

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Wednesday, July 13, 2011 beginning at 10:00 a.m.
Camp Dodge, Gold Star Museum
7105 – NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

Present: Darlene McMartin, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Dan Gannon, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Becky Dirks Haugsted, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Francis McAllister, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Kate Myers, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Bill Wallace, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Larry Spencer, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Mickey Williams, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Excused: Todd Jacobus, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Staff: Jodi Tymeson, Executive Director, IDVA
Mari Mielke, IDVA – Recording Secretary
Missy Miller, IDVA, Trust Fund Administrator
Jill Joseph, Outreach Coordinator

Dave Worley, Commandant, IVH
Greg Wright, CFO, IVH

Guests: Bob Peters, Allamakee County Commissioner
Alice Abbott, Winneshiek County Commissioner
Jennifer Furler, State Public Policy Group
Greg Reed, VA Regional Office
Aaron McKay, Sen. Chuck Grassley's Office
Jennifer Acton, LSA
Anita DeBo, Hawkeye Sports Properties
Steve Garrison, Disability Rights Iowa
Jerry Hansen, Director, Montgomery County VA
Bart Quick, VA Central Iowa Health Care System

Deb Monson, Director, Winneshiek County VA
Glenn Larson, Winneshiek County Commissioner
Karen Schechinger, Army OneSource
Kathy Peters, VA Regional Office
Michele Mustain, Cong. Tom Latham's Office
Amy Beller, Sen. Tom Harkin's Office
Charlene Joens, Disability Rights Iowa
Steve Mulcahy, VVA
Samantha Schaff, Director, Decatur County VA

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: 21 Sept. 2011

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at by Commission Chair, Darlene McMartin at 10:00 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 except Todd Jacobus was excused.

Welcome/Introductions of Guests:

Chairperson McMartin welcomed everyone and asked guests to introduce themselves to the Commission.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

A motion made by Commissioner McAllister to approve the minutes from the April 6th Commission meeting and seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; approved unanimously. A motion made by Commissioner Haugsted to approve the conference call minutes from April 19th was seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried; approved unanimously. A motion made by Commissioner Wallace to approve the conference call minutes of May 4th and seconded by Commissioner McAllister. Motion carried; approved unanimously. A motion made by Commissioner Williams to approve the conference call minutes of June 1st. was seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Presentation by Anita DeBo from Hawkeye Sports Properties

Anita DeBo presented to the Commission advertising options during sports related events of the University of Iowa Hawkeyes. She gave several examples of commercials during sporting events, particularly during the football and basketball seasons. These commercials and advertisements of the Commission would be using the radio media. Chairperson McMartin asked the Commission to consider the many options for this type of media outreach and possibly make a decision at the September Commission meeting.

Jennifer Furler with Tom Slater, SPPG – Update on the Progress of Mental Health Recommendations

Jennifer gave an overview of the achieved outcomes for the 2010-2011 contract period and gave a summary of the recommendations and current status, information, and recommended next steps associated with the recommendations. Her written summary touched on nine items consisting of: 1) Provide Mental Health First Aid training to county veterans service officers, veterans service organizations, the state Family Readiness Group, first responders, and other veterans stakeholders. 2) Enhance the veteran's database by capturing veterans' information through existing state data collection systems. 3) Develop a social marketing and outreach strategy for veterans' behavioral health issues. 4) Integrate crisis intervention training with a veteran's component into law enforcement academy training. 5) Initiate a process to create a jail diversion program for veterans in Iowa. 6) Create community-based peer support pilot programs for veterans and their families. 7) Support efforts to secure a mobile outreach vehicle to serve veterans in Iowa. 8) Establish a state fee basis program for mental health services to serve veterans in their local communities. And 9) Develop a veterans screening process

that will enable non-VA providers to screen and refer patients as appropriate for substance abuse, mental health issues, traumatic brain injury, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Discussion continued about SPPG being real specific this next contract year as to what our outcomes are going to be. After all of the discussion Commissioner Gannon made a motion to extend SPPG's contract to August 16, 2012 up to a cost not to exceed \$75,000 and the specifics of the contract will be discussed at a later date. Commissioner Haugsted seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

VA Regional Office Update – Greg Reed Acting Director

Mr. Reed began his update with congratulations to the new Commission members and announced that the new director of the VA Regional Office is Lisa Breun and she will be joining the office on July 18th. He also introduced Kathy Peters the current Veterans Service Center Manager.

In September 2010 the Des Moines Regional Office was one of only four offices, nationwide of 57 offices, to meet their productivity target and accuracy target. And then on October 1, the bottom fell out. They were mandated to focus attention on the "Nehmer" patients (presumptive conditions from Agent Orange exposure).

