



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

July 28, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brian Morrow, Member at Large - Vice-Chair
Daniel Ansbach, Special Forces #80
James Perry Ashby, American Legion #10
Lawrence "Sam" Bothern, MOAA
Fred Madrid, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chap. 431
Brandon Robinson, Member at Large
James (JR) Turner, VFW 10124
Jeffrey Eakman proxy for Victor Eres, USMC

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Luke Rosendo Keith, VFW 3242 - Chair
Victor Eres, USMC
Len Hampton, Member at Large
James Bentley, MOPH
Adrian Vesth-Nelson, Member at Large
Thomas Chapin, DAV 38

STAFF PRESENT:

Charles Tucker, CLC Inspector General
Amber Dominguez, Administration

OTHERS:

Jeffrey Lee
Dan Lucero
Bill Hawkins
Melanie Delgado
Dave Shultz
Jerome Hanway
Juanita De Lira Gabitzsch
Mr. Chavez

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1 ALL STAND FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

2
3 **3. ROLL CALL**

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5 A quorum was noted to be present.

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7 **4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**

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9 Motion to accept the agenda made by Sam Bothern; seconded by Perry Ashby.
10 Motion passed unanimously.

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12 **5. VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES – June 23, 2026**

13
14 Motion to accept the minutes made by Sam Bothern; seconded by Perry Ashby.
15 Motion passed unanimously.

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17 **6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

18
19 Jeffrey Lee representing Elks and the Organ Mountain Veterans Coffee Group.
20 October 3rd is the Organ Day Festival 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and is an event that
21 the Organ Mountain Veterans Coffee Group puts on every year for the local
22 community of Organ Mountain. It is a free event for all members and the
23 community. They will provide a meal. They ask the local service providers if they
24 want to set up booths. In the capacity of the Elks Lodge 1119 also have Victor
25 Rose who is the veterans committee chair. October 3rd, first Saturday of the month
26 the Elks sponsors a parade/drive-by at the veterans home. They are in the process
27 of contacting local car groups, motorcycle groups for this drive-by. They are asking
28 for people to help the Elks by helping the veterans get moved from their rooms to
29 the outside area, approximately 130 veterans. This is the veterans home in T or
30 C. No time scheduled yet. He also had questions about the public participation
31 section in the minutes. He mentioned that on July 25th there was a veterans legal
32 clinic at the VFW at Post 10124. He was wondering if there was a point of contact
33 that was used for that, to be used for other locations also. Also mentioned that the
34 Commissary privileges can be used by eligible veterans, medal of honor or eligible,
35 or it says that the dependents can go or the caregiver or the person that is helping,
36 wondering if there are any stipulations, guidelines if a veteran has a caregiver,
37 what is the process to get them on the base? This will be looked into. Also there
38 was a request for help by the Marine Corps for Honor Guard who would be the
39 POC for that.

40
41 Dan Lucero member of DAV 38 and 100% disabled veteran. The last two items
42 that the gentleman asked about were from Dan's newsletter. He will provide the
43 board the information about the commissary, and also about the legal clinic, he will
44 forward information.
45

1 Bill Hawkins of the Veterans Parade. They have decided to have it on Saturday,
2 November 7th. The usual staging is at 9:00 a.m. and parade start at 11:00 a.m.
3 Theme is honoring 250 years of military service to the country. He will forward
4 guidance on the criteria for grand marshal in the next week or so.
5

