

**OKLAHOMA VETERANS  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**AUGUST 21, 2023, 10:30 AM**

**Vezey Veterans  
Complex 2132 NE 36th  
Street Oklahoma City,  
OK 73111**

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING:**

The Oklahoma Veterans Commission held a Special Meeting on Monday, August 21, 2023, at 10:30 AM at the Vezey Veterans Complex 2132 NE 36th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111. A Notice of this meeting was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on July 31, 2023. Jennifer Bloomfield served as the Clerk of the Commission for this Meeting.

**AGENDA:**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Allen called the meeting to order at 10:30AM

**II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

**A. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The roll was taken as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Present  
Commissioner Ellington – Present  
Commissioner Martin – Present  
Commissioner Offel – Present  
Commissioner Orr – Present

**B. DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

The Chair declared that a quorum was present.

**III. VERIFICATION OF PROPER NOTICE OF MEETING AND POSTING OF THE AGENDA.**

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to verify proper notice to the Secretary of State and posting of the agenda. The Clerk verified that Notice of this meeting was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on July 31, 2023, at 3:59 PM, and the agenda was posted to the front door of the ODVA Central Office and was available at the reception desk of the ODVA Central Office on August 16, 2023, at 3:32 PM. The agenda was posted to the ODVA website on August 16, at 4:06 PM.

**IV. INVOCATION**

Commissioner Ellington led the Invocation.

**V. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**VI. ODVA STAFF AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Secretary of Military & Veterans Affairs John Nash  
Executive Director Greg Slavonic  
Deputy Director Shawn Kirkland  
Director of Homes Rob Arrington  
Communications Director Jennifer Bloomfield  
Chief Financial Officer Lisa White  
Construction Programs Administrator Nisha Young  
ODVA General Counsel John Settle

**VII. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO VISITORS AND GUESTS**

Chairman Allen welcomed all visitors and guests to the Commission meeting and asked if anyone would like to introduce themselves to the Commission. James Crawford, Assistant Attorney General contract legal counsel to the ODVA, introduced himself to the Commission and those in attendance.

**VIII. BUSINESS**

**A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 12th, 2023, OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to approve the May 2, 2023, Minutes.  
Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.  
Commissioner Allen called for discussion.  
There was no discussion. Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.  
Commissioner Allen – Aye  
Commissioner Ellington – Aye  
Commissioner Martin – Aye  
Commissioner Offel – Aye  
Commissioner Orr – Aye.  
The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.  
Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 22, 2023, OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to approve the June 22, 2023, Minutes.  
Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.  
Commissioner Allen called for discussion.  
There was no discussion. Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.  
Commissioner Allen – Aye  
Commissioner Ellington – Aye  
Commissioner Martin – Aye  
Commissioner Offel – Aye  
Commissioner Orr – Aye.  
The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.  
Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**C. REPORTS, WITH DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE: COMMISSIONER SIDNEY ELLINGTON:**

Commissioner Ellington gave a report related to the number of pins versus unfilled pins agency wide. 308 unfilled pins and a discussion of all new hires, resignations, and terminations since the last scheduled Commission meeting was given.

Commissioner Ellington stated there have been four (4) Leadership Lunch and Learn meetings and all have been received favorably. The Lunch and Lean meetings have had approximately 150 plus participants online and Commissioner Ellington suggests the sessions become an annual requirement.

**2. COMMISSIONER BRETT MARTIN:**

**i. Veterans Forum**

Commissioner Martin proposes formation of an Oklahoma Veterans Forum (OVF) subcommittee and states there could be traveling meeting and offer up the American Legion Post on 50<sup>th</sup> Street, 4000 square foot hall, furnished and multi-media, and proposes the first Monday of the month as a meeting date.

Secretary Nash suggests meetings start as events and the Commission partner with his office. There are some resources that can be brought to bear, help with press releases, etc., and the Commission and Secretary Nash's office would collaborate to help put issues in touch with services.

Commissioner Orr made the Motion to establish Oklahoma Veterans Forum Sub-Committee.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**ii. Be The One Campaign**

Commissioner Martin proposes ODVA and OVF partner with the Be The One Campaign through the American Legion and comments the Governor is in the

process of setting up Veterans Suicide Task Force and the American Legion nationally has its Be The One Campaign which has been incredibly successful.

Secretary Nash comments the Governor's Task Force is just now forming and those details have not been worked out and the Governor recently nominated his first representative to this Task Force and has yet to have their first meeting. Secretary Nash suggests to delay this for the moment as the ODVA Commission has to provide a representative to the Task Force. No action taken.

**D. GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. ADOPT 2024 OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to Table the 2024 Commission Meetings and New Fiscal Year Priorities to next Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**2. NEW FISCAL YEAR PRIORITIES**

No action taken.

**E. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. ELECTION OF NEW FISCAL YEAR 2024 CHAIRMAN.**

Commissioner Ellington made the Motion to Nominate Commissioner Allen to serve another term as Chairman.

Commissioner Offel seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion. Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**2. ELECTION OF NEW FISCAL YEAR 2024 VICE CHAIRMAN.**

Commissioner Ellington made the Motion to Nominate Commissioner Martin as Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Orr seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**3. ELECTION OF NEW FISCAL YEAR 2024 SECRETARY OF THE COMMISSION.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to Nominate Commissioner Ellington as Secretary of the Commission.

