

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

**April 8, 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 April 8, 2026.

ROLL CALL

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

Absences: Commissioners Olivia Fryer and Charles Manuel (excused).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STAFF PRESENT:

Community Initiatives Supervisor, Kara Poling, and Administrative Specialist, Victoria Simmons.

CURRENT EVENTS REPORT

Chair Tree reported on the following:

- In an effort to support and grow the quality of life in Surprise, the Mayor and City Council offer the Surprise Community Outreach Program (SCOP). The program provides financial assistance to qualified nonprofits that provide direct services to City of Surprise residents. The FY2027 application period is now open, and applications will be accepted through Friday, May 1, 2026. For more information, please email Deb Perry at deborah.perry@surpriseaz.gov or call 623.222.1623.
- Surprise's Vet Fest is a fun-filled evening offering those who have served, are currently serving, or are looking to serve in the military a chance to connect with and learn about the support and resources available to veterans. Military families, supporters and the entire community are encouraged to take and show their support for our veterans! This family-friendly event is free for the community and will feature live music, food trucks with food for purchase, vendor booths, information from veteran service providers, a job fair, kids' zone, sensory tents, static displays of military vehicles and more!

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Wisniewski

- Participated in the Founder's Day Parade on March 28.
 - Carried America's 250th Anniversary banner with Commissioner Billcheck
- Attended Mayor's Boards and Commissions Dinner
- Participated in the escort for The Wall that Heals on April 8, along with Commissioner Maxfield
 - 77 riders, including the wall and other vehicles
 - Wall is ready to open tomorrow from April 9 – 12, open 24 hours a day
- Commissioner Billcheck
 - Attended Founder's Day on March 28, carried 250th Anniversary banner
 - Attended Mayor's Boards and Commissions Appreciation Dinner
 - Welcomed The Wall that Heals as it entered the City of Surprise complex
- Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge
 - Attended a VA Mental Health Advocacy Council meeting
 - It is interesting to learn about the different wait times within the VA health administration
 - Attended America's Mighty Warriors fundraiser event on March 19
 - Attended Out of the Park Country Music Festival on March 19
 - Attended Rattlers game where VFW Post 285 on the field participating in National Anthem Ceremony
 - Attended Founder's Day event on March 28
 - Attended Mayor's Board and Commissions Dinner on March 30
 - Attended Mayor's Roundtable on Disabilities today
 - April is Autism Awareness month, along with Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention month and Parkinson's Awareness month
- Commissioner Maxfield
 - Attended Mayor's Boards and Commissions Dinner
 - Participated in the escort for The Wall That Heals
 - Attended event with Fountains of Living Water
- Chair Tree
 - Attended Mayor's Boards and Commissions Dinner
 - Welcomed The Wall that Heals yesterday
 - Welcome Home Ceremony on Thursday, April 9, at 6 p.m.
 - Candlelight Ceremony on Friday, April 10, at 7:30 p.m.
 - Taps at Sunset on Saturday, April 11
 - Closing Ceremony on Sunday, April 12, at 1:30 p.m., followed by final Taps at 1:58 p.m.
 - Wall closure at 2 p.m.

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 March 11, 2026 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Vice-chair Kent-Partridge moved to approve the March 11, 2026, Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Billcheck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 5 Yes votes and 2 absences (Fryer and Manuel).

Item 2 – Citywide – Discussion pertaining to the final planning details of Vet Fest 2026.

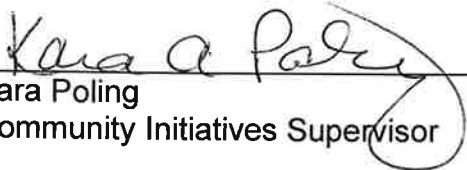
The commissioners discussed final details of planning for Vet Fest 2026.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Battle Belles, non-profit organization

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice-Chair Kent-Partridge moved to adjourn the meeting of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission on April 8, 2026, at 6:21 p.m. Commissioner Wisniewski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 5 Yes votes and 2 absences (Fryer and Manuel).


Kara Poling
Community Initiatives Supervisor


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:

6/10/2024