

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

**February 11, 2026 | 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 February 11, 2026.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Absences: Allison Wisniewski (excused).

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Human Services & Community Vitality Director, Seth Dyson, and Administrative Specialist, Victoria Simmons.

**CURRENT EVENTS REPORT**

Chair Tree reported on the following:

- City of Surprise administrative offices will be closed on Monday, February 16, in observance of Presidents' Day.
- The City of Surprise is honored to welcome The Wall That Heals, a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, along with its Mobile Education Center. The exhibit will be open 24 hours a day, beginning at 5 a.m. on April 9 and ending at 2 p.m. on April 12 and is free for the public to experience. The Wall That Heals honors the more than three million Americans who served in the Vietnam War and bears the names of the 58,281 men and women who gave their lives in service to our country. This is a somber, reflective exhibit, and volunteers are essential to ensuring visitors experience the Wall with dignity, care, and respect. If you value service, tradition, and community, we invite you to stand with us. For more information about the wall or to volunteer, please visit [TheWallThatHeals2026.surpriseaz.gov](http://TheWallThatHeals2026.surpriseaz.gov).
- Please join us for Vet Fest on Saturday, April 11, from 5 – 8 p.m. at the Surprise Stadium. It is a fun-filled evening offering those who have served, are currently

servicing, or are looking to serve in the military, a chance to connect and learn about the support and resources available to veterans. Military families, supporters and the entire community are encouraged to take part and show their support for our veterans! For more information or if you'd like to become an exhibitor, please visit [surpriseaz.gov/VetFest](http://surpriseaz.gov/VetFest). The City of Surprise is also seeking sponsors for Vet Fest. If interested, please reach out to Seth Dyson at 623.222.1620.

## COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Billcheck
  - Attended Mayor's Veteran Roundtable on February 4
    - City Staff briefed members of the roundtable on The Wall That Heals coming to Surprise and how to volunteer
- Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge
  - Attended VA Mental Health Advocacy Council on January 15
    - Attend meetings each month to discuss resources for veterans (i.e. Veterans Court)
  - Attended PIT Count Training and the Surprise Area Homeless Collaborative Meeting on January 21
  - Attended and participated in the 2026 PIT Count event on January 27
  - Attended Vet Fest stadium tour on January 27
  - Attended the Mayor's Veteran Roundtable on February 4
  - Attended Vet Fest Advisory Planning Committee on February 10
- Commissioner Manuel
  - Attended Mayor's Veteran Roundtable on February 4
  - Attended a tour of the new Surprise Resource and Community Center; many services offered there
- Commissioner Fryer
  - Attended Vet Fest stadium walk-through on January 27
  - Attended Vet Fest Advisory Committee meeting on February 10
  - Attended City of Surprise 90's Backyard Bash
  - Enrolled in and will be participating in City Academy training, starting on February 23
- Commissioner Maxfield
  - Attended Mayor's Breakfast
  - Attended Mayor's Veteran Roundtable on February 4
  - Attended Vet Fest stadium tour on January 27
  - Attended Vet Fest Advisory Planning Committee meeting on February 10
  - Visited and volunteered at Teen Challenge
- Chair Tree
  - No updates

## STAFF REPORT

None.

## CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

None.

## **CONSENT AGENDA:**

None.

## **REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - PUBLIC HEARING:**

None.

## **REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - NON-PUBLIC HEARING:**

### **Item 1 - Consideration and action pertaining to the January 14, 2026 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.**

Commissioner Kent-Partridge moved to approve the January 14, 2026, Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 Yes votes and 1 absence (Wisniewski).

### **Item 2 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to Cycles of Kindness.**

John Riddle gave a presentation on programs offered through Cycles of Kindness.

### **Item 3 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to Veterans Affinity.**

Founder and Executive Director, Rick Kreiberg, gave a presentation on services offered to veterans through Veterans Affinity.

### **Item 4 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to Billy’s Place.**

Executive Director, Kris Freidman, gave a presentation on services offered by Billy’s Place.

### **Item 5 – Citywide – Discussion and possible action pertaining to the reallocation of the Veteran, Disability & Human Services Commission budget.**

The Commissioners discussed ways to reallocate the Veteran, Disability & Human Services Commission budget. Ideas about how to reallocate the budget were discussed. Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge moved to approve the reallocation of the Veteran, Disability & Human Services budget, with \$1,000 to be used for the purchase of more autism kits for public safety vehicles and for the remaining amount to be used for Vet Fest 2026. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 Yes votes and 1 absence (Wisniewski).

**Item 6 – Citywide – Discussion pertaining to the event planning details of Vet Fest 2026.**

Assistant Director of Sports, Entertainment & Culture, Travis Ashby, provided information on The Wall That Heals coming to the City of Surprise.

The commissioners discussed final details of planning for Vet Fest 2026.

**OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Presentation from AZ Strut

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge moved to adjourn the meeting of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission on February 11, 2026, at 8:05 p.m. Commissioner Billcheck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 votes and 1 absence (Wisniewski).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Seth Dyson  
Human Services & Community Vitality Director

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT