



County of El Dorado

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

Minutes - Draft

Veterans Affairs Commission

Todd Smith, Vice Chair, District I - Alternate Robert Fischer
Roger Reynolds, District II - Alternate Donna Mullens-Becker
Seth Culver, Chair, District III - Vacant
Ken Welch, District IV - Alternate Tim Thompson
Gary Norton, District V - Alternate Thomas Millham
Jon Brown, VSO, Secretary Ex-Officio
Courtney Frame, Recording Clerk of Veteran Affairs
Commission

Thursday, March 12, 2026

12:00 PM

<https://edcgov-us.zoom.us/j/86378230395>

3883 Ponderosa Rd
El Dorado County Child Support Services
Shingle Springs, CA 95682

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INSTRUCTIONS: The Commission meeting room will be open to the public. The meeting will continue to be live-streamed via Zoom. By participating in this meeting, you acknowledge that you are being recorded.

To observe the live stream of the Commission meeting go to <https://edcgov-us.zoom.us/j/86378230395>. Members of the public may address the Commission in-person or via Zoom to make a public comment. The public should call into 530-621-7603 or 530-621-7610. The Meeting ID is 863 7823 0395. Please note you will not be able to join the live-stream until the posted meeting start time. If you are joining the meeting via zoom and wish to make a comment on an item, press the "raise hand" button. If you are joining the meeting by phone, press *9 to indicate a desire to make a comment. Speakers will be limited to 3 minutes.

Although the County strives to offer remote participation, be advised that remote Zoom participation is provided for convenience only. In the event of a technological malfunction, the only assurance of live comments being received by the Commission is to attend in person. Except for a noticed teleconference meeting, the Commission reserves the right to conduct the meeting without remote access if there is a malfunction.

If you choose not to observe the Commission meeting but wish to make a comment on a specific agenda item, please submit your comment in writing. You are encouraged to submit your comment in writing by 4:00 PM on the Tuesday before the meeting to ensure the Commission has adequate time to review. Please submit your comment to the Clerk of the Board at edc.cob@edcgov.us. Your comment will be placed into the record and forwarded to Commission members.

PROTOCOLS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment will be received at designated periods as called by the Commission Chair.

Individuals will have three minutes to address the Commission. Except with the consent of the Commission, individuals shall be allowed to speak to an item only once.

Individual Commission members may ask clarifying questions but will not engage in substantive dialogue with persons providing input to the Commission.

If a person providing input to the Commission creates a disruption by refusing to follow Commission guidelines, the Commission Chair may take the following actions:

Step 1. Request the person adhere to Commission guidelines. If the person refuses, the Commission Chair may turn off the speaker's microphone.

Step 2. If the disruption continues, the Commission Chair may order a recess of the Commission meeting.

Step 3. If the disruption continues, the Commission Chair may order the removal of the person from the Commission meeting.

CALL TO ORDER - PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG - 12:02 PM**ROLL CALL**

Present: 8 - Commissioner Norton, Alternate Thompson, Commissioner Welch, Commissioner Millham, Alternate Mullens-Becker, Alternate Fischer, Chair Culver and Vice Chair Smith

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Reynolds

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND WELCOME**ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR**

All items on the Consent Calendar are to be approved by one motion unless a Commission member requests separate action on a specific item including moving items to or from the Consent Calendar and adopt the Agenda and the Consent Calendar for discussion. At the appropriate time as called by the Chair, members of the public may make a comment on matters on the Consent Calendar prior to Commission action.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- 1. 26-0432** Commission to review and approve mileage reimbursement for Veterans Affairs Commissioners for the month of February 2026.

Attachments: [February 2026 MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT](#)
[February 2026 MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT - Revised](#)

- 2. 26-0433** Commission to review and approve Veterans Affairs Commission February 12, 2026 meeting minutes.

Attachments: [Draft Minutes Veteran Affairs Commission 2-12-26](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Mullens-Becker, seconded by Commissioner Smith to adopt the agenda and approve the consent calendar.

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Norton, Commissioner Welch, Alternate Mullens-Becker, Chair Culver and Vice Chair Smith

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

GUEST SPEAKER - VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

3. **26-0434** Caleb Balbuena from GunsUp will provide an overview of the organization and their efforts to support veterans in the community.

Balbuena reported that GunsUp! has seen an increase in clients within the last six months. They had seven clients in the fall of 2025 and are now up to nineteen as of March 2026, many of whom were referred by friends and family. The organization utilizes several different properties for their hunts and provides gear to clients who do not have their own equipment. Balbuena also addressed safety concerns raised by Commissioner Norton, explaining that they take the safety of both staff and clients very seriously. Lastly, Balbuena reported that they are currently working on acquiring funds to purchase a covered four-seat ATV to help disabled veterans access waterfowl hunting locations.

Public Comment: D. Zelinsky

AGENDA ITEMS

4. **26-0435** Veterans Affairs Commission to review the duties and reporting requirements for the Transportation Committee.

