

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting
Wednesday, October 7, 2020
Conference Call via Zoom and Facebook Live beginning at 10:05 a.m.
7105 - NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

Present: Commissioner Ledvina, Chair
Commissioner Connors
Commissioner Cressler
Commissioner Lloyd
Commissioner Pauline
Commissioner Wattnem
Commissioner Whitmore
Commissioner Lloyd
Commissioner Van Horn
Commissioner Hyde

**By Phone
or Zoom:** Recorder, Nancy Morford, IVH
Commissioner McMartin

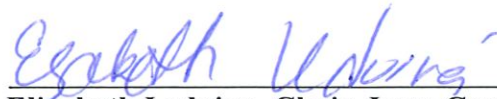
Staff: Steve Lukan, Executive Director, IDVA
Timon Oujiri, IVH Commandant
Karl Lettow, Public Information Officer, IDVA

Guests on Call: Dave Allen, Sen. Grassley's Office
Brenda Safranski, Sen. Ernst's Office
Chris Oliver, Wright County Administrator
Sue Rich, Washington County Administrator
Patty Hamann, Cedar County Administrator
Ed Staszewski, Clinton County Director
Timon Oujiri, IVH Commandant
Rod Derringer - VARO
Julie Simon - Iowa Senate Democratic Caucus Staff
Bob Bird - Iowa Senate Republican Caucus Staff
Richard Witt, Fayette County Commissioner
Doug McQuire, American Legion
James Kesler, American Legion
Gail Graham - Director, Des Moines VA
Sandi Hurtado-Peters: Iowa Department of Management
Jen Watkins-Schoenig, Muscatine CVSO
Athena Delgado, VARO
Amy Muse Iowa American Legion VA&R Committee
David Thornburg: DAV
Lola VanDeWalle , Quad Cities Veterans Outreach
John Derner – American Legion
Jim Peterson
Bryan Clarke, Iowa City VA
Kevin Smith – RF Excel

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Threase Harms, Advocacy Iowa
General Ford – IANG
Jean Gage, Clayton County VA
Todd Schriever, Floyd County VA
Mike Bierl, Greene County VA
Kristi Catrenich, VARO

APPROVED:



Date: 1/19/2021

Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Ledvina followed by a moment of silence.

VA Regional Office Update

Athena Delgado gave an update for the VA Regional Office with information for veterans to use if they are experiencing issues with their claims. They are looking for ways to expand their virtual outreach, with virtual benefit town halls, fairs and personal interviews via Zoom, Facebook Live and WebEx. They are willing to coordinate with county VSOs on local events. Her telephone number is (515) 3237465. She can provide links to postings of past events.

Iowa City VA Medical Center Update

Bryan Clark on behalf of Director Judith Johnson-Mekota gave an update for the Iowa City VAMC. Of note, they have located and surveyed a site for a new clinic in Burlington.

Des Moines VA Medical Center Update

Gail Graham gave an update for the Des Moines VAMC.

Camp Dodge Office Update

Director Steve Lukan provided an update on IDVA and IVC operations.

Veterans Home Update

Commandant Oujiri gave an update for the Iowa Veterans Home.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Commissioner Connors made a motion to approve the minutes from the quarterly meeting of July 1, 2020 and Commissioner McMartin seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to approve the Trust Fund meeting minutes of July 2, 2020 and was seconded by Commissioner Hyde. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Cressler made a motion to approve the Trust Fund meeting minutes of August 6, 2020 and was seconded by Commissioner McMartin. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Van Horn made a motion to approve the Trust Fund meeting minutes of September 3, 2020 and was seconded by Commissioner Wattnem. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Old Business

Tabled proposal from the July meeting. A presentation from Linda Gorkow, Executive Director of the Iowa Food Bank Association and Michelle Book, President & CEO of the Food Bank of Iowa with a proposal for a Partnership with the Commission in a request for \$500,000 to help provide food assistance to veterans in all 99 counties in Iowa. After discussion of the proposal for the requested funds, the Commission choose to table the request because the request does not follow the criteria for the Veterans Project Assistance Program for use of the Veterans License Plate Fund. The commission noted the Iowa Food Bank already receives state funding, and there was no current mechanism in place to ensure veterans would be the beneficiaries of the assistance. Commissioner Hyde motioned to deny the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wattnem. Motion to deny carried unanimously.

New Business

License Plate Fund Applications:

Iowa Highway 20 Iowa Medal of Honor proposal. Proposal for signs along U.S. Hwy 20 for \$32,500. The signs were approved in legislation and suggested to be funded through the License Plate Fund. Commissioner McMartin made motion to approve. Commissioner Van Horn seconded. John Derner added that Indiana has already approved similar measures for its portion of U.S. Hwy 20. Motion carried unanimously.

IVH requested \$6000 to purchase morale t-shirts and badge lanyards for each staff members to be worn at work as a 'thank you' for their service during the unusual times of COVID-19. Commissioner Whitmore motioned to approve. Commissioner Wattnem seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lola VanDeWalle, Founder, Quad Cities Veterans Outreach Davenport requested assistance to replenish depleted food pantry and other supplies, not to include administrative or operational costs. Commissioner Wattnem moved to approve an award of \$25,000 for the replenishment of consumable supplies. Commissioner Pauline seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Dave Thornburg of DAV requested a separate meeting with the commission and a representative of the governor's office to discuss DAV commission participation. The item was scheduled for the January 6th Quarterly Meeting Agenda.

Kevin Smith, Senior Government Affairs representative of RF Excel introduced himself to the commission and informed all, of his company's initiatives and partnerships for future pharmaceutical drug tracking compliance, primarily in federal systems.

Next Commission meeting

The next quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 6th, 2021 at Camp Dodge, Johnston, IA.

Adjournment

Commissioner Connors made motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wattnem seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.