Commissioner McMartin asked about the pending files that have been sent to Lincoln, NE Regional Office and Seattle, WA Regional Office, how are they being tracked and when will they be sent back to the Des Moines Regional Office. Discussion continued.

VA Central Iowa Health Care System Update – Bart Quick

Mr. Quick is filling in for Don Cooper. Central Iowa Health Care System covers 43 counties in the central corridor of Iowa. In the last six months, enrollment has been approximately 26,000 patients. There are a large number of eligible veterans who are not taking advantage of health care benefits that they have earned. Currently, outreach efforts are looking for and contacting these veterans to see why they haven't been to the VA.

Inpatient admissions for the last period were 1,350; outpatient visits was about 147,000, (a fair number of patients coming through the doors). Mr. Quick continued to update the Commission on the construction projects. The CBOC that is in Knoxville will remain on that campus until sometime in 2012 and then will be relocated.

Veterans Home Update – Commandant Dave Worley

The Commandant started out by updating the Commission on the storm damage that happened 2 days earlier. The Veterans Home is now back on commercial utility service. Some employees had to remain at the Home to help with the next shift because employees couldn't get to work because of the storm.

Mr. Worley had Greg Wright, Chief Financial Officer at IVH, give the Commission an update on IVH's operating budget. Mr. Wright asked the Commission to contact him at greg.wright@ivh.state.ia.us with any questions they may have after his update.

Mr. Worley announced that the Home's Adjutant Stan Freeborn retired June 24th with more than 25 years at IVH and thanked him for all he has brought to the success of the finest veterans home in the country. He does plan on changing the title to Deputy Commander and will fill the position in the near future. He does intend to require this position's employee have a nursing home administrator's license.

IVH provides two levels of care which includes Nursing Care and Domiciliary Care. The VA does not pay them for residential care which is a term that the State of Iowa uses and not a VA term. The VA pays for domiciliary care; not residential care. Domiciliary care is when a patient comes to IVH and gets treatment for their needs and then discharges back into the community. His discussion continued regarding the differences in terms used to define the levels of care.

Mr. Worley passed out handouts of the construction progress and discussed how those plans (how the buildings will house and care for patients) have evolved and changed during the process. Discussion continued. If you have questions regarding this update, contact him at david.worley@ivh.state.ia.us.

Commissioner Williams asked if there were any penalties because the construction timeline is past due. Mr. Worley's stated that first the federal VA approves the plans and they provided 65% of the funds, everything else is directed by the State. When you do a State construction project, technically that project is run by the Department of Administrative Services; which means there are no penalties for the construction project being late.

After discussion of Administrative Rules presented by the Iowa Veterans Home to adopt changes in Chapter 10, in rule 801-10.1(35D) "Gold Star parent" means a parent whose child died while serving in the armed forces of the United States, Commissioner Haugsted made a motion to adopt the Administrative Rules amendment as written and seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Camp Dodge Office Update – Executive Director Jodi Tymeson

The IDVA web page has been updated to include a group photo of the Commission and bios. The Commission received a packet of information regarding the Postcards the Commission purchased being distributed to all 99 counties along with the Quick Series booklets that the Commission also purchased. Along with the Quick Books going to the counties there is also an allotment separate from the county distribution that will be going to all the returning soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team which will be distributed at all the Yellow Ribbon Integration events. The booklets will also be going to the VA Medical Centers, the veteran's organizations at the RO, Workforce Development representatives and the Yellow Ribbon Integration events.

The Injured Veteran Grant funding ran low; Jodi requested additional funds. The Legislature made a supplemental appropriations of \$1 million. The Military Homeownership Program also ran low; \$1 million was appropriated in the 2012 budget. Veterans Trust Fund has \$57,000 of approved applications that are pending because of the low interest per month; this puts the pending payments back logged six to eight months. Discussion continued regarding the low rate of return on the Fund.

The DOT is working with IDVA for the newly created combat veteran license plates. Jodi sent an invitation out for a Roundtable Discussion set for August 3rd to talk about possible legislative proposals for next session.

Cemetery Update

Memorial Day ceremony was well-attended. Replaced sod in Section 5. Replaced electrical under the road, reprogrammed the irrigation system, put up shed over irrigation system, installed peristaltic pump and chemical system to mitigate iron in water, created policy letter on tree and plaque donations ordered directly from the vendor. The federal grant needs to be closed so we are trying to use remaining funds for needed repairs.

We have had a few requests for Saturday or Sunday services. The only exception for a weekend service would be if the veteran is killed in action. This is a national standard.

