



County of Sonoma
Agenda Item
Summary Report

Clerk of the Board
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

APPROVED
SEP 18 2018

Agenda Item Number: 7
(This Section for use by Clerk of the Board Only.)

	AYE	NO
GORIN	✓	
RABBITT	✓	
ZANE	✓	
GORE	✓	
HOPKINS	✓	

THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT IS A
CORRECT COPY OF THE ORIGINAL
ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE.

ATTEST: **SEP 18 2018**

SHERYL BRATTON, Clerk/Secretary
BY *[Signature]*
DEPUTY CLERK/ASST. SECRETARY

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Board Agenda Date: September 18, 2018

Vote Requirement: Majority

Department or Agency Name(s): General Services Department

Staff Name and Phone Number:
Caroline Judy, Director: 565-8058

Supervisorial District(s):
All

Title: Veterans Memorial Building Use Policy

Recommended Actions:

Adopt the "Veteran's Memorial Building Use Policy" to establish and clarify scheduling, fee, and other usage policies regarding uses of the Sonoma County Veterans Memorial Buildings by Veterans organizations, Veterans and community users.

Executive Summary:

Since February 2016, General Services has been working with the Veterans Building Advisory Committee to obtain general agreement on revisions to the Veterans Memorial Building Use Policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2005. Over the past thirteen years different approaches to management of the Veterans Buildings had created challenges to policy implementation and confusion as to the type of public event where building use charges would apply. Recognizing that the issue of charging fees for public events has been a persistent complaint from Veterans groups, General Services requested that the Veterans Memorial Building Advisory Committee ("Advisory Committee") assist by identifying potential changes to the Policy. The revision process with Veteran representatives and the Committee itself was undertaken resulting in the proposed policy which was unanimously approved by the Advisory Committee on August 14, 2018 and is presented for your Board's consideration.

The proposed Policy retains the primary use of the Veterans Memorial buildings for Veterans association business meetings and memorials, and augments the existing policy by allowing for Veterans association sponsored public events without use fees, when those events are for patriotic purposes or held specifically for the purpose of fundraising to benefit Veterans and their families, and by providing for discounted use fees for individual Veterans personal events.

Discussion:

The County of Sonoma owns seven Veterans Memorial buildings. These facilities serve residents by providing facilities where Veterans groups, individuals, non-profit, and fraternal organizations may gather, and provide arts, faith-based, and other events supporting the community. Veterans' organizations typically use the facilities for regular meetings, memorials, and fundraisers. The buildings

also function as emergency evacuation centers and shelters in the event of disaster. Over a number of years the County has explored several different models for management of events, Veterans building operations and maintenance.

From 1978 to 2012, Regional Parks managed the Veterans buildings. Recognizing the challenges and expense of maintaining the facilities, the Board of Supervisors transferred to General Services the responsibility for maintenance of all of the Veterans buildings, and event management responsibility for Guerneville and Sonoma. Through a competitive solicitation process a subcontractor was hired to handle event management at Santa Rosa, Petaluma and Cotati. Following the termination of the subcontractor in January 2017, General Services assumed overall responsibility of all the facilities. Currently General Services manages events, operates and maintains the Veterans Memorial buildings in Sonoma, Guerneville, Petaluma and Cotati. General Services maintains the Santa Rosa and Cloverdale Veterans Memorial Buildings while the event management is performed by the Sonoma County Fair and Exposition and the American Legion Post #293 respectively. The Sebastopol Veterans Memorial Building is maintained and operated by the Sebastopol Center for the Arts.

There are a number of large fundraisers attended by the public and held each year at the Veterans buildings. The current Board-adopted Veterans Use Policy requires that Veterans organizations are charged a building use fee for fundraising events open to the public where admission is charged. As previously described there have been challenges in implementing the existing policy of charging for these types of events. Currently there are annually 250 free Veterans bookings at the Santa Rosa Veterans building, and over 600 free Veterans bookings combined at the Sonoma (251), Petaluma (245), Cotati (11), and Guerneville (105) buildings. This provision of the policy has led to frustration on the part of Veterans organizations over what qualifies as a no-charge event and presents challenges for the administration of event reservations. General Services has been working with Advisory Committee members since February 2016, as documented below, to obtain general agreement on revisions to the policy and to address the complaints raised by veterans groups.

