

Veterans Assistance Commission

Minutes

For
January 24, 2023

- Call to Order
- Opening Ceremony – Pledge Allegiance to the Flag – Post Colors
- Prayer
- Public Comment
Two organizations were here to present. Not public comment. Presentations before the board.
- Roll call of delegates and alternates
David Allen, Stan Olenjack, Stan Bobka, Jim Grimes, Rich Kuyper, Tim Rehmer, Ed Peters, Richard VanPelt, Dan Horton, Nic Smith, Skip Myers, Michael Lockwood, Wayne Burgess, Joe Mayfield, Tom Nelson, Larry Blanchette, Karl Fritzgerald, Tom Page, Roger Bean, Jim Wasser, Nick Monacelli, Joe Gaca, Manny Quinto
Other present: Mike Peecken Superintendent, Office Staff: Karen Smietanski, Ashley Appleton, and David McCleery
- Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes
A motion was made by Larry Blanchette, 2nd by Roger Bean to approve the minutes of the November meeting. Motion Carried.
- Approval of Financial reports
A motion was made by Roger Bean, 2nd by Rich Kuyper to approve Financials Reports for November Motion Carried.
- Office Report
A motion was made by Rich Kuyper, 2nd by Dan Horton to approve the report. Motion carried. Please see report for details on MVAA, By-laws, etc.
- Old business
- New business
- For the good of the order
- Report of the sick and distressed
- Retire Colors
- Adjourn
A motion was made by Ton Nelson 2nd by Rich Kuyper to adjourn. Motion Carried.

VACKC OFFICE REPORT
February 2023

Veterans Treatment Court (VTC):

* There are currently 10 VTC participants. 1 referral under consideration. We have a graduation coming up if all goes well on March 23rd. All are invited. If the MCL is available, we'd appreciate their helping us out with the colors and pledge that day.?

Transportation:

* In January we had 30 riders with 32 appointments. The bus just got all new tires and brakes for \$2500 on the bus. And now there's a need for a spring to be replaced.

OFFICE

See Back page for report on MVAA and DC trip.

*Karen gave a presentation virtually to the state DHS Dept Mgrs.

*David is still looking for mentors for veteran's court. Please invite him to your post meetings so he can talk about the needs and spread the word.

*Quote for architect is in for the expansion. Copies are available for anyone who wants to see them. If anyone has a suggestion of who to get a second quote from that would be great. We need to see if we can get the plans for the VHA side and the original floor plans for the architect, no matter who we hire, because they need to know the structure.

*Discussion has started on hiring just an administrative assistant that will stay admin and another VSO. The job descriptions are being revamped before we put them out.

*Roger has been volunteering in the office. He has asked to file his and Jim D.'s claims thru us, not DAV.

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Lima Charlie Every Monday Night 7-9 pm 22 Heritage Dr.

*March 6th – Jackie Haas Advisory Council meeting

*March 10th IDVA Director Prince Meeting

*March 14th – PACT Training Virtually with the CBOC

*Ashley NACVSO Advanced Appeals March 15-17

*April 6 – Presentation at the Bourbonnais Public Library

*NACVSO Basic Benefits (Amanda) April 24-28

*April 27th Service Organization Service officer training on the PACT Act, state laws, & VA Healthcare (flyer)

*IACO Conference is May 10-12

*May 20th VAC, PHAT, MCL, & Buddy Check 22 All Vet Golf Outing

*Joint IDVA/IACVAC training May 22-26

*NACVSO Annual Conference Madison WI June 3-9

*HHH will be June 10 this year

VACKC OFFICE REPORT
February 2023

Karen's report from Training in February on MVAA and DC trip:

The Winter Meeting of the IACVAC in East Peoria was well attended. Day 1 was all about the MVAA. We had two representatives from the IL Attorney Generals Office, our Attorney, and two IACVAC Superintendents present most of the day. It was a great day.

The latest changes to the MVAA were recently signed by the Gov. and are in effect. This means we need to move forward with our By-Laws amendments. By-Laws do not preempt State Statute

Other things that do not affect by-laws that were in the latest changes:

1. The county can appoint a Veteran to the Commission
2. The IL Attorney General can if there is or has been a violation of Section 8 or 9 or subsection a, b or c of Section 10 – can enforce –
3. Annual reporting and public availability
4. Formation, composition, operations, and accountability of Commissions & Superintendents
5. Time frames on filling Superintendent Vacancies

We also must adopt our own policies and procedures. We have adopted the counties in the past. We are using theirs as a basis for ours and adapting to ours. There is little to no change. Amanda has been re-typing them.

We must have a:

1. Financial Policy
2. Travel Policy
3. Budget Policy
4. Purchasing Policy
5. Personnel Policy
6. Compensation Policy
7. Ethics Policy

At a minimum

The Leadership NACVSO Meeting in DC was eventful. We heard from a panel of House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Panel. They also listened to some of our concerns. The Executive Director from National Association of Counties. NACVSO is partnering with NACo to support veterans at all levels.

The Green Beret Foundation presented on their programs to help veterans as did Wounded Warrior Project.

We heard from the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Veterans Appeals, Ken Arnold on the progress (or lack thereof) of the Legacy Appeals Claims. We meet the Acting Under Secretary for VA Benefits Joshua Jacobs. And, we met Dr. Shereef Elnaha, the Under Secretary for VHA. I had the opportunity to ask questions to the VHA Liaison for VHA on the issues with rural community care and rural C & P exams.

The big day was “marching” on the hill. As Leaders with NACVSO, we all took time to talk to Congressional members about the NACVSO priorities. The CVSO Act (handout provided) is the biggest. I spent the day with the State Director from New Mexico. The CVSO Act is meant to help states and areas like her that are in areas where funding and services for veterans are dismal. I learned a lot this day. I never thought in a million years I'd ever walk the hall of the Senators or Representatives asking for them to vote on veteran agendas. It was a great honor to be beside the State Director from New Mexico.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Commission for allowing me to take part in Leadership of NACVSO and IACVAC. These opportunities have created new contacts in the VA, the country and taught me things about myself that I didn't know I was capable of. Thank you.