Jodi referenced previous discussions with the Commission about creating a policy for monument donations; these are the veterans' organizations monuments that line the sidewalk. The Commission would be the approving authority. Jodi presented a policy for the Commission's approval. After discussion of this policy, Commissioner Spencer made a motion to approve and that the organizations applications are submitted through IDVA to bring before the Commission. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

As of July 11, 2011, there have been 884 interments; 748 of those were veterans and the rest dependents. There are 29 states represented at the Cemetery; you do not have to be an Iowa resident to be interred at the Cemetery. There are 27 veterans memorialized on the Memorial Walk. In case people ask you, these are the headstones of veterans where there are no remains available. There are 5,399 pre-approved applications and we encourage folks to do the pre-application because it is so much easier for their families when their eligibility is already determined. There is no cost to the veteran for interment and \$300 fee for the spouse.

Events coming up include August 7 as Purple Heart Day, August 15 is the Veterans Day Parade at the Iowa State Fair beginning at 10:00 a.m., The Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall Experience will be erected at Resthaven Cemetery in West Des Moines September 16-18, and the Fall School for County Commissioners is October 18 in Carroll, Iowa.

The department budget for FY'12 is \$998,832 and subtracting 13 employees' salaries and SLIP payment of \$903,026 leaves a balance left to pay all bills at 3 office locations and operate the Cemetery of \$95,806. Budget discussion continued.

IACCVA Update – Jerry Hansen

Forty county directors/administrators attended the National school in June; which had very good speakers. The Association helps to provide educational opportunities to its members; an example of this is one of the speakers at the National school is the president of the National Association of Veterans Advocates which provided very good information on how to put together a claim and be successful with it. Another speaker who is the head of Compensation and Pension and he fielded questions and got to talk to him directly, which was very valuable information.

The Association is currently planning a fall school very similar to what we use to do at a summer school, which will be in at the Holiday Inn Express in Des Moines. We're hoping that some of the training will consist of Training Responsibility Involvement Preparation (TRIPP) training for our members to get better at using it. The Association has also instituted a mentorship program that an experienced county director would pair up with any incoming new directors to help them get started and work together so they can get their feet on the ground.

Jerry asked how the Commission would enforce the Iowa Code to the counties that are out of compliance. Commissioner McMartin stated they are writing a letter to the counties that are out of compliance with the Iowa Code. The counties are required to have a county office in all 99 counties either full-time or part-time based on their county population. There are a few counties that are not in compliance with the Iowa Code; they will be receiving a letter notifying them that they are out of compliance with the Iowa Code.

Commissioner McMartin stated that she has asked for an Attorney General's Opinion on a few questions of what would be the consequences if a county is out of compliance based on office hours, using the allocation funds incorrectly, that they don't maintain their accreditation and if they don't continue with the continuing education credits. Discussion continued regarding helping the counties fulfill their obligations to stay in compliance.

Old Business

None

New Business

Jodi Tymeson explained to the Commission about the Commission's expenses supported as a line item in IDVA's budget. She recommended that the Commission could have all of their budget/expenses come from the License Plate Fund to support their per diem, mileage expenses, conference calls fees, and any hearings that take place at IVH. There are no administrative rules that support the use of the License Plate Fund. She proposed writing administrative rules because the rules are typically what are used to carry out the Code. The Commission has been using the License Plate Fund appropriately, but may want to consider having some administrative rules in place for how to spend that money. She is willing to work on something for the January Commission meeting and work with the Commission sub-committee members to establish these rules.

Jodi explained to the Commission members about how IDVA staffs the Commission and who to contact with particular questions. Jodi distributed a proposed estimated budget for the Commission of \$4,621 annually and to consider using License Plate Funds for this budget. Citing Code of Iowa 35A.11 where the Commission has complete control of the License Plate Fund that it seems appropriate that the Commission could be paying for their expenses. This would be a great help for IDVA's budget and a more appropriate way to cover the Commission's expenses.

After more discussion, Commissioner Wallace made a motion to use the License Plate Fund to cover the costs the Commission incurs. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner McMartin passed out the new sub-committee assignments and asked Mari to mail a hard copy of the sub-committee sheet and a updated Commission Roster.

County Allocation Program Appeals

Jodi explained to the Commission how the County Allocation program works; the State distributes an annual allocation of \$10,000 to each county with instructions about how the funds can be spent. If there is unspent money from the \$10,000 the county then remits that money back to the State. If there is money not spent according to the instructions then we ask the county to remit that money back to the State. There are a couple of counties reworking their Activities Report because they were not understanding how they were supposed to be accounting for this money. You cannot supplant county money with State money, which means, you can't take county money out and put State money in, and you cannot use the money for direct services to veterans; that is what the county budget is used for.

