



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**  
**Board of Supervisors**



**DATE:** May 6, 2015  
**BOARD MEETING DATE:** June 2, 2015  
**SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING:** None  
**VOTE REQUIRED:** Majority

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Supervisor Warren Slocum

**SUBJECT:** Establishment of the San Mateo County Veterans' Commission

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution establishing the San Mateo County Veterans' Commission.

**BACKGROUND:**

There are numerous boards and commissions that perform specific County government functions or advise the Board of Supervisors on a range of issues. Some of these commissions, including, for example, the Commission on Aging and the Commission on Disabilities, focus on policy matters and issues of interest to specific segments of the population within San Mateo County.

A number of cities and counties in California, including neighboring Alameda County and the City and County of San Francisco, have established Veterans' Affairs Commissions to address issues of concern to resident veterans and their families.

County staff has reviewed the structure and mandates of these existing Veterans' Affairs Commissions and has determined that these commissions share common goals. For example, each one is charged with promoting the needs of veterans and their families and recommending programs, plans, procedures and policies that facilitate their access to critical benefits and services and address areas of unmet need.

**DISCUSSION:**

In 2014, the County Manager's Office and the Human Services Agency spearheaded a study to help identify and address the needs of approximately 32,000 veterans residing in the County. Many other County departments, as well as veterans working for the County, participated in the process. Drawing from primary data like interviews and focus groups and secondary data like statistical information, the goal of the study was to learn more about the needs of veterans in the County, the services currently available to them, and the areas of unmet need.

The San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment 2014 found that while many veterans residing in the County have stable employment, housing and social support networks, some veterans require additional support, including access to benefits and safety net services, mental and behavioral health services and affordable housing. Key findings include:

- More than half of the veterans in the County are age 65 or older. This demographic reported the need for assistance in accessing civilian and veterans' benefits.
- While 95% of veterans are male, a higher percentage of younger veterans are female - close to 20% of veterans ages 18-34 and close to 10% of veterans ages 35-54 in the County. Women veterans reported the need for additional services targeted to them, and increased awareness by all veteran-serving agencies of the issues specifically confronting them.
- Veterans are overrepresented in the County's homeless population, comprising approximately 12% of its homeless population, while comprising only 6% of its overall adult population.
- With San Mateo County being one of the least affordable housing markets in the state, access to affordable housing was commonly identified as a need by veterans who were consulted for the study.

The Veterans' Commission would promote programs and policies that address the unmet needs of veterans in San Mateo County, such as those identified in the recent Needs Assessment. Potential areas of focus include:

- Expanding education and outreach efforts to veterans who are seniors so they have better access to critical benefits and services;
- Bringing greater recognition and visibility to issues that disproportionately impact women veterans, such as military sexual trauma and the deficit of services targeted to women veterans' needs;
- Developing policy recommendations which would help increase access to affordable housing for veterans and their families; and
- Recommending initiatives which facilitate the provision of emergency or transitional shelter and ancillary services and assistance to homeless veterans.

### **Commission Structure**

The Commission would have nine voting members appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve three-year terms. However, initial terms upon formation of the Commission would be staggered so that four of the initial members would serve two-year terms in order to ensure the continuity of the Commission by avoiding the simultaneous

expiration of all member terms. The Commission would meet at least six times a year, and it would implement an annual work plan. The Commission would provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors at least once a year.

Approval of this resolution contributes to several of the County's Shared Vision 2025 outcomes. It strives to meet the goal of a Healthy Community by supporting increased access by veterans to critical services and benefits in the County, especially by underserved segments like senior and women veterans. It fosters a Livable Community by providing a platform to address affordable housing, emergency and transitional shelter and related services for low-income and homeless veterans. Finally, approval of this resolution promotes a Collaborative Community by encouraging veterans and others who have an abiding interest in veterans' affairs to become civically engaged, as well as by helping to educate the broader community about veterans' issues.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no impact on the budget at this time. Resources to staff and support the Commission's work will be determined once the goals and priorities of the Commission have been established. Currently, required staff support is estimated not to exceed 0.5 FTE.

**RESOLUTION NO. 073812**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

\* \* \* \* \*

**RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE SAN MATEO COUNTY VETERANS' COMMISSION**

---

**RESOLVED**, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, that

**WHEREAS**, this Board is committed to supporting and promoting the quality of life and well-being of San Mateo County's veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment 2014, some veterans in this County require support in accessing federal, state and local benefits, including those related to healthcare, employment and education, as well as safety net services and affordable housing; and

**WHEREAS**, more than half the veterans in this County are seniors who frequently need assistance in accessing civilian and veterans' benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment 2014, the County's women veterans have identified a need veterans serving agencies to increase their focus on issues specifically faced by women veterans, such as military sexual trauma, and the corresponding deficit of services targeted to their needs; and

**WHEREAS**, veterans are overrepresented in the County's homeless population, and access to transitional and emergency shelter as well as affordable housing are therefore critical to this population.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DETERMINED AND ORDERED** as

follows:

**1. COMMISSION – ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSES.**

There is hereby created the San Mateo County Veterans' Commission (the "Commission").

