

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

**June 10 | 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 June 10, 2026.

ROLL CALL

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

Absences: Chair Michael Tree (excused).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STAFF PRESENT:

Human Services and Community Vitality Director, Seth Dyson, Community Initiatives Supervisor, Kara Poling, and Administrative Specialist, Victoria Simmons.

CURRENT EVENTS REPORT

Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge reported on the following:

- Due to the Juneteenth holiday, City of Surprise administrative offices will be closed Friday, June 19.
- In observance of the Independence Day holiday, City of Surprise administrative offices will also be closed on Friday, July 3.
- Join us on Wednesday, July 8, at St. Mary's Food Bank to assist with sorting and 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 Foodbank; this process will require you to create an account on their website first. For questions about this event or volunteer opportunities, please visit surpriseaz.gov/DOS or call Daisy Vargas at 623.222.1612.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Manuel
 - June 10 - Attended a tour of the new Surprise Community & Resource

- Center
- Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge
 - May 18 – met with Project Manager, Samuel Pena and Director, Jeanine Jurkovic with the City of Surprise Economic Development department to learn more about the SPARK Hidden Talent Program
 - May 20 - Attended DDD Lunch and Learn, which focused on employment challenges and solutions to help disabled members of the community
 - May 21 - Attended VA Mental Health Advocacy Council meeting on May 21
 - Presentation by Michelle Cleveland with Project 24/7
 - Project 24/7 is a suicide prevention app tool for veterans, adults and adolescents meant to target those who do not have access to mental health resources.
 - June 6 - Attended Women’s Veteran Recognition Day as a veteran spouse panelist
 - Hosted by West Valley Women Veterans
 - June 7 - Attended a Women Veterans event at the VFW Post 1433
 - June 8 - Attended a meeting with Community Initiatives Supervisor, Kara Poling, Jared Beard of Maricopa County Workforce Development, and Tim Stump with Vocational Rehab
 - Learned about employment resources for those with disabilities and DDD members
 - June 10 - Attended a tour of the new Surprise Community & Resource

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 May 13, 2026 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Prior to consideration of the item, staff noted that the agenda contained a clerical error. The agenda incorrectly referenced the May 8, 2026, meeting minutes; the item should have referenced the May 13, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Billcheck moved to approve the May 13, 2026, Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 Yes votes and 1 absence (Tree).

Item 2 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to Brain Injury Association of Arizona.

Director of Veteran Services, Luke Fadell, gave a presentation on the different services and resources offered by Brain Injury Association of Arizona.

Item 3 – Citywide – Discussion and action pertaining to the 2026 Surprise Community Legend Awards application and timeline.

Community Initiatives Supervisor, Kara Poling, gave a presentation regarding the 2026 Surprise Community Legend Awards. Commissioner Billcheck moved to approve the application and timeline for the 2026 Community Legend Awards. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 Yes votes and 1 absence (Tree)

Item 4 – Citywide – Discussion and action pertaining to the 2026 Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshal selection process, application, and timeline.

Community Initiatives Supervisor, Kara Poling, gave a presentation regarding the 2026 Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshal selection process, application, and timeline. The commissioners discussed options to consider nominees from previous years instead of opening it up for new nominations. Commissioner Wisniewski moved to carry this item forward to August for voting of the 2026 Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshal. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 Yes votes and 1 absence (Tree)

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Presentation by Project 24/7

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Wisniewski moved to adjourn the meeting of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission on June 10, 2026, at 7:09 p.m. Commissioner Billcheck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 6 Yes votes and 1 absence (Tree).

Kara Poling
Community Initiatives Supervisor

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: _____