Commissioner Thompson reviewed the Veterans Affairs Bylaws that comply with El Dorado County requirements and reported ongoing collaboration with MFSG, EDVR, and David Zelinsky on transportation issues. The main challenge is a shortage of volunteer drivers, largely due to DMV record requirements, associated fees, and privacy concerns. MFSG currently has only one active driver, and Thompson plans to work with Zelinsky and Whalen on recruitment. Commissioner Culver emphasized that the Transportation Committee should act as a liaison between organizations, drivers, and county compliance, and he requested a detailed report of obstacles be brought back to the Veterans Affairs Commission (VAC) in April. Commissioner Norton asked why El Dorado Transit is not used more often. Zelinsky explained that Transit's strict scheduling and slow ride confirmations presents challenges. Whalen reported that EDVR received 34 ride requests in 2025 and completed 20, with the remaining rides canceled or covered by others. He also noted that MyRide reimbursement is complicated, Paratransit is limited, and VA transportation is limited to veterans with severe medical conditions. Whalen expressed interest in further discussions with the Transportation Committee to address transportation challenges.

Public Comment: L. McAdams

A motion was made by Commissioner Culver, seconded by Commissioner Mullens-Becker to have the Transportation Committee report back to the VAC at the April meeting with any obstacles or items they have found that have hindered their abilities to provide transportation to veterans.

- Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Norton, Commissioner Welch, Alternate Mullens-Becker, Chair Culver and Vice Chair Smith

5. **26-0436** Veterans Affairs Commission to review the duties and reporting requirements for the Legislative Committee.

Commissioner Smith reported that Veterans Service Representative (VSO) Brown provides legislative updates during his Ex-Officio Reports and has access to legislative information concerning veterans. Smith feels that the Legislative Committee should continue for review purposes, but noted that most of the information is currently coming from VSO Brown. Brown confirmed that he receives his information from the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) and CalVet.

Public Comment: D. Zelinsky

A motion was made by Commissioner Culver, and seconded by Commissioner Mullens-Becker to leave the Legislative Committee as is with a caveat that the Legislative Committee will defer to the Ex-Officio Report.

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Norton, Commissioner Welch, Alternate Mullens-Becker, Chair Culver and Vice Chair Smith

EX-OFFICIO REPORT - RECEIVE AND FILE (Brown)

26-0518 Veterans Service Officer (VSO) Brown reported that he and Tisha Holy, Veterans Service Representative (VSR) II, attended the California Association of County Veteran Service Officers (CACVSO) Winter Training Conference from February 9th to 13th. Next, Brown reported that Senate Bill 694 had been passed in February 2026. Next, Brown reported that Senate Bill 1407 would remove the tax liability for military retirement and survivor benefits. Next, Brown reported that El Dorado County Facilities had begun construction on the office build-out at the Veteran Services Office. He expected the construction to last from Monday, March 9th, through Friday, March 20th. Next, Brown reported that for the month of February 2026, the Veteran Services Office received 300 incoming phone calls, 77 scheduled appointments, and 86 walk-ins. He also stated that the CalVet Semi-Annual Audit Report identified a few missing signatures on forms but no major corrections. Lastly, Brown reported that there were no changes to services in South Lake Tahoe.

Attachments: [Mar 2026 Ex-Officio Report](#)

COMMITTEE REPORTS - RECEIVE AND FILE

- TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax) (Reynolds) - Commissioner Mullens-Becker reported that the TOT Committee met that morning and discussed the new language in the El Dorado Community Foundation FY 25/26 contract, which could allow organizations to receive urgent, one-time funding. The TOT Committee will meet again in early April to review an Urgent Grant Application Form that could be used by individuals or organizations seeking funding assistance. The Committee plans to recommend to the VAC a process to award urgent funds at the April 2026 meeting. Mullens-Becker also reported that the TOT Committee is focusing on the TOT Mini-Grants, which will be accepting applications from March 30th to April 23rd. The Committee will review the applications in May and present recommendations to the VAC for approval. Once the Mini-Grant applications are approved, organizations will receive their funds in July. Lastly, Mullens-Becker reported that the Board of Supervisors approved a one-time funding allocation of \$175,000 for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, with approximately \$56,000 designated for the Mini-Grants Fund. The current balance with the El Dorado Community Foundation exceeds \$100,000, and the TOT Committee needs to spend these funds down. One option is to offer an Urgent Fund for organizations assisting veterans. Mullens-Becker expressed concern that the funds could be reclaimed if they are not spent in a timely manner.
- RULES (Culver/Smith) - Commissioner Smith stated there was nothing to report.
- HOUSING (Welch) - Commissioner Welch stated there was nothing to report.
- LEGISLATIVE (Smith) - Commissioner Smith stated there was nothing additional to report.
- TRANSPORTATION (Thompson/Whalen) - Commissioner Thompson stated there was nothing additional to report.
- BUDGET (Reynolds/Mullens-Becker) - Commissioner Mullens-Becker stated there was nothing additional to report.
- EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT (Mullens-Becker/Fischer) - Commissioner Fischer reported that he was tasked with researching the California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP) CalVet March Webinar Series. CalTAP assists veterans with questions about benefits related to college tuition fee waivers, GI Bill benefits, education, and entrepreneurship. Veterans can also access videos and webinars featuring experts who answer questions in real time. The webinars are free for veterans to watch.
- OUTREACH (Reynolds) - Commissioner Mullens-Becker reported that she will be working with Commissioner Reynolds when he gets back to help assist him with posting on both Facebook and Instagram for the VAC.

