

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Carolyn Gallaway, Clerk of the Board
Adiel McKnight, Deputy Clerk of the Board

DATE: May 5, 2025

SUBJECT: Veterans Advisory Board By-Laws

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) meetings were cancelled in 2023 and 2024 due to lack of a quorum. On December 17, 2024 the Veterans Advisory Board was finally able to reach a quorum, and hold their annual meeting.

The reason that the VAB has had difficulty reaching a quorum, is the current by-laws state a quorum is five members. As there are only five positions, there would need to be 100% participation, as written. Staff learned on April 30, 2025 that one member is resigning.

As there is a special VAB meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 3:00 p.m., staff is requesting that the by-laws be revised to address the quorum issue.

ANALYSIS:

Attached is the draft Veterans Advisory Board By-Laws for consideration. Staff has been working with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office for guidance.

These updated by-laws replace the previous, outdated version dated October 23, 2015, in its entirety. Since there were so many changes and a lot of work went into the update, we weren't able to provide a redline version. The revised by-laws reflect current operational needs and governance standards, ensuring greater clarity and alignment with best practices.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board review the draft Veterans Advisory Board By-Laws and approve them.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator


Date

2025

DRAFT

Jefferson County Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) By-Laws



DRAFT

Jefferson County
Veterans Advisory
Board

(VAB) By-Laws

04/25/2025

Revised Draft By-laws, April 25, 2025

The Jefferson County Advisory Board (VAB) was established

by Resolution 39-15

Jefferson County VAB By-Laws

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Jefferson County VAB By-Laws

1. NAME

This organization, shall be known as the **JEFFERSON COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD**, hereinafter referred to as the VAB.

2. AUTHORITY FOR THE VAB

The Jefferson County Veterans Relief Fund was established per RCW 73.08.080 to provide tax funds for the provision of emergency relief for funding for indigent veterans. Veterans must be a resident of Jefferson County and show proof of residency. Acceptable forms of proof include, but are not limited to: driver's license with Jefferson County address, utility bill in their name, etc. These funds help pay for certain short term, emergency assistance with food, shelter, utilities and other necessities of life.

It has been the position of Jefferson County that all veterans who have provided proof of residency in Jefferson County and have served our country honorably, deserve to be treated equally and with respect, dignity, compassion and fairness.

On January 3, 1994, the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) adopted Ordinance Number 01-0113-94 authorizing the execution of an agreement between Jefferson County and the VAB for the disbursement of funds from the Jefferson County Veterans Relief Fund.

RCW 73.08.035 requires that the legislative authority for each county establish a Veterans Advisory Board and solicit representatives from either local branches of nationally recognized veterans' service organizations or the veterans' community at large, or both, to serve on the Board.

VAB meets the requirements of a Veterans Advisory Board. Jefferson County Resolution Number 39-15 made it transparent and clear to the public that Jefferson County is fulfilling the requirement of RCW 73.08.035.

3. PURPOSE OF THE VAB

The purpose of VAB is:

- 1) To assist the Veterans organizations of Jefferson County in carrying out their duties as prescribed by their respective organizations.
- 2) To be the organization to work with the County in the disbursement of funds from the Jefferson County Veterans Relief Fund through a voucher system.

Jefferson County VAB By-Laws

4. DUTIES OF THE VAB

VAB will have two Service Officers, or their designees, appointed in accordance with these By-Laws, provide the following services to meet with local Veterans and;

- 1) Review all Veterans Relief Fund applications in accordance with any guidelines or agreements established by and between VAB, the County, and SH Bill 1189.
- 2) Approve and sign vouchers per established guidelines or agreements.

5. MEMBERSHIP, TERM, AND APPOINTMENT FOR VAB

The membership shall consist of appointees from each nationally chartered veterans' organization in Jefferson County (including but not limited to: American Legion, VFW, and DAV) and at least one (1) Officer-at-Large.

The Service Officer-at-Large will be recommended by the VAB Officers and will serve a term of one (1) year.

No fewer than a majority of the board members shall be members from nationally recognized veterans' service organizations and only veterans are eligible to serve as board members.

All members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

6. NO COMPENSATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE VAB

Pursuant to RCW 73.08.035(3), service on the board is voluntary. The county legislative authority may provide for reimbursement to board members, service officers, or designees, for expenses incurred.

7. VAB OFFICERS, DUTIES, AND POWERS

Immediately following the first meeting every year, the members present shall meet for the purpose of electing Officers for the ensuing year.