On behalf of Harrison County's appeal, Jodi explained to the Commission that initially we were in agreement with everything that they spent, except for \$843.70 which was unspent and they did return this amount. They have asked for reconsideration of their purchase of wheel chairs for veterans in the amount of \$1,423.13. Two chairs were purchased for use in Longview Nursing Home for veterans use only and this was done as an outreach effort to assist in mobility for our veterans in the facility as the existing chairs were not large enough. Jodi recommended that they not be required to remit the \$1,423.13 back to the State because they made the case that this is not direct service to individual veterans, but rather general use for any veterans.

After discussion Commissioner McAllister made a motion to approve Harrison County's appeal and motion was seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

On behalf of Johnson County, Jodi explained that Johnson County is appealing the whole FY'10 \$10,000 allocation. The appeal states that Johnson County ranks #1 in the State in costs for housing, this is our most basic request and need. Jodi stated, although this is a noble use of money, it is not within the guidelines of the State Allocation funds.

After discussion Commissioner Gannon made a motion to deny Johnson County's appeal and seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried; denied unanimously.

Glenn Larson a commissioner with the Winneshiek County Veterans Affairs Commission presented appeal information to the Commissioners.

After further discussion Commissioner Wallace made a motion to deny Winneshiek County's appeal and seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; denied unanimously.

Elections

Commissioner McMartin nominated Commissioner Todd Jacobus as the new Chairperson; with no further nominations, all in favor; elected unanimously. Commissioner Williams nominated Commissioner Darlene McMartin as 1st Vice-Chair; with no further nominations, all in favor; elected unanimously. Commissioner McMartin nominated Commissioner Bill Wallace as Junior Vice-Chair; with no further nominations, all in favor; elected unanimously.

Public Comment

None

Determine next Commission Meeting

The next Commission of Veterans Affairs quarterly meeting will be on Wednesday, September 21 at the Iowa Veterans Home beginning with a tour of the construction at 9:00 a.m. and the meeting beginning at 10:00 a.m. in Whitehill Auditorium. Commissioner Spencer indicated that he is not available for this meeting.

Adjournment

The Commission meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m. and began the approval process of Trust Fund applications.

Trust Fund Applications

After discussion of application #00032 requesting \$3,000 for unemployment, Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve \$2,500 of the request and Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00294 requesting \$543 for housing repairs, Commissioner Haugsted made a motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00342 requesting \$1,200 for dental work, Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner McMartin. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00459 requesting \$1,075 for new dental work, Commissioner McAllister made a motion to approve the \$1,075 but to deny \$200 that is considered old debt. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00486 requesting \$2,000 for dental work, Commissioner Myers made a motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00487 requesting \$1,500 for unemployment, Commissioner Williams made a motion to defer based on medical statement – unemployable workman’s comp. denial letter needed. Commissioner Gannon seconded the motion; motion carried; deferred unanimously.

After discussion of application #00491 requesting funds for housing repairs, Commissioner Williams made a motion to deny because it is not an emergency situation. Commissioner Gannon seconded the motion; motion carried; denied unanimously.

After discussion of application #00492 requesting funds for dental work, Commissioner Spencer made a motion to defer based on lack of clarification of expenses. Commissioner Gannon seconded the motion; motion carried; deferred unanimously.

After discussion of application #00494 requesting \$1,144.47 for vehicle repairs, Commissioner Haugsted made a motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner McAllister. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mari Mielke, Recording Secretary

Cc: Jeffrey Boeyink, Chief of Staff, Governor’s Office
Ted Stopulos, IDVA Policy Advisor, Governor’s Office
Sandra Hurtado-Peters, Department of Management
Barbara Galloway, Assistant Attorney, Attorney General’s Office
Sue Lerdal, Legislative Fiscal Agency
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
Elizabeth Ledvina, President, IACCVA
Zeke Furlong, House Democratic Research Staff
Jill Jennings, House Republican Caucus Staff
Tom Ashworth, Senate Republican Caucus Staff
Julie Simon, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff

Barry Sharp, Director, VAMC, Iowa City
Don Cooper, VAMC, Des Moines
Lisa Breun, Director, VA Regional Office
Senator Daryl Beall, Senate VA Committee, Chair
Senator Jeff Danielson, Senate VA Committee, Vice-Chair
Senator James Seymour, Senate VA Committee, RM
Representative Royd Chambers, House VA Committee, Chair
Representative Guy Vander Linden, House VA Comm. Vice-C.
Representative Jerry Kearns, House VA Committee, RM