



VETERANS AFFAIRS COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, September 8, 2026 – 6:00 pm
Room 416, San Francisco City Hall

WILLIAM BARNICKEL, PRESIDENT
HANLEY CHAN, VICE-PRESIDENT
JOSEPH BABA, JAMES BOATMAN, CHANNIE BARKER,
DEBORAH DACUMOS, ADITYA LAKSHMINARAYAN, JENNY PEREZ,
JOHN REISSENWEBER, NICHOLAS RUSANOFF

City Hall Hearing Rooms are wheelchair accessible. Remote public participation is available upon request for members of the public who cannot attend in person due to disability. A request to participate remotely should be received no later than five (5) hours prior to the start of a meeting to help ensure availability of the meeting link. To request a meeting link due to disability, please call (415) 509-9691.

RAMAYTUSH OHLONE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The San Francisco Veterans Affairs Council acknowledges that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. As the indigenous stewards of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost, nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. As guests, we recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the Ancestors, Elders, and Relatives of the Ramaytush Ohlone community and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

ROLL CALL / CONFIRM QUORUM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SET AGENDA [Action]



PRESENTATION

Healing Through Horsemanship

Presented by Zachary Leyden, Owner, Ocean View Stables LLC. Ocean View Stables runs a working horsemanship program on the San Francisco coast. This presentation will cover how time spent handling and riding horses supports veterans dealing with stress, isolation and transition to civilian life, what access looks like for veterans in the city today, and where the practical gaps are that the Council could help close.

[Presentation – 10 minutes / Q&A – 10 minutes]

COMMUNICATION

SFCVSO Report – CVSO Director

[Report presentation / Q&A with Commissioners – 15 minutes]

Executive Team Updates

Secretary

Vice-President

President

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

August 11, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes Draft

[ACTION / VOTE]

OLD BUSINESS

Update regarding Veterans Justice Court Funding: Council member Rusanoff will provide an update on the funding status for Veterans Justice Court. This update follows the Council's discussion and action on this topic at its May 12 meeting. [DISCUSSION]

Restoring the San Francisco Veterans Council to the Veterans Affairs Commission: This item follows Council's discussion and action on this topic at its August 11 meeting. VP Chan to lead discussion regarding requesting Supervisor Alan Wong to sponsor an ordinance amendment to restore the San Francisco Veterans Council to its former status and name as the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission. The discussion will also address concerns regarding the Streamlining Task Force process and what is believed were prejudicial and disproportionate treatment of the Veterans Affairs Commission and San Francisco's veteran community during the restructuring process. [DISCUSSION]



NEW BUSINESS

SB 296 – Property Tax Exemption for 100% Service-Connected Disabled Veterans:

VP Chan to lead discussion regarding SB 296 and its impact on 100% service-connected disabled veterans and their families. VP Chan would like the Council to consider formally supporting this legislation and urging the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to introduce and adopt a resolution supporting SB 296 and encouraging the Governor to sign the bill. VP Chan's draft letter was distributed to council members prior to meeting for vote to approve.

[POSSIBLE ACTION]

Legislative Advocacy and Tracking of Veterans Bills: VP Chan to lead discussion regarding establishing a regular Veterans Council legislative update to identify and track significant local and state legislation affecting San Francisco veterans, including veterans' benefits, housing, property taxes, employment, health services, and other quality-of-life issues. [DISCUSSION]

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month: Raising Awareness of Veteran Suicide Rates and Upcoming US Coast Guard Event in San Francisco. Recognizes September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Council member Boatman will share details about USCG Suicide Awareness March at the Golden Gate Bridge on September 18. [DISCUSSION]

GOOD WELFARE

This is the opportunity for members of the Veterans Affairs Council to share special thanks and congratulatory remarks for the good welfare taking place in the veteran community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

An opportunity for council members to share information about San Francisco veteran events or briefly comment on San Francisco veterans related news.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

An opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Council on items of interest to the public that are within the subject of veteran affairs. Members of the public should address the Council as a whole and not direct comments to a specific council member. Speakers are allowed up to two minutes for comments. Each member of the public will be allotted the same number of minutes to speak. The President may limit the total testimony to 30 minutes.



HONORS REPORT AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

In memory of American service members in all wars and conflicts who made the ultimate sacrifice. We also remember the passing of homeless veterans, veterans who died while awaiting approval of benefits, and suicides within the veteran and armed service communities.

ADJOURNMENT

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Veterans Affairs Council Meetings:

General meetings of the SFVAC are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month, except for July, when there is no scheduled SF VAC meeting, and are held in Room 416 in City Hall.