The purposes of the Commission include:

- a. To promote programs that foster the well-being of veterans in San Mateo County;
- b. To increase the understanding and visibility of issues that disproportionately impact underserved segments of the veterans' population, including, but not limited to, seniors, women, LGBTQ members, and the homeless;
- c. To provide outreach and support to underserved segments of the veterans' community in San Mateo County;
- d. To develop initiatives to support San Mateo County veterans and their families; and
- e. To report and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors as needed, but not less frequently than once every twelve (12) months.

**2. MEMBERSHIP.**

The Commission shall consist of nine (9) voting members who shall be

residents of the County of San Mateo, work in the County, or provide services, which target and benefit veterans residing in the County.

Members shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Board of Supervisors, and shall serve at the pleasure thereof.

The following criteria shall be used in appointing Commission members:

- a. Members shall have a demonstrated interest in supporting and furthering the well-being of veterans.
- b. Consideration shall be given to the applicant's background and/or community involvement to the extent relevant to the fulfillment of the Commission's mission.
- c. Members should have sufficient time and resources to effectively serve on the Commission.

Outreach efforts shall be made to maximize the likelihood the Commission members reflect the diversity of San Mateo County in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, age and sexual orientation.

### 3. TERMS.

Initial terms shall be staggered to help ensure the continuity of the Commission. For the initial appointment of members, five (5) members shall be appointed to serve three (3) year terms and four (4) members shall be appointed to serve two (2) year terms. Thereafter, each of the terms shall be three (3) year terms. Upon the conclusion of a term, a member may be

reappointed subject to a maximum of four (4) full three (3) year terms. This limit shall not include partial terms to which a member may be appointed at the beginning of their service, or holdover service caused by delay in appointing a replacement at the end of the member's term of service. In the event a vacancy shall occur on the Commission during the term of any member, the Board of Supervisors shall appoint a replacement who shall serve the rest of that member's term.

Terms shall begin on July of the year of appointment and end on June 30. Initial terms at the formation of the Commission may begin any time on or after July 1, 2015, and shall end on June 30 of the applicable year depending on the length of the member's initial term.

#### 4. ORGANIZATION.

The Commission shall adopt rules for the conduct of its own business, including but not limited to, the following provisions:

- a. The Commission shall annually select, by majority vote, a Chair and a Vice Chair.
- b. The Commission shall meet at least 6 times a year, unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the Commission.
- c. Commission action may be taken only by a majority vote of all members. A majority vote is defined as a majority of the authorized membership, meaning a minimum of five (5) votes.

- d. The Commission shall have the authority to establish *ad hoc* committees and appoint non-voting volunteer committee members from the community. These *ad hoc* committees will serve the sole purpose of developing and making recommendations to the Commission.
- e. The Commission shall work with the Human Services Agency as its administrative liaison, or such other County department as the Board of Supervisors may authorize.
- f. The Commission shall establish the time and place of its regular meetings.
- g. All meetings of the Commission or committees thereof shall be subject to the open meeting requirements of the Government Code, specifically, the Brown Act, section 54590, *et seq.*
- h. All documents and reports generated by the Commission shall be subject to the provisions of the Public Records Act, specifically, Government Code section 6254, *et seq.*
- i. Except to the extent that this resolution sets forth different rules or processes, the Commission shall comply with all standing rules for County boards, commissions and advisory committees that are established by the Board of Supervisors.

## 5. COMMISSION'S POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS.



The duties, functions and powers of the Commission shall be as follows:

- a. To advise and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors;
- b. To develop and implement an annual work plan;
- c. To provide a public forum for input from the veterans' community to identify unmet needs;
- d. To work with existing veterans' advocacy and service organizations to help coordinate systems of care and benefits;
- e. To act as an advocate for veterans, taking positions pertaining to federal, state and local policies, programs, procedures and any legislation affecting veterans and their families; and
- f. To fulfill other duties and engage in other activities as directed by the Board of Supervisors.

Regularly passed and adopted this 2nd day of June 2015

AYES and in favor of said resolution:

Supervisors:

CAROLE GROOM

DAVE PINE

DON HORSLEY

WARREN SLOCUM

ADRIENNE J. TISSIER

NOES and against said resolution:

Supervisors:

NONE

Absent Supervisors:

NONE

Carole Groom

President, Board of Supervisors  
County of San Mateo  
State of California

Certificate of Delivery

I certify that a copy of the original resolution filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County has been delivered to the President of the Board of Supervisors.

Mina Lim Acting Deputy  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors