

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

**August 12 | 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 August 12, 2026.

ROLL CALL

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

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

Chair Tree reported on the following:

- The City of Surprise is expanding its partnership with West Valley Community Center to offer one of the Valley's most affordable before- and after-school programs for local families. The program provides transportation to and from the following locations: Surprise Elementary School, West Point Elementary School, and Thompson Ranch Elementary School. Families can also apply for full and partial scholarships to help keep before- and after-school care affordable. For rates, scholarship information and enrollment, contact West Valley Community Center at 623.583.0016 or email info@westvalleycommunitycenter.org.
- To encourage community engagement and further build strong relationships with communities, the Surprise City Council approved funding for the Neighborhood Grant Program, providing eligible neighborhoods with small grants to fund neighborhood events, functions or community improvements. To be considered, projects must meet the certain program criteria. Nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations are ineligible. Interested communities can find more information about the grant at surpriseaz.gov/NGP. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. on Friday, August 28, 2026.

- In observance of the Labor Day holiday, City of Surprise administrative offices will be closed on Monday, September 7.
- Excitement is building as the new Surprise Community and Resource Center (SCRC), located at 12641 W. Santa Fe Dr., prepares to open its doors. The 35,000-square-foot, multigenerational facility will bring the Surprise Resource Center, Surprise Senior Center and Hollyhock Library together in one location, creating expanded opportunities for learning, wellness, recreation and access to community resources for residents. A Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is scheduled for September 3. Programs currently offered at the Surprise Resource Center, Surprise Senior Center and Hollyhock Library will transition to the new facility in phases throughout the end of August. As construction and move preparations continue, the program transition dates are subject to change. Please visit surpriseaz.gov/HSCV for the latest updates and current information.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Manuel
 - June – attended Soldiers Best Friend event to honor service animals
 - August 5 – attended Mayor's Veterans Roundtable meeting
 - Attended several American Legion meetings
- Commissioner Fryer
 - July 8 – attended Mayor's Roundtable on Disabilities meeting
 - Dysart Special Education PTSA is hosting Fall Festival on October 10 at the Support Services building
 - October - Special Olympics Competition here in Surprise
 - July 27 – Community Legend Awards Sub-Committee meeting
- Commissioner Maxfield
 - Attended Veteran Caravan Celebration for Corporal John Morgan's 100th birthday
 - Attended Silence the Violence
 - August 11 - attended Faith and Community meeting
- Commissioner Wisniewski
 - July 8 – attended Mayor's Roundtable on Disabilities meeting
 - July 23 – attended the Surprise Area Homeless Collaborative meeting
 - Attended Veteran Caravan birthday celebration for Corporal John Morgan for 100th birthday
 - August 5 – attended Mayor's Veterans Roundtable meeting
 - August 11 - Faith and Community Connection meeting
- Commissioner Billcheck
 - July 21 – attended meeting with Chair Tree and Mayor Sartor to discuss a Hometown Heroes Banner Project
 - Attended Caravan for Corporal Morgan's 100th birthday
 - August 5 – attended Mayor's Veterans Roundtable meeting
- Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge
 - June – met with Michelle Cleveland, with Project 24Seven
 - June – connected Luke Fadell with Seth Dyson to provide suicide prevention training here in Surprise
 - July 8 – attended Mayor's Roundtable on Disabilities meeting
 - July 9 – attended Legislative Breakfast

- Attended retirement ceremony for Connie Phillips of Lutheran Social Services
- August 3 – attended meeting with Seth Dyson and the Surprise Police Department
- August 5 – attended Mayor’s Veterans Roundtable meeting
- Chair Tree
 - August 5 – attended Mayor’s Veterans Roundtable meeting
 - July 27 – Attended Community Legend Sub-Committee meeting
 - July 21 – attended meeting with Mayor Sartor to discuss a Hometown Heroes Banner Project

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

Chair Tree opened the floor to nominations.

Chair Tree nominated Michael Tree. Commissioner Wisniewski nominated Charles Manuel. Commissioner Maxfield nominated Allison Wisniewski. Commissioner Manuel nominated Michael Tree.

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

The Commissioners submitted their votes. Michael Tree received five votes (Tree, Manuel, Fryer, Kent-Partridge, and Billcheck). Allison Wisniewski received one vote (Dr. Maxfield). Charles Manuel received one vote (Wisniewski). Michael Tree was selected as the

Veterans, Disability, and Human Services Commission Chair.

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

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

Chair Tree opened the floor to nominations.

Commissioner Fryer nominated Julie Kent-Partridge. Chair Tree nominated Julie Kent-Partridge. Commissioner Manuel nominated Julie Kent-Partridge. Commissioner Maxfield nominated Allison Wisniewski. Commissioner Wisniewski nominated Charles Manuel.

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

The Commissioners submitted their votes. Charles Manuel received two votes (Wisniewski and Maxfield). 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 10, 2026 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Manuel moved to approve the June 10, 2026, Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 7 Yes votes.

Item 4 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to Project 24 Seven.

Michelle Cleveland gave a presentation on Project 24 Seven.

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

The commission discussed details about the selection of the 2026 Community Legend Awards. The Community Legend Awards Subcommittee made recommendations to nominate Hadley Gray for Outstanding Youth of the Year, Veterans Affinity for Organization of the Year, Louis O'Brien, a Home Service Volunteer with Benevilla for Volunteer of the Year, and Debbie Lee, CEO and Founder of America's Mighty Warriors for Individual Legend Award.

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

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

Item 6 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to the 2026 Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshal.

The Commission discussed details about the selection of the 2026 Grand Marshal. The Grand Marshal Subcommittee made the recommendation to nominate Rick Kreiberg, founder of Veterans Affinity.

Commissioner Maxfield moved to approve Rick Kreiberg as the 2026 Veteran’s Day Parade Grand Marshal. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. Motion passed with 7 Yes votes.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Future presentation by NAMI Valley of the Sun
- Future presentation by Veterans 5-9
- Annual Military Retiree Appreciation Day on September 26 at 8:00 a.m. in the Navy Reserve Center on Luke Air Force Base
- Review applicants from Community Legend Awards for future presentations, to learn from organizations that were nominated

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge moved to adjourn the meeting of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission on August 12, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 7 Yes votes.

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:

DRAFT