- 6 ○ **Right at Home presentation** - Melanie Delgado, Jerome Hanway - They gave this
7 presentation in El Paso to their advisory board. They are bringing to people's
8 attention the "invisible veterans." That is a veteran that lives in the communities
9 and is not registered or connected with any of the VA systems. A lot of these
10 veterans are aging in place and have chronic illnesses and their families are
11 struggling to take care of them. They do not understand that there are benefits
12 that they have that the VA can help them with. The VA knows there is a gap.
13 There are 18 million veterans in the United States and only nine million are actually
14 registered with any VA office and going to VA clinics. She owns Right at Home in
15 San Diego which is one of the biggest and very well mature VA systems in the
16 country. With their organization she has veterans that work for her in her office.
17 They go out into the community and educate the community on what is going on.
18 Even with that, in this community they find 10-15 plus veterans that are not
19 registered in San Diego. This happens everywhere. They have signed up 25
20 veterans in this community in the last nine months. The aging veterans now are
21 from Vietnam and turned their back on the VA due to their return to U.S. not being
22 good and thinking the VA will not help anyway. The struggle here is the El Paso
23 VA is really chartered to just do Doña Ana County, so not looking at Deming,
24 Lordsburg, Silver City, T or C, or Alamogordo. Those are supposed to be
25 connected to Albuquerque VA, but the distances that a veteran has to travel, they
26 are closer to El Paso than to Albuquerque. Home based care that the VA provides,
27 Albuquerque does not provide home based care south of Albuquerque. So there
28 is a whole sector of veterans that are invisible in the system. Veterans over 65 in
29 southern New Mexico is a larger number than what is in El Paso. A caregiver will
30 see a veteran more often than anybody else will. Transportation is the biggest
31 problem out here. They hope the board can reach out to representatives to help
32 them understand and identify the level of care that is here and being sure it is
33 provided at a higher level. Discussion with Gabe Vasquez a couple of years ago
34 stated they were working on getting Otero County moved to El Paso VA. That is
35 still in the works, although it does have some red tape. Need to have medical need
36 to provide home help, but not a disability rating above zero. Qualifier is activities
37 of daily living. Perry Ashby would like to elevate the facts and numbers. He will
38 pass on information to the powers that be.
39

40 Juanita De Lira Gabitzsch with Senator Heinrich's office. They are listening. If
41 anyone has veterans coming to their organizations with the stories of trouble
42 getting help, have them reach out to their office. They need a privacy release form,
43 and a summary of what they are experiencing. Their office is here in town.
44 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, claims are open, and her office will help
45 with that, and this is for veterans or civilians.
46

1 Mr. Chavez stated that veterans can also apply for that if they were exposed to
2 any type of radiation or nuclear during their time in service.

3
4 Edwin Hubert is the new GM for Home Instead. He asked about if they needed to
5 have written complaints or information to go to the office (Senator Heinrich).
6 Juanita De Lira Gabitzsch stated that whenever someone comes to their office,
7 they require a signed privacy release form which is giving them permission to ask
8 questions regarding the inquiry they are submitting. She can also help connect
9 people with the correct resources. Charles Tucker stated they are signing the
10 Privacy Act of 1974. Jerome Hanway stated always bring in a VSO to be sure the
11 process is happening correctly. Focus on the Mission Act. Home Instead, Right
12 at Home, and Interim or NovaCare here locally are all providers by TriWest, all
13 approved to be providers for the VA. Again mentioned that the El Paso does not
14 bring them on. The El Paso VA does not honor the Mission Act.

15
16 Mr. Chavez asked about the plaques and how much money has been acquired.
17 Len Hampton would know but is absent today. He stated he has been striving to
18 get funding for the plaques. He mentioned a \$20 cash recently acquired, and that
19 there is over \$8,000 from Mayor Miyagishima that at last meeting was unable to
20 be found. He has asked the city, the county, and state representatives for money.
21 Brian Morrow would like to see Mr. Chavez work with Dolores Archuleta as she
22 has been involved with the plaques from the beginning. Mr. Morrow asked Mr.
23 Chavez to take over the plaques since Mrs. Archuleta cannot handle it anymore.
24 Mr. Chavez said he would think about it.

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26 **7. AGENDA ITEMS TO DISCUSS - None**

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28 **8. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

29
30 **Jeffrey Eakman - Marine Corps League** - Their group has performed four
31 funerals and three separate color guards; also for the 4th of July parade, the NMSU
32 fireworks, and Vado Raceway.

