

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting  
Wednesday, July 7, 2010, beginning at 10:00 a.m.  
Camp Dodge, Bldg. A6A  
7105 - NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

**Present:** Darlene McMartin, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs  
Don Delamore, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs  
Becky Dirks Haugsted, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs  
Todd Jacobus, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs  
Francis McAllister, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs  
Steve Mulcahy, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs  
Rosetta Waychus, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs  
Mickey Williams, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

**Staff:** Patrick Palmersheim, Executive Director, IDVA  
Mari Mielke, IDVA - Recording Secretary  
Missy Miller, IDVA, Trust Fund Administrator  
Stan Freeborn, IVH  
Dennis Mack, IVH  
Lisa Purvis, Legislative Liaison, IVH  
Greg Wright, Business Mgr. IVH  
Doug Freeman, IVH

**Guests:** Bill Wallace, newly selected Commissioner but not yet appointed from Governor' (Replaces Jean Schroeder)  
Dan Gannon, VVA  
David Bolton, DAV  
David Thornburg, DAV  
Greg Reed, VARO  
Kathy Barton, Iowa National Guard  
Larry Oik, Report on Veterans Courts  
Al Fryl, MOPH  
Laurel Phipps, past ICVA Commissioner  
Samantha Schaff, Decatur County Veterans Affairs  
Peggy Cummings, Clarke County Veterans Affairs  
Patricia Hamann, Cedar County Veterans Affairs  
Brett McLain, Story County Veterans Affairs  
Elizabeth Ledvina, Tama County Veterans Affairs  
Sue Lerdal, LSA  
Chuck Reich, DAS  
John Derner, American Legion

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE 'UNAPPROVED' UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.**

**APPROVED:** Darlene McMartin  
Darlene McMartin, Chairperson, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

**Date:** 9/22/2010

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Mulcahy called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:**

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance and then a moment of silence.

**Roll Call:**

The recording secretary took roll call and all Commissioners were present including newly appointed Commissioner Becky Dirks Haugsted. Bill Wallace was also present replacing Commissioner Jean Schroeder, but not as a voting Commissioner. He hasn't been appointed from the Governor's Office yet.

**Welcome/Introductions of Guests:**

Chairperson Mulcahy welcomed everyone and the new Commissioners that were present and asked for the Commissioners to all introduce themselves and then asked all the guests in attendance for self introductions.

Commissioner Mulcahy needs to revise the agenda by reversing items 11 and 12 and between items 15 and 16 "discussion of subcommittees. Also items 17 and 18 will be reversed (Trust Fund applications after determining next meeting). Commissioner McMartin made the motion to revise the agenda and Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

**Approval of Commission Minutes:**

A motion to approve the regular Commission minutes from the April 7, 2010 meeting, as well as the conference calls minutes approving Trust Fund applications from April 28, May 26, and June 23 made by Commissioner Delamore and seconded by Commissioner McAllister. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

**VA Regional Office Update**

Greg Reed presented the VARO update on behalf of Director, David Davis. We are still waiting further instruction with regard to promulgating the claims associated with the three additional illnesses related to the exposure to Agent Orange. They are Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease, and the B cell leukemia such as hairy cell leukemia. There are about 560 claims from Iowa veterans that are currently in a holding pattern awaiting final regulations to come down. Nationally there are close to 40,000 claims pending related to these three additional illnesses; could go as high as 200,000.

We are pleased to report that we have announced four additional RVSR's (Rating Specialists) positions within the Regional Office. This is an internal announcement and we will be selecting from those VSR's who are experienced and permanent employees. Also, we were given authority to bring up two new VR&E counselors, one will be based in Davenport in our out-based office there and another will be assigned to the Wounded Warrior project at Rock Island, IL, that serves over 300 soldiers.

Mr. Reed touched upon the VFW office located in the Regional Office has closed its doors and is temporarily closed. Not sure how the national organization is going to handle the situation since mail is coming in daily. No idea when it will reopen. The Commission continued discussion with Mr. Reed about possible remedies.

Commissioner Jacobus asked Mr. Reed about the pilot project of expediting claims that Mr. Davis mentioned at the April Commission meeting. Mr. Reed said he would get back to him with more information on the topic since he wasn't aware of the project. Commissioner McMartin asked if the counties could be made aware of when the Regional Office's monthly meetings are so they could either participate at the meetings or give input for discussions.

