

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

**November 12, 2025 | 6:00 PM
City Council Chambers
16000 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Tree 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 November 12, 2025.

ROLL CALL

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

Absences: Chair Michael Tree (excused) and Commissioner Dr. Gwen Maxfield (excused).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STAFF PRESENT:

Community Initiatives Supervisor, Danielle Osborne.

CURRENT EVENTS REPORT

Chair Tree reported on the following:

- The City of Surprise, in partnership with ARIZONA@WORK, is hosting a free hiring event to connect job seekers with employers currently hiring in the West Valley. The hiring event will be held tomorrow, November 13, from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Surprise Regional Library, 16089 N. Bullard Ave. Job seekers can meet potential employers and establish professional relationships in a convenient, time-saving setting.
- Join us on November 22, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Surprise Recreation Campus, for the 2025 SciTech Festival. The festival is a high-energy, hands-on celebration of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (S.T.E.A.M.) for all ages. This free community event showcases real-world innovation through engaging exhibits from educational, civic, and business organizations, and local innovators. As a signature event of the Arizona SciTech Institute, the festival also highlights career pathways to spark interest in S.T.E.A.M. fields and the industries shaping our future. For more details, or to register to become a Sponsor or Exhibitor, please visit surpriseaz.gov/SciTech

- City of Surprise administrative offices will be closed Thursday, November 27, and Friday, November 28, in observance of Thanksgiving.
- The Community is encouraged to join us on Saturday, December 13, 2025 from 8 - 11 a.m. for our December Day of Service. Partnering with JustServe, volunteers will help separate, sort and bag new socks for distribution to A New Leaf, Faith House and the City of Surprise Fire-Medical and Police Departments to give back to our community members in need. Registration will open on November 17. For more information or to register, please visit surpriseaz.gov/DayofService
- The City of Surprise is excited to present the 4th Annual Sensitive Santa Experience, in partnership with the Autism Society of Greater Phoenix and T.E.A.M. 4 Kids, celebrating their 12th Annual event. This sensory-friendly celebration is designed for individuals with special needs, offering a calm environment free of long lines, bright lights and loud noises. This event will take place on Saturday, December 13, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Surprise Stadium. For assistance or more information, email ashley.stevens@surpriseaz.gov or call 623.222.2284.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Billcheck
 - Attended Mayor's Veterans Roundtable on November 5
 - Received updates on veteran services organizations who are currently assisting veterans and discussed future Vet Fest event
- Commissioner Fryer
 - Attended West Valley Impact Collective on October 23, presented by AZ Impact for Good and City of Surprise
 - Very informative and many non-profit organizations in attendance
 - Attended Special Olympics Tournament
 - Attended Gain Night on October 25
 - Attended Yes Day for Autism on October 26, in Tempe
 - Large outdoor Resource Fair for anyone in the autism and disability community
 - Attended Veterans Day Parade on November 11
 - Challenge Coin awarded to Christian Brothers Automotive
- Commissioner Manuel
 - Attended Veterans Day Parade on November 11
 - Attended Mayor's Veteran Roundtable on November 5
 - Invited by West Valley Chamber of Commerce to attend a dinner
 - Was one of three to be awarded a \$10,000 scholarship for service animal training
 - Challenge Coin awarded to Circle K Global Finance Manager for Donations; dinner tickets were purchased and donated for veteran awardees to attend the event
- Commissioner Wisniewski
 - Attended Gain Night on October 25
 - Attended Senior Heritage Apartments ribbon cutting
 - Attended Veterans Day Parade on November 11
- Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge

- Attended Senior Heritage Apartments ribbon cutting on October 8
- Attended Vet Fest Planning Committee Meeting on October 14
- Attended Division of Developmental Disability Lunch and Learn on October 15, on autism spectrum disorder
- Attended VA Mental Health Advocacy Council Meeting on October 23
- Attended Gain Night on October 25
- Attended Mayors Veteran Roundtable on November 5
- Attended Veterans Court Meeting on November 6
 - More details to come
- Attended VFW 1433 BBQ on November 8
- Attended Veterans Day Parade on November 11

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Osborne discussed:

- We are inviting the community to share their acts of service, big or small, by participating in the annual #SurpriseCelebratesMLK Challenge. The challenge encourages community members of all ages to embrace service as a path to greatness.
 - To be part of the challenge, participants are asked to share photos, videos, or creative expressions that answer the question: “How do YOU serve?” Submit your stories of service at surpriseaz.gov/MLKChallenge, or post them on Facebook, Instagram or X with the #SurpriseCelebratesMLK by December 31st to be included in the video showcase at the MLK Day of Celebration and Service on January 17, 2026.
- Thank you to all for participating in the Veterans Day Parade. Our Grand Marshal, Leo Pooley, was in attendance and was thrilled to be part of the event.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - PUBLIC HEARING:

None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - NON-PUBLIC HEARING:

Item 1 - The City Clerk will administer the Oath of Office to Charles Manuel, who has been approved for reappointment to the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission for a four-year term, expiration on June 30, 2029.

City Clerk, Kristi Passarelli, administered the Oath of Office to Charles Manuel, who has been reappointed to the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission for a 4-year term.

Item 2 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to the October 8, 2025 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Billcheck moved to approve the October 8, 2025, Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 5 Yes votes and 2 absences (Tree and Maxfield).

Item 3 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to the Northwest Valley Veterans Association.

Rodney Hage gave a presentation on services offered through the Northwest Valley Veterans Association.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Presentation by Operation BBQ Relief

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Wisniewski moved to adjourn the meeting of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission on November 12, 2025, at 6:41 p.m. Commissioner Billcheck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 5 votes and 2 absences (Tree and Maxfield).

Danielle Osborne
Community Initiative Supervisor

Julie Kent-Partridge
Veterans, Disability and Human Services Commission Vice-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: _____

DRAFT