

Utah Veterans Advisory Council  
Minutes of Monthly Meeting  
April 17th, 2024

**Place:** Zoom online meeting

**Members Present:** Marti Bigbie, Gary Harter, Chris Holly, James Patten, Bob Pagnani, Ninzel Rasmuson, Heath Silcox, Paula Stephenson

**Excused:** Dave Phillips, Angela Williams

**Secretary:** Alan Ferner

**Guests:** Katie Fry, Jennica Gruver, Jeff Hanson, Cory Pearson, Taylor Ricks

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:06 PM by Paula Stephenson. Paula introduced and welcomed those in attendance. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. The minutes of our 20 March meeting were reviewed and approved by the members of the Council.
3. Bob Pagnani resumed duties as meeting chair.
4. VA Regional Office: Chris Holly reported that the claims grant rate is running at about 75% Nationally and 77.4% for Utah. Chris indicated that Pact Act claims will be a continuing process. He also advised that hiring continues.
5. VA Medical Center: Angela Williams emailed information on the August 2024 National Veterans Golden Age Games, including volunteer registration instructions,
6. Utah Dept. Veterans & Military Affairs: Gary Harter provided information on the Memorial Day event at the State Capitol. Gary also advised of the Veterans Cemetery plans for Memorial Day. HAFB has an Air Show scheduled for 29-30 June. Gary expects the Veterans and Military Affairs Commission to hold a meeting in May.

Jeff Hanson reported that the 4 Utah Veterans Nursing Homes are operating at a 93% occupancy. Recent survey results have been very favorable. Memorial Day events are planned for all 4 Homes. The new SLC Home is in the design/development stage, which is near completion. Construction will begin upon federal funding, probably next year. The Veterans Cemetery is averaging approximately 40 internments per month: 72% Veterans and 28% spouses and dependent children. There are several ongoing projects. Construction on the National Cemetery in Cedar City should start this year.

Cory Pearson reviewed the “Honoring Women Veterans” event which took place on 15 March. Cory summarized “Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day” on 29 March. Cory then announced that AMVETS will be in SLC on 8 May, as part of a Western Regional trip for Suicide Prevention. Cory also updated us on the Governor’s Suicide Prevention Program.

Also, on 10 May the Annual Veterans Business Conference is scheduled at SL Community College.

Taylor Ricks advised that planning is in progress for Memorial Day activities. The Governor will speak at the 27 May event at the State Capitol. Also, on 17 May there will be the “Service Member of the Year” award, and 18 May is Armed Forces Day.

7. Bob Pagnani reminded us that the Annual Golf Tournament will take place on 16 May. Golfers and sponsors should sign up now.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 PM by Bob Pagnani. Our next monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 15th at 4:00 PM, via Zoom online.