

**CITY OF SURPRISE
VETERANS, DISABILITY, AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**August 13, 2025 | 6:00 PM
City Council Chambers
16000 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Wisniewski called the Veterans, Disability, and Human Services Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at Surprise City Hall, 16000 North Civic Center Plaza, Surprise, Arizona 85374, on August 13, 2025.

ROLL CALL

In attendance were Chair Allison Wisniewski, Vice-Chair Dr. Gwen Maxfield, Commissioners Julie Kent- Partridge, John Billcheck, Olivia Fryer, Michael Tree, and Charles Manuel.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STAFF PRESENT:

Human Services and Community Vitality Director, Seth Dyson, Assistant Director, Deb Perry and Administrative Specialist, Victoria Simmons.

CURRENT EVENTS REPORT

Chair Wisniewski reported on the following:

- Join us for a Day of Service, tomorrow, August 14, at St. Mary's Food Bank. Individuals will assist with sorting, packing food, assisting clients and packing Kid's Cafe meals. Volunteer opportunities start at 7:15 a.m., 9:45 a.m. and noon. Youth ages 12 and over are invited to participate, however, all participants under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required through St. Mary's Food Bank. For more information on how to register, visit surpriseaz.gov/DayofService.
- The City of Surprise proudly celebrates its designation as a Golden Rule Community through the annual Surprise Area Interfaith & Golden Rule Community Breakfast. This uplifting event brings together leaders from local government, faith communities, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to honor those who exemplify kindness, compassion, and dedicated community service. This free community event will take place on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, from 8 AM – 10 AM. During the program, the Surprise Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission will present the Surprise Community Legend Awards, recognizing recipients in the categories of Individual Legend, Outstanding Youth, Volunteer of the Year and Organization of the Year. Registration opens on August 14, and

space is limited. To RSVP, please visit surpriseaz.gov/GoldenRuleRSVP.

- City of Surprise administrative offices will be closed Monday, September 1, in observance of Labor Day.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Kent- Partridge
 - Attended the Veterans Community Project (VCP) meeting in June
 - Veterans housing project is located behind VFW in Glendale
 - Met with Veronica Morgan, with Home of Record Project, a nonprofit with resources to assist with rent and mortgage assistance for veterans and their families
 - Attended Phoenix VA Mental Health Advocacy Council meeting on June 26
 - Mental Health Summit on October 8, 2025. This is a free event and will be held virtually this year. More updates and invites to come
 - Attended Mayor's Disabilities Round Table on July 9
 - Attended meeting with Aubrey from the Veterans Community Project on July 29
 - Invited to tour the Longmont Colorado Housing Project and will be attending at the end of August
 - Attended the Valley Metro ADA Certification Clinic today
 - Met with Maggie Roby, with Arizona Registrar of Contractors
 - Scholarship program for service members, veterans, and their spouses, to help pay for registrar of contractors' fees
- Commissioner Tree
 - Attended the City of Glendale, Triple M (Mayor's Military Mission) meeting
 - Luke Air Force Base is hosting Retirement Day on October 18, 2025, from 8 a.m. to noon at the Navy Reserve Center
- Commissioner Fryer
 - Attended Mayor's roundtable on Disabilities
 - Discussed possible meeting to discuss employment opportunities
 - Attended legislative wrap up session hosted by various organizations dedicated to disabilities
 - Attended Arizona Disability Advocacy Coalition meeting earlier today
- Commissioner Billcheck
 - Attended Mayor's Disabilities Roundtable in July
 - Attended Mayor's Veterans Roundtable on August 6
 - Vet Fest Planning Committee meeting on September 9, 2025
- Vice Chair Maxfield
 - Attended subcommittee meetings for Grand Marshal and Community Legend Awards
 - Attended Mayor's Roundtable
 - Attended a Meet and Greet with the new Chief of Police and provided him with a VDHS Challenge Coin
 - Challenge Coin given to Melanie Ruiz, with Corte Bella Vets
- Chair Wisniewski
 - Attended Veterans Community Project meeting
 - Briefing on tiny homes project, in Glendale
 - Attended Mayor's Veterans Roundtable on August 6

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Dyson discussed:

- Vet Fest Planning Meeting on Tuesday, September 9, at 4:00 p.m.
- See Victoria for extra VDHS Challenge Coins
- Surprise Resource Center quarterly partner meeting on Thursday, August 21, at 1 p.m.
- Gain Night on Saturday, October 25, from 5 – 8 p.m.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Rosemary Lieberman discussed concerns about being denied CHAMPVA benefits after applying last year. She mentioned being eligible for benefits and is seeking further guidance.