Commissioner Offel seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT, HIRING, APPOINTMENT, PROMOTION, OF ODVA INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GREGORY SLAVONIC.**

Commissioner Ellington made the Motion to Remove the Interim Designation and Nominate Gregory Slavonic as Director.

Commissioner Orr seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.  
Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**F. REPORTS WITH DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. OKLAHOMA SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND MILITARY: JOHNATHAN NASH, DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION:**

Secretary Nash suggests ODVA Executive Director to authorize hiring a CPA Firm to conduct agreed upon procedures to validate the financials of the ODVA regarding FY2018 through 2023.

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to authorize hiring of CPA Firm to validate financials for FY 2018 through FY 2023.

Commissioner Offel seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion. There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

Commissioner Orr made the Motion to give Admiral Slavonic the authority to choose and solicit a CPA firm and move forward with the audit.

Commissioner Offel seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Allen called for discussion. There was no discussion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**2. ODVA: ADMIRAL GREG SLAVONIC, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION:**

**i. Travel;**

Director Slavonic states this past month he has been to Lawton, Sallisaw, and Norman, held an event there on July 4<sup>th</sup>, where we recognized fourteen (14) WW2 veterans, ranging in age from 95 to 104

**ii. HB 1036;**

Director Slavonic states House Bill 1036 was voted on and approved. The Act relates to veterans, creating the Veterans Suicide Task Force. The Task Force will conduct an organizational meeting no later than November 1, 2023.

Commissioner Ellington made the Motion to nominate Commissioner Martin for the Veterans Suicide Prevention Task Force.

Commissioner Orr seconded the Motion.

Commissioner Orr seconded the Motion.

Chairman Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion. Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

**iii. Legislative Committee;**

Director Slavonic recommended creation of Legislative Committee and hiring of Legislative Liaison to draft and propose legislation and rules needed to support the mission of the ODVA. Discussion concerning the need and process regarding a potential Legislative Liaison was held.

Commissioner Ellington made the Motion to create a standing ODVA Legislative Committee including five Committee Members, Commissioner Allen, Commissioner Ellington, Executive Director Slavonic, Deputy Director Kirkland, and General Counsel Settle.

Commissioner Orr seconded the Motion.

Chairman Allen called for discussion.

There was no discussion. Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye.

The clerk notified Chairman Allen the Roll Call vote was five (5) Ayes and zero (0) Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion to have Passed.

Break at 12:12 pm.

Back from Break 12:17 pm.

**3. ODVA: NISHA YOUNG, CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS  
ADMINISTRATOR, RE: ARDMORE FACILITY PROJECT UPDATE,**

**DISCUSSION:**

Project 60% complete. Submitted and received approval for aquatic program design with completion date November 2024.

**4. ODVA: NISHA YOUNG, CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATOR, RE: SALLISAW VETERANS HOME CONSTRUCTION UPDATE RE CHANGE ORDER PROGRESS, DISCUSSION:**

35 acres purchased with equipment barn/maintenance structure in place. Two change orders have been executed.

**ODVA: LISA A. WHITE, ODVA CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:**

Per diem rates will increase 3% to 4% on October 1, 2023. A digital copy of this presentation is available as an attachment to these minutes.

**5. ODVA: SHAWN KIRKLAND, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, REPORTS AND DISCUSSION RE:**

Rob Arrington gave presentation on behalf of Deputy Director Kirkland. Regarding Talihina Closure and status, of the 77 employee RIF packages offered, 39 have accepted. Facility currently has 11 residents with 9 planned transfers.

**6. ODVA: JOHN M. SETTLE, GENERAL COUNSEL, REPORT RE: STATUS OF CURRENT LITIGATION IN WHICH ODVA IS A NAMED PARTY AND ANY POTENTIAL LITIGATION, DISCUSSION:**

Action to Adjourn to Executive Session.

Commissioner Ellington made the motion to adjourn to Executive Session.

Commissioner Martin seconded the Motion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye

The Clerk notified the Chair that the Roll Call vote was 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion passed.

The Commission entered Executive Session at 1:07 pm and recording was paused.

Meeting doors were opened, recording started and action to return to Open Meeting from Executive Session was considered.

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to Return from Executive Session.

Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye



Commissioner Orr – Aye  
The Clerk notified the Chair the Roll Call vote was 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.  
Chairman Allen declared the Motion passed.

The Commission Returned to Open Meeting at 2:01 pm.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**X. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS BY THE OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF AGENDA ITEMS IN ADVANCE OF EACH MEETING.**

**XI. OKLAHOMA VETERANS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING DATE AND POSSIBLE SEPTEMBER 2023 SPECIAL MEETING DATE TO INCLUDE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion that a Special Meeting be scheduled for September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 9:00 a.m., here at the Vesey Veterans Complex.

Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye

The Clerk notified the Chair that the Roll Call vote was 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion passed.

Next Meeting:

September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 9:00AM

Vesey Veterans Complex

2132 NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street

Oklahoma City OK 73111

Chairman Allen set August 29, 2023 as the deadline for submission of agenda items for the next Special Meeting.

**XII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ADJOURNMENT.**

Commissioner Martin made the Motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Ellington seconded the Motion.

The Motion is not debatable.

Chairman Allen asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Allen – Aye

Commissioner Ellington – Aye

Commissioner Martin – Aye

Commissioner Offel – Aye

Commissioner Orr – Aye

The Clerk notified the Chair that the Roll Call vote was 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Chairman Allen declared the Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:08 pm.