### **VA Medical Centers Update**

None

### **Veterans Home Update**

Dennis Mack presented the IVH update. The new Commandant, David Worley will start his employment at IVH August 1, 2010. He is from the Kentucky Veterans Affairs. There will be a change of command ceremony in August, further details to follow. The current resident census is 659. IVH experienced 78 early retirements as of June 24, which is quite a loss for and consists of about 1500 total years of service out the door.

Greg Wright, budget analyst at IVH presented the Commission with a handout explaining revenue sources for budget FY2011, which also included a breakdown of the Master Plan construction. After Mr. Wright's budget presentation, discussion continued with the Commission on the Master Plan part of the handout. If there are any questions about IVH's budget, Master Plan, revenues, projects, etc., please don't hesitate to contact him.

Chuck Reich, Department of Administrative Services Master Plan Project Coordinator did a PowerPoint presentation to update the Commission on the Master Plan process and progress.

Stan Freeborn, adjutant at IVH discussed the handout to the Commission regarding IVH's Community Re-Entry Program. He explained to the Commission the purpose, the policy and the procedures of said program that eligible residents can apply to participate. Discussion continued.

### **Camp Dodge Office Update**

Patrick Palmersheim, Executive Director of IDVA distributed the department's bi-monthly newsletter to the Commission. Fall School is scheduled for October 19-21. The remaining CEU's that are needed for this year will be the afternoon of October 19<sup>th</sup>. Veterans Parade at the Iowa State Fair is Monday, August 16 beginning at 10:00. Replacement of the Scan Trak is almost complete. As of July 1, the License Plate Fund's balance is \$438,002. No money was needed to replace the Scan Trak but could need funds to reconfigure the Nursing Home Reporting program.

As of today's date we have 556 burials at the Cemetery. With all the rain the grass is growing too fast, so it's been a challenge to keep up with the mowing. It will be a challenge this winter burying the entire vault for a single burial. We haven't needed to until now because the single vaults were pre-buried. The vaults will now be ordered at the time of a scheduled burial. The vault company will lower the vaults into the ground that have previously been dug out. Today is the second year anniversary that the Cemetery opened. With all the rain this spring the road to the west of the Cemetery has shifted so much that the county needs access to the Cemetery to shore up the bank. Once the county is done rebuilding the road we can get back to fixing the well issues.

Elizabeth Ledvina asked about the Spring School certificates and when will they be sent out to the participants. Mr. Palmersheim indicated that we will get them out soon. She also asked that information about troop send offs be sent to all the counties so they know when it will take place in their county. There was discussion regarding the State's requirements that each county is in compliance of the mandated requirement that each county office is open a certain amount of hours a week, that each county has an accredited director or administrator, etc., and which entity (the State, the Commission or the County Association) will take care of issuing a questionnaire so each county can respond to it to stay in compliance. Commissioner Mulcahy indicated he would initiate a cover letter to get to Missy Miller at IDVA and have it sent out to all the counties.

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **New Business**

- Progress report: Commissioner Mulcahy introduced Larry Olk who has been doing research now for 3½ years on "veteran's court" relating to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Larry's report talked about how he got started doing his volunteer research after visiting with some veterans and how they were represented in civilian trial court cases. The veteran is being treated unjustly and unfairly when it comes to determining how PTSD affects the veteran that is on trial. This in justice isn't just happening in the State of Iowa but all across the country. The current rate for multiple deployed soldiers that return from combat, that the incidence of acquiring PTSD is running around 20-25%. So only one-fifth to one-quarter of these multiple deployed soldiers are diagnosed with PTSD and what I've been focusing on is purely those that have not been diagnosed with PTSD. In the last year and a half in my research, I have visited with representatives from the Iowa Attorney General's Office, the Iowa Bar Association, the Iowa Supreme Court, Iowa Department of Corrections, the VA of Iowa and Regional offices, Des Moines and Iowa City hospitals and random police departments and sheriff's departments and a boat load of trial attorneys across the State of Iowa; as well as, district judges and the Iowa Department of Public Safety.