In February 2016, the Advisory Committee, which is comprised of 8 Board-appointed veteran representatives, began to address the issue of charged vs. uncharged use of the buildings by Veterans groups. They started by researching what practice was used in other Counties in California for the use of the buildings by Veterans groups. In February 2017, an Ad-Hoc committee submitted to the Advisory Committee the first draft of recommendations for the revised policy. The Ad-Hoc committee continued meeting with General Services' staff and numerous Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) throughout 2017 and into early 2018 to revise the policy recommendations based upon input from VSO's. In February 2018, the Advisory Committee held a special meeting to review the proposed policy revisions and determine the next steps in presenting their recommendation to the County. Based on feedback during the special meeting, further revisions were made to the proposed policy and subsequently on August 14th 2018, at a regularly scheduled meeting, the Advisory Committee voted to approve sending the proposed policy revision to the Board of Supervisors. This action passed with a 7-0 vote, with one member abstaining.

Among other things, the proposed Veterans Use Policy would allow fundraisers for the purpose of benefiting Veterans and their families in need, without building rental fee charges. Also, the policy clarifies and confirms that no building rental fees will be charged Veterans' organizations for their

regular meetings, ceremonies, or events in line with patriotic purposes (whether on specified days or otherwise qualifying as “patriotic” events). The attached comparison chart illustrates the differences between the current and proposed policies.

The proposed policy represents two years-worth of work by representatives of the Veterans Memorial Building Advisory Committee, the culmination of three meetings of the full Advisory Committee, and many hours of General Services’ staff time. Some VSO’s would like to see entirely free use regardless of the type of patriotic, fraternal and/or individual building uses and may continue to express those desires. The unanimous vote of the Veterans Memorial Building Advisory Committee illustrates the best outcome possible to this long standing issue.

Prior Board Actions:

June 5, 2018 – Approved amendment to Resolution #94-0290 regarding Veterans Memorial Buildings Advisory Committee. Approved multiple license agreements between the County and Sonoma County Fair and Exposition, American Legion Post #293, VFW Post # 1929, and VFW Post # 1943.

June 20, 2017 – Approved extension of event management agreement with Sonoma County Fair for the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial building.

March 21, 2017 – Adopted a Resolution to increase the FY 16-17 expenditure appropriations by \$125,700 to support operating expenses incurred as a result of an interim assumption of management responsibilities over the Cotati, Petaluma and Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Buildings by General Services Department. Of that amount, \$55,180 was requested from General Fund Contingency.

June 23, 2015 – 1) Authorized General Services Director to authorize adjustments to the current rate structure on a case-by-case basis for the Cotati, Guerneville, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, and Sonoma buildings to allow rentals for smaller blocks of time. 2) Authorized General Services to establish a rental rate pilot program in Cloverdale to determine a market based fee structure that will result in increased facility use. 3) Authorized General Services Director to execute a license agreement with the Cloverdale Veterans group for transfer of operational and management control of the Cloverdale Veterans Building.

July 31, 2012 – Executed 5 year concession agreement with United Camps, Conferences and Retreats for management of the Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and Cotati Veterans Memorial Buildings.

July 26, 2005 – Adopted the existing “Fee Waiver and Free Use Policy,” which applies to Veterans’ organization uses open to the public for a fee.

March 2, 1994 – Approved resolution #94-0290 adopting updated administrative policy on advisory body roles and relationships for the Veterans Memorial Buildings Advisory Committee.

Strategic Plan Alignment Goal 4: Civic Services and Engagement

Fiscal Summary			
Expenditures	FY 18-19 Adopted	FY 19-20 Projected	FY 20-21 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			
Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:			
<p>It is unclear whether there will be a fiscal impact as a result of this policy change. Since the policy change would largely bring conformity to existing practices as to when to not charge Veterans groups for uses, if there is not an increase from the current level of free use then there should be minimal budget impact. However, if Veterans organizations increase their free use of the buildings then there will be a corresponding reduction in the number of hours and revenue associated with paying users. Staff will monitor the impact of the proposed changes to the use policy and report back to the Board if the changes result in significant revenue losses.</p>			
Staffing Impacts			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A – I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):			
None.			
Attachments:			
Attachment 1: Veterans Use Policy Attachment 2: Use Policy Comparison			
Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:			

Veterans Memorial Building Use Policy

County of Sonoma

The County owns and controls seven Veterans Memorial building facilities and provides these facilities to Veterans groups, community organizations and the public for beneficial use of the buildings, equipment, and parking areas. This Policy establishes guidelines regarding use of the Veterans facilities by Veterans organizations and associations (as defined in the California Military and Veterans Code) (“Veterans associations”) and clarifies the applicability of reservation rental rates, equipment use, event set-up, custodial services, event staffing support, parking, and fee waiver procedures. This Policy shall apply at all County Veterans facilities, whether managed by County directly or by any third party.