Public Comment: T. Jaynes

A motion was made by Commissioner Mullens-Becker, seconded by Commissioner Welch to rescind the motion under item #26-0436 as it is not applicable to the Legislative Committee.

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Norton, Commissioner Welch, Alternate Mullens-Becker, Chair Culver and Vice Chair Smith

COMMUNICATIONS' REPORTS - RECEIVE AND FILE

- **VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING – VETERANS HOUSE COUNCIL (Reynolds) -** Commissioner Culver reported that the Veteran Memorial Building (VMB) House Council met on Thursday, March 5th. He noted that two major issues were brought before the Council. The first issue was the cost of replacing the dining room chairs, which have become difficult to clean and are beginning to show signs of mold. The House Council is currently reviewing bids to replace the vinyl on 100 chairs. There was also a question about whether TOT Annual Grant funds could be used for this replacement, given that it is a health and safety concern and the chairs are used by all veteran organizations. The second issue was a motion not to move forward with the planned bar reconstruction. Instead, the House Council is considering redirecting those funds toward replacing the flooring downstairs.
- **AMERICAN LEGION SERVICE OFFICER (Zelinsky) -** David Zelinsky reported that he has been working with South Lake Tahoe Housing to assist a veteran with Lou Gehrig's disease (also known as ALS) who has a young son. Commissioner Millham was able to place the veteran and his son in a motel during the snowstorm while longer-term housing arrangements were being coordinated. Next, Zelinsky reported that, while reviewing the Sheriff's arrest records, he discovered that a veteran had been arrested and released shortly afterward. He is currently working to determine the reason for the arrest. Next, Zelinsky reported that he is assisting a Marine veteran who had been recently arrested, and the situation remains challenging because the veteran continues his substance use. Zelinsky had hoped to take him to a rehabilitation facility for detox support. Next, Zelinsky reported that he will be serving as an expert witness for a veteran currently in custody and hopes to help get the veteran into Veterans Court. Lastly, Zelinsky reported that he had been working with a veteran experiencing survivor's remorse who recently passed away. Zelinsky read a poem in honor of the veteran who passed away.
- **EDC VETERANS ALLIANCE -** There was no report provided for El Dorado County Veterans Alliance.
- **VA VET CENTER/MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP/EL DORADO VETERAN RESOURCES (Whalen) -** Tim Whalen reported that MFSG will be meeting on March 19th at the VMB. He noted that the group will be discussing deliveries of mobility equipment and a household retrieval project. Whalen stated that he will provide an update at the April VAC meeting on the outcomes of their discussion.
- **REGIONAL VETERAN EVENTS -** Leonard McAdams reported that MFSG is distributing food on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 11 AM to 1 PM. Next, David Zelinsky reported that Christmas Cheer in South Lake Tahoe is in the process of delivering food to veterans in need but has encountered a logistical issue.

GOOD OF THE ORDER (COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS)

Commissioner Thompson reported that the United States flag at the El Dorado County Veterans Monument is in significant disrepair and needs to be replaced. Thompson contacted the El Dorado County Veterans Alliance but was informed that replacing the flag is the responsibility of El Dorado County. Amy Higdon, Health and Human Services Agency Program Manager, stated that she would reach out to El Dorado County Facilities to request that the flag be replaced.

Commissioner Culver reported that Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 10165 and Post 2680 are in the process of merging into a single VFW Post. VFW Post 10165 has already voted to approve the change, and VFW Post 2680 is scheduled to vote on Friday, March 13th. Once both posts approve the merger, the proposal will be taken to the district for final approval. The combined post would retain the number 2680, as it is the older charter. Culver hopes to have the merger completed by the end of June 2026. Leonard McAdams, Commander of VFW Post 10165, stated that their vote took place on Tuesday, March 10th, and passed unanimously. McAdams noted that he and many other members could not recall the original reason for having two separate VFW posts and agreed that consolidating into one makes sense. McAdams also reported that the VFW State Convention will be held in Sacramento in June 2026 and expressed hope that many local members will attend.

OPEN FORUM

Open Forum is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Veteran Affairs Commission on subject matter that is not on their meeting agenda and within their jurisdiction. Public comments during Open Forum are limited to three minutes per person. The Commission Chair may limit public comment during Open Forum.

NEXT MEETING LOCATION, DATE & TIME

April 9, 2026 at 12 PM

330 Fair Lane, Conference Room D

Placerville, CA 95667

ADJOURNMENT - 1:33 PM