" should be "playing of taps."

8
9 Motion to accept the corrected minutes made by John Poland; seconded by Victor
10 Eres. Motion passed unanimously.

11
12 **5. RECOGNITIONS**

13
14 There were none.

15
16 **6. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

17
18 **Hector Sanchez - NMSU Student at Large** - He passed out a flyer on Veterans
19 Appreciation Week. They are doing their 9th Annual Military Veterans Appreciation
20 Week. This starts with the parade. Events kick off at Aggie Memorial Tower which
21 is a memorial shrine to all the Aggies who died in the line of duty. Also have the
22 students veteran organization passing information on veteran issues. November
23 12th having the Veterans Day Picnic which also includes various resources for the
24 student veterans. November 13th tribute to veterans served in sea vessels, land
25 vehicles, and aircraft. ROTC Armed Forces Recruiter Day. Carnival event by
26 student veterans organization music, food, and other games from 11:00 to 2:00.
27 November 14th Military Veteran Program open house from 11:00 to 2:00 for
28 NMSU, and the community. November 15th Annual Faculty and Staff Veterans
29 Banquet. There are over 100 staff and faculty that have served in the military.
30 Also awards will be given at the banquet. All students and public are invited to any
31 of the events, except the banquet.

32
33 **John Poland - American Legion Post 10** - American Legion service officer,
34 veteran post members helped with the standdown held recently. The Auxiliary
35 prepared "blessing bags," about 60, which were filled with personal hygiene items
36 that were handed out to the veterans. Also provided resource information to help
37 the veterans with their life situations. They are preparing for the Veterans Day
38 Parade with a float, as well 1941 army ambulance. At 2:00 today at Cornerstone
39 Christian Academy on Cortez Road American Legion will perform an American flag
40 disposal ceremony for 203 unserviceable flags. At the same time the students of
41 the academy will learn about Americanism and proper flag etiquette. Any flags not
42 disposed of will be donated to Getz Funeral Home for placing a flag with a veteran
43 who is going to be cremated.

44
45 **Victor Eres - USMC** - Will be having the annual Marine Corps Ball on November
46 8th. The following day they will provide a color guard for the parade. Provided

1 funerals for nine fallen veterans, and two color guards from September 25 to
2 October 22.

3
4 **Fred Madrid - Vietnam Veterans of America** - A book was passed out and a
5 guideline which has information on veterans, dependents. Page 80-83 should be
6 read. Also mentioned a burial planning guide.

7
8 **Brandon Robinson, Member at Large** - Nothing to report.

9
10 **Jason Ferguson - Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)** - Nothing to report.

11
12 **Brian Morrow - Member at Large** - Nothing to report.

13
14 **Beverly Drum - UMW of Southwest** - There is an invitation from the Girl Scouts
15 of the Desert Southwest Desert Diamond Service unit, presenting a free pancake
16 brunch honoring female veterans on November 2nd from 11:00 to 1:00 at the
17 Eagles Lodge, 980 N. 17th Street. For more information e-mail
18 diamondssu@gmail.com. Adaptive Cycles Plus having the next group ride
19 November 6th at 8:00 a.m. at La Llorona Park on Picacho. December 7th is the
20 Annual Bingo benefiting UMW of the Southwest, held at 1185 E. Madrid at the
21 American Legion, doors open 12:00, games start at 2:00. An unwrapped toy will
22 acquire an additional door prize ticket will be awarded. Tickets, please call (575)
23 639-1265.

24
25 **James Turner - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 10124** - There was a
26 successful standdown at the post and over 60 veterans were serviced, given
27 haircuts, good breakfast, and other stuff.

28
29 **Lawrence "Sam" Bothern - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) #10** - They are
30 participating in the parade. Starting semi-annual fund raiser with Golden Corral
31 with the free meal on Veterans Day.

32 33 **6.1 CITY STAFF COMMENTS**

34 35 **▪ Veterans Corner Website updates**

36
37 Larry Nichols stated they have gone to the Press Information Office
38 and they have posted additional upgrades to include contacts for
39 veterans. To visit go to City of Las Cruces website, then to
40 Residents, and then downwards has Veterans Corner. For an item
41 to be posted it needs to be a City program, such as the Veterans Day
42 Parade, the Memorial Day Ceremony, and Garrison Flag dates. Also
43 it needs to be a government entity, such as this Board. Also the
44 organization needs a written agreement or relationship with the City
45 of Las Cruces.

1 **6.2 UPDATE OF VAB PARKING LOT EXPANSION**

2
3 Larry Nichols shared a video. He stated it is on schedule.

4
5 Sam Bothern stated he had a meeting with the Mayor after last month's VAB
6 meeting and they talked about the park. In the Mayor's opinion we need to
7 open it up and have more activities there, suggestion of car shows in the
8 parking lot, maybe pancake breakfast. He received an email questioning
9 why the playground was gone. Along with bringing people to the park
10 consider bringing the playground back. Larry Nichols stated that proposal
11 could be made as a recommendation from the Board for the City to
12 consider. Victor Eres stated a playground will open the gates to other
13 people wanting to practice there and have other family events there, which
14 is where issues arose with people not cleaning up after themselves. Also
15 reminded of the fatality concerning a child. Jason Ferguson asked how
16 many e-mails were asking about the playground, which was only one. He
17 agrees they should not entertain returning the playground. Brandon
18 Robinson stated he thinks a playground would be a nice addition to bring
19 families, and that the park can serve more than one goal. Hector Sanchez
20 stated this had been discussed for many years. That people did come but
21 just for the playground and would leave trash. The decision was it was not
22 just a park as there are many parks people can go to take their children,
23 leave it as a memorial park for the fallen.