I. SCHEDULING

- A. To best ensure the benefits of the reserved uses provided for herein, Veterans associations shall annually submit reservations and any changes to their previously scheduled reservations for all Veterans association meetings and events. To ensure room availability and avoid potential reservation conflicts, each Veterans facility shall maintain a reservation management system (which may be online) and require all users to submit reservation forms for all uses. All regular business meetings and events will be booked into the reservation management system to ensure there are no scheduling conflicts. Reservations shall be completed by each of the respective Veterans associations and confirmed by the building representatives of the Veterans Advisory Board, and furnished to the respective Veterans facility booking office (“Booking Office”) by November 10 for the upcoming year. By November 30 each year, the facility Booking Office will provide a confirmation of all Veterans reservations for the coming year. Reservations will not be accepted more than three years in advance of an event.
- B. In the event, due to unforeseen circumstances, that a change to an existing reservation(s) is required or additional reservation(s) are desired or become necessary, a Veterans association shall submit requested changes/additions to the Booking Office to determine availability of facility. Veterans associations, business meetings and memorials shall always have priority scheduling over other unscheduled uses, except when the facility is being used for disaster response or other County-determined emergency activities. Other Veterans association events shall have priority booking over public event scheduling requests received at the same time.
- C. Notwithstanding any reservation for Veteran use, the remainder of each facility may be separately reserved and used by other users if County and/or the Booking Office determines that the other use will not interfere with the Veterans use.

II. VETERANS EVENTS -- FEES

A. Patriotic and Meeting Events

1. Veterans associations shall not be charged a building use fee for use of the Veterans facilities for regularly-scheduled meetings, social events restricted to members, family, and invited guests, or commemoration ceremonies and memorial services for deceased veterans.
2. Veterans associations shall not be charged a building use fee for use of the Veterans facilities (or for any parking areas therefor) for events on nationally-recognized patriotic event days as identified in Appendix A and for other events in line with the group's patriotic purposes. "Patriotic purposes" shall mean events primarily and principally involving celebration and promotion of the United States of America, the armed forces, and/or associated themes. "Patriotic purposes" shall not include other fraternal and/or benevolent activities or events not principally celebrating or promoting the United States of America, the armed forces, and/or associated themes, such as general philanthropic events, fundraisers, or festivals. No building use fees will be charged on these patriotic event days or events.
3. Facility spaces shall be provided for free in as-is condition in standard set-up arrangement. If the meeting or event requires the use of extra building equipment (such as tables, chairs, or service items), extra janitorial services, and/or other extra County staff or contracted resources for additional set-up/take down, then the applicable general rates will be charged for these expenses.
4. For all such events, the sponsoring Veterans' association must execute a reservation form and license Agreement and provide Proof of Insurance.

B. Benevolent or Fraternal Events

1. General benevolent and/or fraternal events conducted or sponsored by a Veterans association, such as general philanthropic fundraisers or festivals open to the general public, shall be subject to payment of a building use fee and all other County equipment and staff rates.
2. Unless a "patriotic" or meeting event as allowed for free by Section II, A. above, all events where general admission or any other gate fee is charged shall be subject to payment of a building use fee.
3. Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, for Veterans association events (including those open to the general public, and where general admission is charged) for the purpose of fundraising to benefit Veterans and their families, no building use fees will be charged.

4. If the event requires the use of building equipment (such as tables, chairs or service items), janitorial services, and/or other County staff or contracted resources for set-up/take down, then the applicable general rates will be charged for these expenses.
5. For all such events, the sponsoring Veterans' association must execute a reservation form and license Agreement and provide Proof of Insurance. The general public Booking Procedure shall apply to such events, including for booking priority, deposits, and cancellation requirements.

