

Meeting Minutes: Commission on Veterans Quality of life

Date: 24 March 2025

Time: 1:00pm

Location: Virtual

1. Call to Order/Attendance:

- Cory Ahonen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00pm
- Members were reminded that the meeting was being recorded.

2. Roll Call:

○ **Members Present:**

1. Cory Ahonen, Chair
2. Scott Pita, OVA Designee
3. Leroy Ashwood, BRAVE for Veterans
4. Ashley Booker, Governor Appointee, Veterans Advocate
5. Al Tenorio, Governor Appointee, Veterans Advocate
6. Sarah Bateman, Senate President Appointee, working with Veterans
7. Sergeant Ryan Puzzo, Senate President Appointee, working with Veterans
8. Robert Baker, Senate Minority Leader Appointee, Veteran/family member
9. Melissa Alden, Senate Minority Leader, Veteran/family member

○ **Guests:**

1. Nicolette Slezak, EOVS Admin
2. Matthew Deacon, EOVS General Counsel
3. Erik Mayberg, EOVS Legislative Director
4. Raymond Carville (public attendee)
5. Chelsea Peterson (public attendee)
6. Steven Croteau (public attendee)
7. Valerie M. (public attendee)

○ **Members Absent:**

1. Bill LeBeau

10 members present. We do have a quorum.

A. **Administrative Matters**

- a. Cory Ahonen, Chair, welcomed and thanked everyone for their participation to the Veterans Quality of Life commission. Chair outlined the key agenda items, emphasizing discussion on ways to enhance employment opportunities and other key areas impacting veterans. Chair addressed the Veterans Quality of Life Charge and Mission: exploring concepts, identifying and developing categories, goals, objectives and organizing topics for open discussion from all commission members.
- b. Erik Mayberg, EOVS Legislative Director, discussed the legislative mandate and requirements of the Commission.
- c. Matthew Deacon, EOVS General Counsel, discussed general guidance of open meeting law procedures and state ethics relating to the work on this commission.

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B. New Business

- a. Cory Ahonen, Chair, addressed the methodology and scope, prioritizing the most immediate need to Veterans. Chair addressed for open discussion the impacts of the veterans and the external impacts that effect the veterans. Members expressed areas of interest they would like to have attended to such as housing, food security, employment, job security, job training, outreach, transition to civilian life. The committee discussed obtaining forms of literature, to reach out to returning veterans categorizing branches of service, to better understand the scope of changes. The committee also discussed the importance of connecting with veterans immediately upon discharge.

B. Next Steps/Action Items

- a. Develop categories, topics, goal and objectives
- b. Next meeting is April 28, 1:00pm

C. Public Comments/Questions

- i. None

D. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 1:55pm