

# New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for the February 8, 2023 meeting held hybrid (virtually and in person at DVS offices)  
representing the meeting for Manhattan

## Members

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### Present:

Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)	Linda Ollis (Staten Island)
Mercedes Elias (Queens)	Joe Bello (Bronx)
Todd Haskins (Manhattan)	John Rowan (Queens)
Jennifer Kamrowski (Manhattan)	Peter Kauffmann (Queens)
Paul Dietrich (Staten Island)	

### Absent:

Charles Hernandez (Bronx)	Andrew Walcott (Brooklyn)
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Note: Awaiting board member to be appointed by Speaker's Office.

## Minutes

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- Wendy McClinton (Chair) commenced the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Thanked everyone for attending and welcomed staff from the Department of Veterans Services on the call. Began meeting by having Veterans Advisory Board members introduce themselves and turned it over to DVS staff to introduce themselves. VAB member Joe Bello notes that it is his last meeting while serving on the board.

**Old business:** There is no old business to discuss.

### Presentation:

Chair Wendy McClinton introduces Commissioner Hendon to share Department of Veteran Services (DVS) updates.

Commissioner Hendon briefed about the process to volunteer to serve on local community boards ([www.nyc.gov/vetcommunityboards](http://www.nyc.gov/vetcommunityboards)), deadline for non-profits to apply for city council funding ([www.nyc.gov/vetcouncilfunding](http://www.nyc.gov/vetcouncilfunding)), and the Joseph P. Dwyer program provided by NY states for veteran peer-to-peer activities ([www.nyc.gov/site/veterans/community/Dwyer-peer-to-peer-program.page](http://www.nyc.gov/site/veterans/community/Dwyer-peer-to-peer-program.page)). The Veteran Business Leadership Association can assist with signing up for the Dwyer funds ([www.nycvbla.org](http://www.nycvbla.org)).

Commissioner turns it Jason Loughran who introduces new directors under his purview:

- 1) Housing and Support Services (Lamarr Wheeler) – serving homeless veterans or those facing eviction.
- 2) Veterans Benefits Services (Philip Du) – assist with processing disability claims.
- 3) Care Coordination Services (Dr. Lauren D’Mello) – facilitates all requests coming into DVS, connecting them to services and non-profit organizations.

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services can be reached at [www.nyc.gov/vets](http://www.nyc.gov/vets), 212-416-5250, [connect@veterans.nyc.gov](mailto:connect@veterans.nyc.gov), and / or [@nycveterans](#) on social media.

Wendy turns the floor to Paul Vallone to speak on behalf of the Speaker’s office. Paul briefs that DVS is focused on getting more veterans to sit on their local community boards and increase their civic engagement. Briefs about council grants and discretionary funds available for veteran service organizations. Pesach Osina works in Speaker’s office covering community engagement.

Commissioner recognizes Chair Robert Holden on the call and the Chair invites Chair Holden to speak. Chair Holden briefed about the veterans’ resource center and the chair is focused on getting funding set aside for veterans’ organizations. Briefed the hearing regarding student veterans attending CUNY. Reinforced wanting more veterans to serve on local community boards. Also discussed private rooms at Borden Housing for veterans.

Council Member Robert Holden 718-366-3900 • email: [rholden@council.nyc.gov](mailto:rholden@council.nyc.gov) • Address: 58-38 69th St. Maspeth, NY 11378 • Chair NYC Council Veterans Committee

Wendy opens the floor for questions after presenting Joe Bello with award for his service on the Veterans Advisory Board.

**Public Comments:** The following comments were submitted to the board during the virtual meeting and were addressed throughout the course of the meeting. Both questions and responses are provided.

**Victoria Falk:** Representing The New American Chamber of Commerce, 26 Court St, Suite 701, Brooklyn, NY is offering free membership for Veterans who want to start business or become an entrepreneur. Contact Victoria Falk at (347)658-8459 or [victoriafalk777@gmail.com](mailto:victoriafalk777@gmail.com).

**Kevin Meggett:** Director of Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program at BVSJ. Briefed that they also have employment services, food pantry, counseling, and suicide prevention. Kevin Meggett, Black Veterans for Social Justice ([kmeggett@bvsj.org](mailto:kmeggett@bvsj.org)), Jose Rios, Black Veterans for Social Justice ([joserios@bvsj.org](mailto:joserios@bvsj.org)). Contact information for Black Veterans for Social Justice: 718-852-6004 / [www.bvsj.org](http://www.bvsj.org) / 665 Willoughby Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11206.

**Kevin Meggett:** Is DVS’ position to service homelessness or eradicate it?

- **Response:** Commissioner Hendon responds housing is a primary focus of DVS and they are working to get under “functional zero” which is under 400. Most recent count from

HUD is 482 and the office is continually trying to work to reduce this number to functional zero.

**Kevin Meggett:** How feasible is it for New York City to create veteran government housing?

- Response: Commissioner Hendon responds this is something they have been considering and speaking with NYCHA about. DVS cannot approve this, but they can push the issue with the housing authority.

Wendy stated that the next meeting we will follow up on any questions that were emailed in.

**Meeting adjourned.**

**Next meeting:** 6 pm April 19, 2023

Submitted by: Mercedes Elias, Secretary