C. Individual Veteran (Non-Association) Uses

1. Use of a Veterans facility by an individual Veteran for personal use (*i.e.*, an event not directly related to a Veterans association), such as weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, or otherwise private events, will be charged the current building use fee, less 50%.
2. If the event requires the use of building equipment (such as tables, chairs, kitchen or service items), janitorial services, and/or other County staff or contracted resources for set-up/take down, then the applicable general rates will be charged for these expenses.
3. For all such events, the individual Veteran must execute a reservation form and License Agreement and provide Proof of Insurance. The general public Booking Procedure shall apply to such events, including for booking priority, deposits, and cancellation requirements.

D. Fee Waivers

1. Nothing in this Policy modifies or precludes County's ability, in its sole discretion though the Board of Supervisors, to approve fee waiver(s) for any particular use of any Veterans facility, in accordance with County's fee waiver general policy.

III. ALCOHOL LICENSE REQUIREMENT

- A. All Veterans and associations shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to alcohol at the Veterans facilities, including any requirements to obtain a California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control One-Day Special Events License for events open to the general public where alcohol is to be served (unless otherwise covered by existing or other ABC license).
- B. Security is required for all events open to the public where alcohol is to be served, including for all events outside of designated Veterans lounges.

IV. ROOM SET-UP/ TAKE DOWN AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The County General Services building management (or contracted third parties) shall be responsible for the upkeep, functionality, and other operational aspects of all the Veterans facilities, to include routine janitorial cleaning, room set-up and take down configurations, post-event return of venue to pre-event configuration, and routine facility security.

V. CANCELLATIONS OF MEETINGS OR EVENTS

Notice must be provided to the Booking Office of any cancellation of any meeting or event at least 7 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting or event. Failure to timely provide the required notice of cancellation may result in the scheduling party being charged a fee for set-up and take-down.

VI. SECURITY AT EVENTS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Each scheduling party shall provide security for their events, at levels and according to other terms and conditions as may be required by County and/or the respective facility Booking Office.

Appendix A

United States Patriotic Holidays & Dates

Name	Date
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January, 3 rd Monday
Washington's Birthday (President's Day)	February, 3 rd Monday
Armed Forces Day	May, 3 rd Saturday
Memorial Day	May, Last Monday
Flag Day	June 14
Army Birthday	June 14
Independence Day	July 4
Coast Guard Birthday	August 4
Purple Heart Day	August 7
Labor Day	September, 1 st Monday
Patriot Day	September 11
Air Force Birthday	September 18
POW/MIA Recognition Day	September, 3 rd Friday
Gold Star Mother's Day	September, Last Sunday
Columbus Day	October, 2 nd Monday
Navy Birthday	October 13th
Navy Day	October 27
Marine Corp Birthday	November 10
Veterans Day	November 11
Pearl Harbor Day	December 7

Veteran Memorial Building Use Policy Comparison

DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

	Types of Events	Existing Policy	Proposed Policy	Policy Section
Patriotic and Meeting Events	Veterans associations’ regularly-scheduled meetings	Free	Free	II. A. 1
	Veterans associations’ social events restricted to members, family, and invited guests	Free	Free	II. A. 1
	Commemoration ceremonies and memorial services for deceased veterans.	Free	Free	II. A. 1
	Patriotic events, as listed, or celebrating the United States of America, the armed forces, and/or associated themes	Free	Free	II. A. 2
Benevolent or Fraternal Events	General Veterans Fundraisers	Charge	Charge	II. B. 1 (II. B. 2)
	Veteran Fundraisers Benefitting Veterans and Families	Charge	Free	II. B. 3
Individual Veteran (Non-Association) Uses	Personal use by veterans (Weddings, Birthdays, etc.)	Charge	Charge with 50% discount	II. C. 1
	Public Use (Non-veterans)	Charge	(No Change)	Existing
Government Use	Government Use	Charge unless waived	(No Change)	Existing
	Disaster Use	No Charge	(No Change)	Existing

Fee Waivers: Nothing in this Policy modifies or precludes County’s ability, in its sole discretion through the Board of Supervisors, to approve fee waiver(s) for any particular use of any Veterans facility, in accordance with County’s fee waiver general policy. Visit [this page](#) to learn more about the fee waiver process: <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Board-of-Supervisors/Fee-Waiver-Requests/>