33
34 **Fred Madrid - Vietnam Veterans of America** - They had two food drives, the first
35 one at the Save Mart on August 2nd from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the second one
36 is at 571 Walton Boulevard, Walmart on August 16th 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. He is
37 also going to a leadership education conference in Jacksonville, Florida.

38
39 **Daniel Ansbach - Special Forces #80** - Nothing to report.

40
41 **Brandon Robinson - Member at Large** - Nothing to report.

42
43 **James Perry Ashby - American Legion #10** - This month the Joe Quesenberry
44 American Legion Post 10, donated \$1,500 to the National Combat Veterans
45 Motorcycle Association Auxiliary Scholarship fund. The CVMA has a national
46 program where they provide veterans that may not be able to themselves or for

1 family members to go to college or even trade schools, so that is where the \$1,500
2 went. They also received a check from the Run for the Wall Organization for
3 \$1,500. They provide breakfast for over 350 riders that are just passing through
4 Las Cruces on their way to Washington, D.C. They have provided this breakfast
5 for the past 10-15 years. They also donated \$1,000 to the Legion Riders Legacy
6 Run. They collect funds every year for the Legion Riders Chapter for scholarships,
7 so that children of veterans can go to college. The Honor Flight Mission 22 is
8 leaving on September 24th. They have a yellow jacket ceremony at 12:30 a.m.
9 before they get on the bus. They will return on September 26th at 4:25 p.m. and
10 arrive at Memorial Medical Center at 6:45 p.m. Looking to have another
11 homecoming for the veterans and their families.

12
13 **Lawrence "Sam" Bothern - MOAA - Nothing to report.**

14
15 **James Turner - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 10124 - Nothing to report.** He
16 will check on the status of the legal conference that was mentioned.

17
18 **Brian Morrow - Member at Large -** They had the Memorial Day event that was
19 very successful, however the weather interfered with about half the day. They
20 handed out nine certificates to people who have supported the food drive. Believes
21 they have acquired about 500 lbs. of food. Next flag date is August 7th, Purple
22 Hearts Memorial. August 8th is the Honor Flight Reunion, 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

23 24 **9. STAFF LIAISON REPORT**

25
26 Charles Tucker stated last month he had a meeting at White Sands Missile Range
27 and had a meeting with Command Sergeant Major Hermes Acevedo who talked
28 about what they had been doing out there. The Department of War is tight on the
29 information he is allowed to release now and has had issues with people releasing
30 information they shouldn't. They are doing a lot of laser stuff. Mr. Hegseth was
31 out there last month. There is not enough hotel space on the installation so
32 pushing people to Las Cruces which is helping with the revenue growth for the city.
33 They are trying to do a cooperative with the City to include the White Sand Missile
34 Range and the Garrison Command out there. There is a new Commander this
35 month. The executive staff for the City will be going to White Sands Missile Range
36 to take a tour with the Navy at their facility, and a tour with the Army next month.
37 There is an Ex-Officio seat on this board for a person from White Sands. Mr.
38 Tucker got the letter from Mr. Chavez and has already e-mailed the Mayor to see
39 if that money still is around. According to the letter it has to go to a 501(c)(3) and
40 Len Hampton is the person the money needs to go to.

41
42 Brian Morrow mentioned that the board does not have a logo. He would like to
43 form a committee to start looking for a logo for this board. He also mentioned we
44 are behind on recognitions and appreciations. A lot of the people on this board go
45 above and beyond, like the Marine Corps League and the funerals, Fred went to
46 D.C. to speak on behalf of the veterans, J.R. just did 15 years performing the flag

1 ceremony for the City. There is no budget, and it would be nice to do plaques for
2 outgoing members as well. Charles Tucker mentioned using Len's account for a
3 budget.
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5 **10. ADJOURNMENT (10:10)**
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7 Motion to adjourn made by Sam Bothern; seconded by Perry Ashby. Motion
8 passed.
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Chairperson