24
25 Sam Bothern thanked City Parks for securing the helicopter blade.

26
27 **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

28
29 Bill Hawkins with Veterans Parade stated the planning and preparation is
30 progressing well. There are about 73 different groups and participants, which is
31 about average. He has been sending the order of march. If someone/group has
32 not received it please send him an e-mail wchawkins1962@gmail.com. They had
33 the poster contest and the winners were recognized at City Council meeting a
34 couple of weeks ago. The winner is excited to attend the parade. The grand
35 marshals were chosen and were recognized at a City Council meeting for the first
36 time. The grand marshals were members of the law enforcement, fire department,
37 or emergency medical. Chosen were Benjamin Balderama, Michael Daniels, Larry
38 Garcia, Joshua Herrera, Marvin Kelly, Summer Stanzione, and Luis Vela. The
39 chosen will be presented with medallions at 10:00 before the parade by Wells
40 Fargo. Spoke briefly of where people are to be to begin the parade. They will start
41 staging as soon as the streets are closed, hopefully by 7:30. Be sure members
42 are on or around the group's entry at about 10:30. At 10:45 the Mayfield Choir will
43 sing the National Anthem. Larry Nichols recognized Bill Hawkins for all his efforts
44 with the Veterans Day Parade.

1 Lawrence Horvath thanked Sam and the board members. He stated he had five
2 of the last eight years as chairman. He asked when the park area will be
3 completed. He asked if anyone started a fund to build a new toilet. He asked if
4 open air gazebo for which they have two benches and literature for those to sit and
5 point out where they want to go. He asked if the new parking area would have
6 lights. Larry Nichols stated the parking lot expansion will be completed later part
7 of November. The original plans did call for a restroom but had to be removed due
8 to expenses, and it would fall under capital improvement project. A pavilion would
9 also be under a capital improvement project. The video did show lighting in the
10 new parking lot.

11
12 Mr. Chavez asked Victor Sanchez if his information would be put out in a public
13 release. Hector Sanchez stated it would be on the website. Suggested putting
14 that information in the newspaper too. Mr. Chavez appreciates the improvements
15 on the City website for veterans. He feels it should not show all of the City events,
16 but just veterans. He would also like more improvements, but no
17 recommendations. He feels the requirements for posting something on the
18 Veterans Corner should be also on the website. He asked about priorities for 2025
19 for the VAB, and the answer was no. He asked if there was a plan for that, the
20 answer was not at this time. He asked about Memorial Day service for 2025 and
21 wants a big event and stated it is the plan. Although he does not want to head up
22 the committee. Larry Nichols stated they did meet with Mr. Chavez and the City
23 would find resources to have a Memorial Day ceremony at the Veterans Memorial
24 Park. Mr. Chavez feels the planning should have commenced for resources, etc.
25 He talked about a band, other ROTC programs, high ranking guest speaker, some
26 type of flyover. And he stated, "they are going to make this a big event." Sam
27 Bothern asked who "they" were. Mr. Chavez stated the City. Larry Nichols stated
28 there are other events sponsored at Veterans Memorial Park; the Welcome Home
29 Vietnam Veterans, welcome the motorcyclists for the Ride for the Wall; and also
30 the Candlelight Ceremony once a year. Mr Chavez stated he will help in way he
31 can. He brought up flag exchange for veterans and has not seen movement on
32 that. He stated there are not six services, not just five, Army, Navy, Air Force,
33 Marines, and Coast Guard, but also have Space Force. He mentioned Dolores
34 Archuleta and the plaque requirements and that could be on the website too. He
35 would also like to see JR's flag schedule on the website too.

36
37 Montevis Price stated they did have the standdown with approximately 200 people
38 there. Give thanks to Gil Bamford, Karen Woods, Darrell Malone, and Len
39 Hampton for their help. The treatment court still has nine participants, and
40 graduated two, one today. Continue to see veterans in the community doing
41 positive things. Their alumni group has started up by Frank Lopez and doing a
42 great job mentoring the veterans. Thanks the board for the standdown. There
43 were 60 veterans were able to be helped, last year 48, and prior to that was 30.
44 Hector Sanchez commented that Gil Bamford has been a great help and received
45 a Pillar Award last week.

1 **8. OLD BUSINESS**

2
3 Sam Bothern stated they used to have a list of people waiting to get on this board.
4 Also mentioned there are at least two vacancies. He asked for a status on this.
5 Larry Nichols does not have an update, but will look into it. Sam Bothern
6 mentioned Mr. Chrisman, and the fact that there is an At Large position open. Also
7 Len Hampton had put in an application.
8

9 **9. NEW BUSINESS**

10
11 Larry Nichols stated that Charles Tucker will be the new staff liaison for the VAB.
12 Both Larry and Charles will attend meetings through the end of the year, and then
13 Charles will be the liaison as of 2025.
14

15 **10. REMINDERS**

16
17 **NOVEMBER 9, 2024 - VETERANS DAY PARADE DAY**
18 **NOVEMBER 11, 2024 - VETERANS DAY**
19 **NOVEMBER 26, 2024 - NEXT VAB MEETING**
20 **NOVEMBER 28, 2024 - THANKSGIVING DAY**
21

22 Beverly Drum stated she has photographs from the last flag lowering event last
23 Monday with alumni mentors group and participants.
24

25 Dolores Archuleta stated she has agendas for the Veterans Parade
26

27 Sam Bothern stated Christine Sautter is still at her training for the blind in Tucson.
28

29 **11. ADJOURNMENT 10:00)**

30
31 Motion to adjourn made by John Poland; seconded by Brian Morrow. Motion
32 passed.
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38 _____
Chairperson