



Chelan County Veteran Advisory Board May 2026 Meeting Minutes



May 21st, 2026
1pm-2:30pm
Location: Economic Services Conference Room (400 Washington Street)/ Zoom
Meeting Contact:
 Anna Witherington
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 Chelan County Veteran Service Office
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Board Members Present:

Name	Position	In Attendance?
<i>Jim Walters</i>	<i>Chair</i>	X
<i>Robin Bloch</i>	<i>Vice Chair</i>	X
<i>April Featherkile</i>	<i>Voting Member</i>	X
<i>Butch Sims</i>	<i>Voting Member</i>	X
<i>Jim Cook</i>	<i>Voting Member</i>	Excused
<i>Josh Williams</i>	<i>Voting Member</i>	Excused
<i>Tony Sandoval</i>	<i>Non-Voting Member</i>	X

Others in attendance: Lance Merz, Sarahbeth Simonson, Elgin Shaw

I. CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Called to order at: 1300

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The "Public Comment" period provides an opportunity for members of the public to address the Veteran Advisory Board on items either not on the agenda or not listed as a public hearing. The Veteran Advisory Board Chairperson will ask if there are any citizens wishing to address the Veteran Advisory Board. When recognized, please provide your name and address and state the matter of your interest. Citizen comments will be limited to three minutes.

Lance Merz – He was here to represent the Douglas County VAB as the Chair. He spoke about how we can work together to best serve communities. A river should not separate us, the goal is to help veterans. He ran through a list of pros & cons with the board. Some of the main concerns were the budget, slowing down the process to make sure it is done properly, and any confusion with oversight and amongst veterans. Some of the pros included having a VSO Supervisor who can process higher level claims, more outreach, it could become a "one-stop shop," and it would strengthen the possibility for federal grants.

Sarahbeth Simonson – Douglas County Veteran Service Officer. She stated that she is glad to be working together for the potential merger, and talking through all of the different pros and cons.

Elgin Shaw – Represented as a member of the Douglas County VAB. He was there to listen and spoke about how he wanted to make sure that the merger looked at all the assets and angles to ensure it is done the right way. He urged to slow things down a bit – not to stop the process, but to make sure all aspects had been considered.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS

Approval of agenda and minutes from the April 16th, 2026 Meeting

Motioned by: Robin Bloch Seconded by: Butch Sims Motion carried: 4-0

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Purple Heart – *Staff has been looking at different locations to host the Purple Heart event. The Convention Center is the only indoor space that has the capacity needed. The cost of food is expensive, and they do not allow for outside food or drink. Staff wanted to discuss with the board about alternative locations. Staff & the board discussed potentially looking into Washington Park to host the event. Staff will continue to look for more locations.*

B. Draft proposal for Potential Douglas County Merger – *Staff sent out the draft proposal for the potential of a merger prior to the meeting for review with intention of discussing the draft during the meeting. There was a conversation had amongst the group including the Douglas County VAB members.*

The Chelan County VAB members discussed wanting to have a meeting to discuss the merger. They would like to host an executive session to have conversation. The Chair will work with Staff to schedule the meeting.

C. VSO Outreach – *John will be expanding his outreach to Entiat.*

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Mission Statement – *The Chair of the Board would like to see a mission statement created. There was deliberation about if a mission statement specific to the VAB was necessary. The Chelan County website was pulled up which contains RCW 73.08.035. It was mentioned that perhaps the board should wait until it has been determined if the two counties will be merging their VABs before creating a mission statement. There were some members who wanted to wait, and other members that did not feel it was necessary, and some members wanted to move forward with it. It was determined that there will be 15 minutes on the next meeting agenda to discuss.*

Motion to postpone discussion until the next meeting of the Chelan County Veteran Advisory Board.

Motioned by: Butch Sims Seconded by: Robin Bloch Passed Unanimously 4-0

VI. REPORTING

B. Veteran Assistance Fund – *Staff provided the VAB with the expenses of the Veteran Assistance Fund since the last meeting. All members in attendance signed the expense sheet.*

VII. OTHER

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at: 14:30