Officers: The Officers shall consist of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary, all of whom shall hold office for the ensuing year, or until their successors are duly elected.

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CHAIR:

- a) Chair regular and special meetings of the VAB.
- b) Be the liaison between the VAB and the County staff.
- c) Coordinate with county staff regarding non-profit status.

VICE CHAIR:

In case of absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of that position.

SECRETARY/TREASURER:

The Secretary/Treasurer shall ensure that the Jefferson County's Veteran's Relief Program Coordinator is carrying out the following duties:

- a) Keeping VAB members informed of updates, meetings, and other beneficial information.
- b) Keeping the minutes of the meetings of the members and cause them to be recorded in a book kept for that purpose.
- c) Providing the VAB with quarterly financial updates.
- d) Maintaining an updated VAB contact list, and distributing to members.

8. PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL OF VAB OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

The JCVVAB may remove any officer, whom they elect by the following procedure: Any member of the JCVVAB may offer a motion for removal at a meeting. If the motion is seconded, it shall be considered and voted on at the next regular meeting or at a duly noticed special meeting of the JCVVAB. Approval of a motion to remove shall require a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

The VAB may recommend removal of any member from the VAB by the following procedure: Any member of the VAB may offer a motion for recommending removal of a member serving on the VAB at a meeting. Approval of a motion to recommend removal shall require a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. The recommendation for removal is then put forth to the BoCC, who may remove a VAB member for cause by majority vote.

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As stated in Section 19, a VAB member who accrues three (3) consecutive, unexcused absences from regular or special meetings, or is unable to be reached via normal channels of communication (e.g., after efforts have been made to contact via phone, email or letter), may be recommended to the BoCC for removal from the VAB by the Chair with the concurrence of a majority of the members.

9. VAB MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

VAB members shall:

- Act as a participant, reviewer, and advisor regarding the VAB's statutorily mandated duties.
- Serve at the pleasure of the BoCC.
- Keep the VAB discussions and activities focused on topics relevant to the VAB's duties.
- Attend regular and special meetings of the VAB and take action on agenda items.
- Read background material, review agenda and notes for each meeting of the VAB, and prepare questions and comments in advance of the meeting, as needed.
- Be a respectful participant, treating others with respect and kindness.

10. REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE FOR VAB

VAB Regular Meetings are held in the Jefferson County Courthouse.

VAB shall meet at least once per calendar year, or more if needed to:

- 1) Conduct any necessary business.
- 2) To establish the schedule of Service Officers to review and approve the Veterans Relief Fund Applications submitted to Jefferson County.

All regular and special meetings are open to the public as required by Chapter 42.30 RCW, the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA).

11. QUORUM REQUIREMENT

A quorum is required to be present before an official, regular or special meeting of the VAB can take place.

A simple majority of the members of the VAB shall constitute a quorum.

Members may meet in-person or hybrid.

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12. CONFLICT OF INTEREST/APPEARANCE OF FAIRNESS FOR MEMBERS

Members of the VAB shall not be disqualified from participating in any meetings, or in the preparation of any reports, recommendations or correspondence of the VAB based on any potential or actual conflict of interest. A VAB member is not prohibited from using their general expertise to educate the VAB or provide general information to the VAB on a decision item.

However, members of the VAB shall disclose personal or business interests that may conflict with a matter of discussion by the committee immediately that might tend to prejudice the member's participation in any meetings, reports, recommendations and correspondence of the VAB.

The VAB members shall comply with the code of ethics for municipal officers, chapter 42.23 RCW, in the performance of their duties. Specifically, at any time a proposal is received by the VAB that appears to benefit any member of the committee that person shall recuse themselves from any decision related to that proposal.

13. REPORTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE VAB

Reports, recommendations and correspondence from the VAB shall be made by consensus, if possible, and will seek opportunities to develop group solutions and resolve conflicts. To reach a consensus decision, VAB members will make proposals, hold additional discussion, and then the Chair will call for the consensus decision on the proposal.

If consensus is not possible, then reports, recommendations and correspondence shall be submitted to the BoCC on behalf of a majority of the members over the signature of the Chair. Minority reports, if any, shall be attached to, and forwarded with such reports, recommendations or correspondence without comment by the Chair.

Concerning items of less formal advice: after discussion in one or more meetings, the VAB shall adopt, by consensus, a written report on the VAB's findings.

14. COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT IS REQUIRED

Because the Board is required to consider VAB recommendations before taking final action, all meetings of the VAB are subject to and shall conform with the provisions of the OPMA.

15. NOTICE OF EACH MEETING

A meeting of the VAB will be either a regular meeting pursuant to the regular meeting schedule in Section 11 or a special meeting.

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A meeting of the VAB that is not conducted in the place or the time posted in the regular meeting schedule is a special meeting. Special meetings shall comply with the special meeting notice requirements in OPMA, RCW 42.30.080.

For special meetings, RCW 42.30.080 requires at least 24-hour notice that specifies the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted. Notice for a special meeting must be: (a) Posted on an agency's website; (b) Prominently displayed at the main entrance of the agency's principal location and the meeting site if it is not held at the agency's principal location; and, (c) Notice given to each local newspaper of general circulation and local radio or television station that the County has on file with the Board a written request to be notified of such special meeting or of all special meetings.

16. AGENDA FOR EACH MEETING

The Chair shall place the interests of the committee above any personal interest. The Chair shall place items on the upcoming agenda, which shall allow for public comment prior to taking final action, consistent with RCW 42.30.240(1).

The VAB shall make the agenda of each regular and special meeting of the governing body available online no later than twenty-four hours in advance of the published start time of the meeting.

VAB members wishing to add item(s) on an agenda shall consult with the county staff who will ask the Chair for permission to place the item(s) on a future agenda.

17. ABSENCES

VAB members shall notify the Chair and the VAB staff if the member is unable to attend a VAB regular meeting. The Chair, with assistance the VAB staff, shall document the excuse provided for the absences in question. If no excuse is given for a particular absence, it shall be considered unexcused.

At the start of each meeting, the Chair will ask the county staff to call the roll of VAB members. For any member absent, the Chair shall announce whether the member's absence is excused or unexcused. The county staff will record the roll call, and notify the Chair if a quorum is present.

The VAB staff will maintain an ongoing attendance record for all VAB members. The official minutes will record which members were present at VAB meetings.

A VAB member who accrues three (3) consecutive, unexcused absences from regular or special meetings may be recommended to the BoCC for removal from the VAB by the Chair with the concurrence of a majority of the members.

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18. CONDUCT OF EACH MEETING OF THE VAB

- a. All meetings of the VAB shall comply fully with OPMA, including but not limited to: (a) The limitation on taking action on items not listed on the notice for a special meeting; and, (2) OPMA's public comment requirements.
- b. VAB meetings shall follow procedural guidance set forth in Jefferson County Resolution Number 50-22, Open Public Meeting Act Guidelines for County Boards, Commissions & Committees.
- c. Members and visitors at the meetings will treat each other with respect, will not monopolize meeting time, and will listen to and try to understand each other's views.
- d. The meeting agenda shall be constituted as follows:
 - i. Call to Order and Roll Call
 - ii. Public Comment
 - iii. Approval/Correction of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s)
 - iv. Committee Reports
 - v. Staff Reports
 - vi. Old Business
 - vii. New Business

19. RECORD OF MEETINGS OF THE VAB

Regular and special meetings of the VAB shall be electronically recorded by audio or video, when possible, and the recording shall be made available online for a minimum of six months.

20. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE VAB

The minutes of all regular and special meetings of the VAB, except executive sessions, shall be promptly recorded and such records shall be open to public inspection. The VAB staff member shall prepare minutes which shall be considered, revised (if necessary), and adopted by the VAB ideally at its next regular or special meeting.

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21. AMENDMENT OF THESE BY-LAWS

These By-Laws may be amended, repealed or altered in whole or in part by a majority vote at any duly organized meeting of the members, provided notice of the proposed change is included in the notice of such meeting, and provided the BoCC approves any By-law amendments by a majority vote.

22. SAVINGS CLAUSE

Should any portion of these By-laws be declared unconstitutional or otherwise contrary to law, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion of these By-laws.

23. EFFECTIVE DATE

These By-Laws for the VAB repeal and replace any By-Laws adopted prior to this date. These Bylaws are effective upon immediately after approval by the BoCC.

(SIGNATURES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE)

Jefferson County VAB By-Laws

ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2025.

JEFFERSON COUNTY VETEERANS' ADVISORY BOARD

Chair

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____ 2025.

JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Heidi Eisenhower, Chair

Greg Brotherton, Member

Heather Dudley-Nollette, Member