The biggest challenge we have is identifying a veteran when they enter the criminal justice system. In talking to police and sheriff departments, they all use the same formatted arrest form. Everyone is using this standard form, but no one knows where it came from. It turns out that the form was developed some 26-27 years ago by somebody, and kind of under the Department of Public Safety, but they allow police and sheriff departments to alter that form to fit their particular needs. The purpose of this report to the Commission is that he would like to see anytime a person is

arrested that they be asked a simple question, "Are you a veteran?" Have a "veterans" check off on the arrest form. This is the originating document and then they could pursue with more questions like, "did you come back with any medical problems?" "Do you have PTSD?" The rest of his report was based on this issue of possibly getting the arrest form changed and to advocate for veterans with PTSD.

- Discussion of future advertising: With the concern of not reaching enough of the veteran population in the State with information on benefits, etc., the Commission discussed using more funds from the License Plate Fund to put together public service announcements on the radio and possibly putting together county booklets. Discussion continued. Commissioner Waychus made a motion to spend up to \$25,000 from the license plate fund for advertising costs. Commissioner McMartin seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Waychus discussed with the Commission about some quick series booklets that various organizations have put out that she would like to see all the counties have such a reference tool. Only problem is most counties couldn't afford it even with their \$10,000 grant money. Most places want around \$20,000 for "x" amount of booklets. Could we also like <sup>use</sup> to the license plate fund for these items. She asked that once the subcommittees are established, could the subcommittee come up with a plan to purchase such items. Discussion continued.

- Revisit Trust Fund Suspended Items: Currently the balance is about \$29,000 and it looks as though now is a good time to think about adding one or more items back on the table so that more applications can be accepted. The Honor Guard reimbursements that have been suspended for well over a year. If we were to pay all the Honor Guard applications that have been submitted would be \$45,225. Several applications have asked for automobile funds for repairs. Discussion continued. After discussion, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to approve the vehicle repairs suspended item up to \$2,500 in a twelve month period. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.
- Fall School of Instruction: Commissioner Mulcahy, Commissioner McMartin and Elizabeth Ledvina met with Bo Berntsen, Joni Klaassen of the Governor's staff and Patrick Palmersheim and Bob Steben from IDVA in reference to how many CEU's are left to attain and the correspondence between IDVA, the Commission and the counties. They assured us that it would get better. The school has been set for October 19-21 at the Holiday Inn on Merle Hay Road and the only thing left to do is arrange for the presenters. Commissioner Mulcahy has not been satisfied with the presenters from the VARO at the last couple of schools. VARO staff is intelligent and they know their jobs, but to know your job and then to teach a school is a whole different ballgame. The Commission would like to see presenters, as from NASCSO, it's the only organization that they know of to use to get instructors. Commissioner Waychus asked how these presenters would be paid (from the license plate fund or some other source) and Commissioner Mulcahy said that from how he understands it, the Governor's office staff said that they would take care of the expenses. Discussion continued.

## **Elections**

Commissioner Waychus made a motion to elect Commissioner McMartin as the new Chair and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Jacobus. With no other nominations; motion carried unanimously with Commissioner McMartin abstaining.

Commissioner Waychus made a motion to elect Commissioner Jacobus as Senior Vice-Chair and the motion was seconded by Commissioner McMartin. With no other nominations; motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Jacobus abstaining.

Commissioner McAllister made a motion to elect Commissioner Delamore as Junior Vice-Chair and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. With no other nominations; motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Delamore abstaining.

Newly elected Chair McMartin initiated the process of establishing Commission subcommittees which follows:

- Legislative subcommittee chair will be Commissioner Mulcahy
- Trust Fund subcommittee chair will be Commissioner Jacobus
- Iowa Veterans Home subcommittee chair will be Commissioner Mulcahy
- License Plate Fund subcommittee chair will be Commissioner Waychus
- Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs subcommittee chair will be Commissioner Jacobus
- IACCVA Training/Compliance subcommittee chair will be Commissioner McMartin
- Iowa Veterans Cemetery subcommittee chair will be Commissioner Wallace
- Outreach/Advertising subcommittee chair will be Commissioner Williams along with Commissioners McAllister and Dirks Haugsted

Commissioner McMartin suggested that each subcommittee chair designate their membership and bring back to the next Commission meeting to make it a point of record. The only subcommittee that would include only Commissioners is the Trust Fund subcommittee with additional members being Commissioners McMartin, Waychus and Williams.