CONSENT AGENDA:

None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - PUBLIC HEARING:

None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - NON-PUBLIC HEARING:

Item 1 – Citywide – Discussion and action pertaining to the selection of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Chair.

Chair Wisniewski opened the floor to nominations.

Vice Chair Maxfield nominated Allison Wisniewski. Commissioner Billcheck nominated Michael Tree. Commissioner Manuel nominated Michael Tree. Commissioner Wisniewski nominated Allison Wisniewski.

Seeing no other nominees, Chair Wisniewski closed the floor to nominations.

The Commissioners submitted their votes. Allison Wisniewski received two votes (Dr. Maxfield, Wisniewski). Michael Tree received five votes (Manuel, Billcheck, Tree, Kent-Partridge, Fryer). Michael Tree was selected as the Veterans, Disability, and Human Services Commission Chair.

Chair Wisniewski moved to accept Commissioner Tree as Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Chair. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 Yes votes.

Item 2 – Citywide – Discussion and action pertaining to the selection of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Vice-Chair.

Chair Tree opened the floor to nominations.

Commissioner Wisniewski nominated Dr. Gwen Maxfield. Commissioner Kent-Partridge nominated Julie Kent-Partridge. Commissioner Manuel nominated Julie Kent-Partridge.

Seeing no other nominees, Chair Tree closed the floor to nominations.

The Commissioners submitted their votes. Dr. Gwen Maxfield received two votes (Dr. Maxfield, Wisniewski). Julie Kent-Partridge received five votes (Tree, Billcheck, Kent-Partridge, Manuel, Fryer). Julie Kent-Partridge was selected as the Veterans, Disability, and Human Services Commission Chair.

Commissioner Billcheck moved to accept Commissioner Julie Kent-Partridge as Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Vice-Chair. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 Yes votes.

Item 3 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to the June 11, 2025 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Wisniewski moved to approve the June 11, 2025 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Billcheck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 7 Yes votes.

Item 4 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to the 2025 Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshal.

The Commission discussed details about the selection of the 2025 Grand Marshal. The Grand Marshal Subcommittee made the recommendation to nominate Leo Pooley.

Commissioner Wisniewski moved to approve Leo Pooley as the 2025 Veteran's Day Parade Grand Marshal. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. Motion passed with 7 Yes votes.

Item 5 – Citywide – Discussion and action pertaining to the 2025 Community Legend Awards.

The commission discussed details about the selection of the 2025 Community Legend Awards. The Community Legend Awards Subcommittee made recommendations to nominate Layla Skye West for Outstanding Youth of the Year, A New Leaf West Valley Housing Assistance Center for Organization of the Year, Aly and Gary Klein with the Surprise Friends of the Library for Volunteer of the Year, and Connie Whitlock with WHAM for Individual Legend Award.

Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge moved to approve the Community Legend Awards as presented.

Commissioner Billcheck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 7 Yes votes.

Item 6 – Citywide – Discussion pertaining to the division of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission into two commissions with one focusing on veterans and the other on disabilities and human services.

Director Dyson presented to the Commission and shared that previous discussions by the City Council have led to the recommendation of splitting the existing VDHS commission into two. The commission discussed their thoughts, concerns, naming of the new commissions, and timing of the division.

A presentation will be made to City Council on September 2 to discuss the split.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Presentation by Veronica Morgan
- Abe McCann with Department of Labor, to discuss updates on programs
- Maggie Roby with the Arizona Registrar of Contractors

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner John Billcheck moved to adjourn the meeting of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission on August 13, 2025, at 7:43 p.m. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 7 votes.



Seth Dyson
Human Service & Community Vitality Director



Michael Tree
Veterans, Disability and Human Services Commission Chair

The foregoing instrument is a full, true, and correct copy of the original document on file in the office of the City Clerk, City of Surprise, Arizona.

ATTEST BY:



Victoria Simmons
Administrative Specialist

DATE:

9/10/2025