## **Public Comment**

Someone in the audience asked how is it determined who is qualified to be on the Commission? Commissioner Mulcahy said that the veteran needs to be nominated by your state service organization. Each service organization that has been designated by the legislature is who is represented on the Commission. Originally the Commission consisted of five organization members and then went to seven members and is now represented by eight organizations and one at-large member, as follows:

Military Order of the Purple Heart (Don Delamore), Iowa National Guard (Todd Jacobus), Disabled American Veterans (Francis McAllister), American Legion (Darlene McMartin), Vietnam Veterans of America (Steve Mulcahy), Veterans of Foreign Wars (Becky Dirks Haugsted), Reserve Officers Association (Bill Wallace), AMVETS (Mickey Williams) and Public Member at large (Rosetta Waychus). When each member's term expires, their service organization is asked to submit two applications to the Governor for appointment. The Commission also has to be gender balanced and political balanced and confirmed by the Senate.

Laurel Phipps discussed with the Commission his displeasure of the selection process that took place regarding the appointment of the new Commissioner representing the VFW.

### **Trust Fund Applications**

After discussion of application #00368 requesting unemployment benefits, Commissioner Mulcahy made a motion to deny and seconded by Commissioner Delamore. Motion carried; denied unanimously.

After discussion of application #00371 requesting unemployment benefits, Commissioner Mulcahy made a motion to defer and seconded by Commissioner Dirks Haugsted. Motion carried; deferred unanimously.

After discussion of application #00380 requesting unemployment, Commissioner Jacobus made a motion to deny and seconded by Commissioner Delamore. Motion carried; denied unanimously.

After discussion of application #00381 requesting unemployment, Commissioner McAllister made a motion to deny and seconded by Commissioner Waychus. Commissioner Mulcahy abstained; motion carried; denied unanimously.

After discussion of application #00383 requesting funds for dental work, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to defer and seconded by Commissioner Mulcahy. Motion carried; deferred unanimously.

After discussion of application #00384 requesting unemployment benefits, Commissioner Waychus made a motion to defer and seconded by Commissioner Mulcahy. Motion carried; deferred unanimously.

### **Determine next Commission meeting**

Next quarterly Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 22, 2010 at the Iowa Veterans Home in the Ford Conference Room.

**Adjournment**

With no further discussion before the Commission, the meeting ended at 2:35 p.m. CST. It was determined that the next Commission meeting is set for Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, beginning at 10:00 at the Iowa Veterans Home, Ford Conference Room.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

*Mari Mielke*

**Mari Mielke**

**Recording Secretary**

**Cc:** Joni Klaassen, Governor's Office  
Kate Walton, IDVA Policy Advisor, Governor's Office  
Shashi Goel, Department of Management  
Barbara Galloway, Assistant Attorney, Attorney General's Office  
Sue Lerdal, Legislative Fiscal Bureau  
Jenny Lawrence, Auditor's Office  
Jessica Holmes, Department of Administrative Services  
Steven Ainger, Department of Administrative Services  
David Worley, Commandant, IVH  
Nancy Morford, Administrative Assistant, IVH  
Lisa Purvis, Legislative Liaison, IVH  
Senator Daryl Beall, Senate VA Committee, Chair  
Senator James Seymour, Senate VA Committee, RM  
Representative Matt Windschilt, House VA Committee, RM  
Representative Ray Zirkelbach, House VA Committee, Chair

John Derner, Adjutant, American Legion  
Ron Healy, Iowa UAW Veterans Committee  
Jerry Meek, Commander, MOPH  
Jon Schneider, President, PVA  
Reginald Richardson, Pres., Reserve Officers Assn.  
Larry Jatho, Adjutant, DAV  
David Hunter, Commander, Marine Corp. League  
Elizabeth Ledvina, President, IACCVA  
Barry Sharp, Director, VAMC, Iowa City  
Don Cooper, VAMC, Des Moines  
David Davis, Director, VA Regional Office  
Tom Ashworth, Senate Republican Caucus Staff  
Zeke Furlong, House Democratic Research Staff  
Jason Chapman, House Republican Caucus Staff  
Julie Simon, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff