

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Wednesday, January 11, 2012 beginning at 10:00 a.m.
Camp Dodge, Gold Star Military Museum
7105 – NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

Members Present: Lt. Col. Todd Jacobus, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Dan Gannon, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Darlene McMartin, 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: Becky Dirks Haugsted, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Ex-Officio Members Present: Jodi Tymeson, Executive Director, IDVA
David Worley, Commandant, IVH

Staff: Mari Mielke, IDVA – Recording Secretary
Missy Miller, IDVA, Trust Fund Administrator

Michael Hines, Admin. Asst., IVH

Signed In Guests: Patricia Hamann, Cedar Co. VA
John Derner, American Legion
Richard Bullock, American Legion
Bart Quick, VA Central Iowa Health Care
David Thornburg, Iowa Veterans Council
Donald Roepke, AMVETS, Post 218
John Mikelson, U of I Iowa Veterans Center
Ted Stopulos, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
Dale Purdy, AMVETS Dept. Commander
Paul Manor, Sons of AMVETS
Mike Mizlak, Sons of AMVETS
Joe Hays, AMVETS, Post 2
Joyleen Maravilla, VARO
Ray Hutchison, VVA
Mary Wegner, Iowa Library Services
Valerie Buckingham, Iowa City VA Health Care

Mike Kuhn, Marion Co. VA
Steve Mulcahy, VVA
Brett McLain, Story Co. VA
Coleen Stewart, VA Central Iowa Health Care
David Bolton, DAV
Dale Henry, AMVETS, Post 218
Jennifer Furler, SPPG
Grant Kick, AMVETS
Ed Kemp, AMVETS
Dennis Miller, AMVETS, Dept. of Iowa
Otto Bush, AMVETS, Post 218
John Mizlak, AMVETS, Post 19
Lisa Breun, Director, VARO
Sondra VanDerPol, IARNG Family Assistance Coordinator
Amy Beller, Senator Tom Harkin's Office
Dennis Sopper, American Legion

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

APPROVED: *T. Todd Jacobus*
Lt. Col. Todd Jacobus, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Date: *April 4, 2012*

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Todd Jacobus at 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

Roll Call:

The recording secretary took roll call and all Commissioners were present except Commissioner Dirks Haugsted who was excused.

Welcome/Introductions of Guests:

Chair, Todd Jacobus welcomed everyone and asked guests to introduce themselves to the Commission.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

A motion made was made by Commissioner Williams to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2011 Commission meeting and seconded by Commissioner Myers. Motion carried; approved unanimously. A motion was made by Commissioner McMartin to approve the October 5, 2011 conference call minutes to approve trust fund applications and seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; approved unanimously. A motion was made by Commissioner McAllister to approve the December 7, 2011 conference call minutes to approve trust fund applications and seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

VA Regional Office Update, Lisa Breun, Director

She has been back to the Des Moines area as the new director for six months now. Kathy Peters, the VARO's Servicing Manager has been promoted and will be leaving for Little Rock, Arkansas. Have interviewed and have 3 candidates to fill the position, so hopefully one will be selected soon.

The VA Regional Office is as busy today as they ever have been. During the month of Nov 2011, they received 962 claims; and, during the month of Dec 2011, they received 1,078 claims – a new record. This is good news, essentially, as it indicates that veterans are being linked to their benefits. They have never had a month like December receiving so many new claims. Currently, there are 7,200 compensation claims pending. There continues to be challenges, and delays in processing claims. While the new Undersecretary of Veterans Affairs has outlined a goal of 98% accuracy and less than 125 days for processing, the average number of days pending at the VA Regional Office is 175 days, and it takes an average of 220 days to complete the claim. Each counselor at the DSM VARO completes 550 claims monthly.

The 1-800 number is always a hot topic, but want to let you know that in October they launched a “virtual hold” technology that includes two features, one is the veteran will get a “call-back” as soon as possible and the second feature is “scheduled call-back” which has been very successful at a rate of 91%, which is much higher than the private industry average.

There was a question about APPEALS. Lisa indicated that there are many appeals currently in the system. She also acknowledged that there are fewer resources directed towards appeals and their main effort remains oriented towards new claims. Lisa acknowledged that this is a frustration for many, but that she believes that everyone deserves to have their claim considered for an initial ruling as soon as possible, and is leveraging her limited resources to accomplish that.

There was a question about the Decision Review Officer process. Background – When a claim is returned to a Service Officer with a ruling, the veteran has an option of re-submitting their claim, as is, to a decision review officer, who then reviews the claim as if it is brand new. There was a case where it took over 3 ½ years for the DRO to re-consider this. The feedback here is that the NEW claims receive priority, and that these re-considerations ARE given retroactive payments, if the decision is changed.

There was a question about Aid & Attendance disability pension benefit. This benefit is requested by the veteran / VSO using the VA Form 21-2680. There is a physical required in order to validate that the veteran needs to be in a protective environment, or needs the assistance of another person to keep them out of a nursing home. PROBLEM – Veterans need to have a physical at the VA Medical Center before they can apply for the Aid & Attendance benefit. And, oftentimes, the documentation from the physical takes three months to get back to the veteran. We need to fix this.

Lisa introduced the Regional Office's new Change Management Agent, Joyleen Maravilla. This is a new position for the VBA (Veterans Benefits Administration) to initiate a number of initiatives to attack some of the issues like more claims not being processed fast enough.

Joyleen Maravilla – Change Agent, VARO

Jolene is responsible for working on making the Des Moines VARO system more efficient. The VARO has invested considerable resources in having a presence in post-deployment out-processing. When the National Guard's 2nd Brigade Combat Team out-processed in Nov and Dec 2011, the VRO was present, and this resulted in many claims. She has taken resources and invested in post deployment out-processing. This has resulted in significant increase in claims.

The VARO is implementing 8 initiatives in change management. They are oriented toward improving quality of processing, enhancing training programs, better organizing office structure, etc. Ultimately, the goal is to have 98% accuracy in processing by 2015. One of the things we will be doing is putting together a quality review team locally so we can catch our problems before they become bigger issues. Her goals are that hopefully in the next few months you will be able to see the progress with these initiatives that the claim process will not take as long as it has been.

Standardize and Simplify Notification Letter. The notification letter that the veteran receives informing them that their claim for service connected compensation has been ruled upon will become more standardized and simplified in the future. This is intended to reduce duplication, remove the detailed medical notes that are not easily understood, and shorten the letters. Basically, these letters will outline whether the claim is approved, denied, and why.

There was a discussion on diagnostic codes. When the veteran receives his award letter it states his disability, the VA has assigned a diagnostic code to all disabilities. Service Officers request that the diagnostic code be listed as well as the written details. With that code the counties can review the award to determine the correct percentage has been assigned and to explain to the veteran why the percentage was given or if an increase over time could be requested. At this time the service officers call the Regional Office or the Service Organization to obtain the rating code, if the Diagnostic Code was on the award we would not need to call anyone to receive this information thus reducing calls and time for everyone.

VA Medical Center – Iowa City – Valerie Buckingham

We have a team which is part of our Outreach program that has been going to all the welcome home events. Our OEF/OIF team alone did 20 events in the month of November. We have also hired two new Outreach Coordinators since my last update to the Commission. She indicated that it is really important for all veterans to know about their entitlements and services offered at the Iowa City facility and to get the word out to their families. It's the family members that will help to the veteran look into the medical centers to file a claim, get the services that that they need and are entitled to receive. Valerie indicated that she finds many veterans who don't pursue their entitlements because of a false belief that they would be taking a benefit away from someone else. As a result, some of these veterans go without the care they have earned and deserved. Please help link veterans to their entitlements through the families of veterans.

The Iowa City VA Hospital has hired two additional full-time outreach specialists. They will be focusing efforts in working with County Directors of Veterans Affairs, service officers, welcome home programs, and doing speaking engagements with civic organizations, civilian organizations, and employers – informing them of programs as they relate to veterans. There are many organizations that have an incredible lack of knowledge on VA programs, particularly as they pertain to mental health, and these outreach efforts have been very helpful.

There are a total of nine Community Based Outreach Clinics and two Outreach Centers supported by the Iowa City VA Hospital. The Cedar Rapids Outreach Center will open in Feb 2012. The outreach center is no longer referred to as the "Homeless Outreach Center", but the mission of supporting homeless veteran's remains its primary purpose.

There is a problem in the processing of the VA Form 21-2680 form VA Examination for Housebound Status or Permanent Need for Regular Aid and Attendance. These forms are filled out by a veteran service officer and required by the VA Regional office for the veterans claim. Once the VAMC receives the form it is sent to Release of Information at the VAMC. PROBLEM: When the service officer sends in the 21-2680, the veteran needs to have a physical in order to complete the form. It appears that the form is sent from the mail room to the "release of information" area so that the staff there can pull the file. Oftentimes, the 21-2680 will sit in "release of information" for a long time (MONTHS even!). Commissioner McMartin suggested that it would seem that since the 21-2680 is going within the VA system that they should not have to be reviewed by "release of information" - the 21-2680 should go directly to a VA physician to complete from the Veteran file, signed by the Physician and then submitted to the VARO or the County office that has requested return. When the veteran does the compensation and pension examination, they should simultaneously be enrolled in the VA Hospital system by SOMEONE at the VAMC. So, once they are approved, they can immediately make an appointment. Under the current management program, it oftentimes takes 30+ days to fill out the 10-10 form and have the VA Hospital Staff enroll them in the system, which could eliminate at least a month from the veterans' wait for an appointment.

There will be a Lorrie Morgan Concert at the Riverside Casino & Resort in Riverside, Iowa, on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2012, at 7:00 pm. Tickets are complimentary to all veterans, their families and the general public. To reserve a ticket, please call (319) 339-7155 or email V4Viowacity@va.gov. Please help spread the word of this great opportunity. The VA Hospital in Iowa City will use this as a marketing opportunity to increase the number of volunteers at their facility in Iowa City.

Mr. Sharp, the director at the Iowa City VA currently has been at the Minneapolis VA as acting director, which is a temporary detail. He will be there until they fill the position with a permanent director. He is part of the search team for the selection process, so he will be returning to Iowa City.

The medical center finally going to receive funding to build a parking garage, but in the meantime parking will continue to be an issue until it is built. Have finished remodeling the sixth floor west wing for the Women's Healthcare Center and opened it January 4th with a ribbon cutting and by that afternoon we were already seeing patients.

VA Medical Center - Des Moines - Bart Quick and Coleen Stewart

The Des Moines VA Hospital will follow up on the issue with Aid & Attendance disability pension benefit. This benefit is requested by using the VA Form 21-2680. Basically, there is a physical that is required in order to validate that the veteran needs to be in a protective environment, or needs the assistance of another person to keep them out of a nursing home. PROBLEM - Veterans need to have a physical at the VA Hospital before they can apply for the Aid & Attendance benefit. And, oftentimes, the documentation from the physical takes three months to get back to the veteran. We need to fix this.

Mr. Quick reiterated that there is a problem in the processing of the VA Form 21-2680 form VA Examination for Housebound Status or Permanent Need for Regular Aid and Attendance. Same comments as to the VA Medical Center in Iowa City.

All VA Medical Centers have expanded efforts into outreach. The Des Moines VA Medical Center has determined that there are many veterans in our communities who are both eligible for benefits and NEED the benefits, but are not aware of them. We need the assistance of all organizations to help identify these veterans and link them up with their entitlements.

Our outreach committee is a very active group, which will be making efforts to connect with other veteran's organizations, etc. to help with reaching veterans to get them enrolled in the VA system so that they are receiving all of their medical entitlements. Our outreach team will be participating in Veterans Supermarkets in Boone and Western Iowa during the next quarter. Make sure to invite the VAMCs whenever there are a large gathering of veterans. This is a great way to meet and talk with veterans, and help link them to their entitlements.

The Medical Center has had a project action team review all of their brochures, and re-done them with an effort towards standardization. Bart handed out three examples of their new brochures. We sent letters to over 3,000 veterans, whom they had not seen in over two years, asking them to please contact the VA, check in with their care provider, and come back in for physicals, etc. They had a volunteer force contact by phone each veteran who did not reply to this letter, and as a result there are several hundred veterans who are now using the facility.

There is a program called "My HealtheVet". Information on this program is available at <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/index.html>. This is an outstanding system for those who are computer savvy, and can really save a great deal of time. How do we help market the "My HealtheVet" program? Is there a "My HealtheVet" subject matter expert at the Des Moines VAMC?

We are not seeing the large number of returning veterans that we expected. Not sure why this is. We need to continue to spread the word on the entitlements of our veterans and ensure that they get enrolled in the VA system.

In our corridor of 44 counties, we have 18 vans, which a lot of these vans are, operated the DAV and volunteers. We have approximately 95 drivers, which their job is to bring in veterans from outlined communities into the VA or their closest Community Based Outreach Centers (CBOC). There is a need to enhanced the network, to increase the transportation support, and in order to do so, we need to see more veterans using the transportation system, and we need to track the number of wheelchair bound veterans who need transportation support.

There was a discussion relative to measurement process for quality delivery of services at the Des Moines VAMC. This was a lengthy conversation, where a few meeting participants indicated that they knew veterans who had been to the Des Moines VAMC, and who were not treated with dignity and respect. There may be a need for a follow-up with those who have had appointments to get some feedback on the quality of service that they have received. There was a discussion on Purple Heart Medal recipients being eligible for compensation.

Parking issues continue to be ongoing especially with ongoing construction, that they are using a shuttle service for off campus parking. The Des Moines VA is also looking into constructing a parking garage. The VAMC continues to encourage employees to park off campus.

VAMC is consolidating patient services, which means putting all patients' services into building three, which includes patient travel, patient funds, cashier, release of information, billing, and eligibility. There was a lengthy discussion of the eligibility process.

New Business

Iowa Veterans Council Overview – Dave Thornburg

Three delegates have been tasked to attend the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs' meetings including: Ray Hutchison, Frank Whitman, and Paul Freeman to help continue a working relationship with the Commission.

The next meeting of the Iowa Veterans Council will take place on 13 Mar 2012 at 1:00 pm at the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown.

Discussion facilitated by Commissioner Wallace – Vote on Carillon Monument at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery

Commissioner Wallace, who is chair of the Commission's subcommittee on oversight of the Iowa Veterans Cemetery, reported that last Tuesday all four members of the subcommittee met with Jodi Tymeson, Executive Director at IDVA to discuss the

proposal from AMVETS to donate a Carillon monument at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery. Some of the issues of discussion included the size of the monument itself, the electrical requirements that would be necessary, the monthly expense of said electricity, the labor requirements of controlling the Carillon. The subcommittee concluded that a Carillon monument is not an appropriate monument based on the policies for monuments being erected at the Cemetery at this time but offered the idea for AMVETS to look into donating the Carillon at the Capitol Grounds where other organizations monuments are located. After further discussion Commissioner Wallace made a motion to deny the application and was seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Roll call was taken and Commissioner Williams who represents AMVETS abstained; motion carried; denied unanimously.

American Legion Monument – John Derner

John Derner handed out a proof for the granite piece of the monument which the base has already been approved at the September meeting. After discussion Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve the final plans for the American Legion monument. Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion. Commissioner Williams voiced her concerns with the “advertisements” on the sides of the monument and believes they are totally unnecessary. After further discussion roll call was taken. All commissioners approved the motion except Commissioner Williams. Motion carried.

State Library/Distribution of Veterans Quick Books – Mary Wegner

First she wanted to dispel any notion that libraries are going away or are withering on the vine and that nobody uses them anymore. There are 544 public libraries in Iowa which means we have a present in 544 communities, with two-thirds of Iowans have active library cards. A West Des Moines library director happens to be a Vietnam veteran and was the catalysts to have a meeting to talk about how libraries could be of service veterans because of his personal experience as he was coming back and getting re-acclimated into society he found that the public libraries were a great resource to use.

The State Library of Iowa has received and begun distribution of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs State and Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents Quick Series Booklets to each library in Iowa. We really need county directors of veteran’s affairs to visit the libraries in their counties over the next several months to introduce themselves and provide their contact information.

Jodi Tymeson committed the efforts of the IDVA Outreach Coordinator, Jill Joseph, with putting together a brochure summarizing veteran’s entitlements and resources, which can be sent via email to all of the libraries in Iowa. Jodi will work with Jill Joseph in crafting a letter that will be sent via the State Library of Iowa Listserv to all librarians, informing them about the Veterans Quick Series booklet that will soon arrive at their library.

Iowa Advisory Council on Military Education (ACME) – John Mikelson, University of Iowa

This council was developed as an advisory council on military education within each college campus in Iowa to promote and provide educational programs and services and to facilitate communication between the membership and the DoD educational support network for service members, veterans and their families. There are several veterans returning with GI Bill money. There used to be an organization called the Iowa Military Education Coordinating Council IMECC, which is no longer active. The Iowa ACME will replace IMECC and put one roof over all of the student veteran organizations on Iowa

college campuses. They will address issues such as admissions standards for veterans, transfer of credits, policies that are veteran friendly, etc.

This council is to help provide a forum for the discussion of current issues and planning for future programming. Also to encourage educational institutions to be innovative and flexible in meeting the student veteran in their educational needs.

There will be a steering committee organizational meeting on March 31, from 1:00-3:00 at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Please talk to folks, educators in your community, to get in touch with him so they could help put this together and get it off the ground yet this summer.

Commissioner Jacobus recommended that the Commission needs to consider having a representative remain connected with Iowa ACME.

Veterans National Career Corporation – Bob Krause

Bob Krause indicated that the VNCC transitioned from the Veterans National Recovery Center VNRC, and started with an opportunity at the Knoxville VA campus. There is a significant shortfall of resources to address the veteran community of 400,000-800,000 suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There were 140,000 homeless veterans suffering from PTSD, but this number is going down. The VNCC concept is to establish a campus, provide 2-4 hours of counseling, group therapy, massage therapy, horticultural therapy, and partnership with the National level organization.

The VNCC was not successful in obtaining the Knoxville campus; was outbid in Nebraska, but found a 40,000 square foot facility in Newton. Bob Krause estimates that the capacity for this facility is 958 veterans / residents. It will cost \$30,000,000 to renovate the facility. The goal is to fund the VNCC through the Homeless Veterans Program. This will provide \$31.00 per day in per diem for ambulatory residents and \$38.00 per day for disabled veterans. Breakeven point is 550 residents; anything above that will allow the VNCC to invest resources into veterans outreach. Bob informed the Commission that the Veterans Transition Program per diem program has not been funded at this time. Bob is working with congressional delegations to find other funding sources, but until that works out, the VNCC is in a holding pattern. Bottom line is that Bob Krause and his team are looking to establish a national model for both homeless veterans and PTSD treatment using a holistic approach, including "Vet to Vet" programs.

- Question – May want to inquire about why the VA would stop federal funding of a program that is helping to transition veterans. If we don't invest in helping veterans transition when they recently separate, then we'll have to invest other resources later when they break the law, etc.
- Question – There was a discussion on the licensing requirements associated with organizations, like the proposed VNCC, to have professional licensure. The concern is that there are many guidelines, and that the VNCC would appear not to meet some of the basic requirements. Bob Krause indicated that the VNCC in Newton will use community hospital services, and would use the DMACC campus for education.

- Question – It sounds like the VNCC will have a significant number of mental health counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists on staff. Will this be realistic due to the existing shortfall of professionals in this field? Bob Krause indicated that they will use the VA’s “Vet to Vet” certification program.
- Question – How will veterans get to the Newton facility? Steve Mulcahy reported that he has traveled to numerous VA medical centers across the country, and when he has done so, he has presented on the VNCC initiative here in Iowa. He has been asked by VAMCs that when the facility opens, let them know so that they can send veterans this way. He also stated that transporting veterans to this facility would become a VA expense and responsibility. He also indicated that the VA will provide the certified professionals at the VNCC.

Note from Amy Beller from Senator Tom Harkin’s Office – (Submitted after the meeting for the minutes.)

The Mil-Con VA Conference Report was completed on December 16, 2011. Two numbers from this report indicates for the Homeless Veterans Programs: \$4.9 billion for health care and support services for homeless veterans. This includes \$939 million in direct programs to assist homeless veterans, including \$202 million for the HUD-VASH program and \$224 for the Homeless Grant Per Diem Program. This program was not defunded.

Construction: The agreement includes \$489.6 million, as requested, for major construction projects at the VA. Additionally, the agreement provides \$482.4 million for minor construction projects, \$16 million over the fiscal year 2011 enacted level.

Old Business

State Public Policy Group (SPPG) – Jennifer Furler

Handouts/Updates

- (1) Key activities on mental health since the last report to the Commission
- (2) Commission sponsored Mental Health First Aid Training update
- (3) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Admin SAMHSA Fact Sheet
- (4) Deliverables Requested by Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

The SPPG will return requests for information to Jodi Tymeson relative to the contract that needs to be signed in order to confirm other expectations.

Veterans Home Update – David Worley

After the VA survey of all the new construction happens, we hopefully will have all 180 new beds occupied by the end of February. We are planning a very small, subtle ceremony because it’s the middle of winter.

Just started talks to redesign the Malloy and Dack buildings into all single rooms; still waiting on the VA budget to be approved and we are on the priority list to get the funds to get started.

IVH's budget is relatively good operationally and we are streamlining other operations so we can get the funding to upgrade the boiler system.

Camp Dodge Office Update – Jodi Tymeson

Cemetery

At the Cemetery the Submariners Monument is in place and has been dedicated. The 3/5 Armored CAV Monument is in place and dedicated. The American Legion has had the base installed. Had a very successful Wreaths Across America on December 10th. Staffing is tight at the Cemetery. We have had 1,043 interments as of January 9th. Jodi also touched on an organization that is going around the state selling caskets. Veterans **DO NOT** need to purchase one of these caskets to be buried at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery. We are trying to get the word out about this and have contacted the Iowa Attorney General's Office. Their literature states specifically, "Don't be fooled, your state has a national or state cemetery and you may be eligible for a burial space and free headstone ... Return this card for free information."

They are leading veterans to believe that they have to buy a casket from them in order to get these benefits for interment at the Cemetery. We are always reassuring veterans that their eligibility for interment is based on your discharge paperwork and their service in the military that makes them qualified. Just a reminder, interments at the Cemetery are either casket or cremations, it's the veterans choice. Choosing a casket or cremation is done by the funeral homes; this process is **NOT** done at the Cemetery. We open and close the site, provide military honors, and we order and install the headstone all free of charge to the veteran and a \$300 fee for the spouse.

Veterans Trust Fund

There is still a backlog of approximately \$92,000. Jodi has had some preliminary discussions with the Governor's Office and the legislators with good willingness to solve this issue. The Veterans Coalition on its legislative initiatives to allow some of the Lottery's proceeds to be deposited in the "spendable" account. Another long term alternative would be to allow the interest to be deposited back into the principle, so we are always putting the interest back in and then allow us the authority to spend a certain amount of the principle for the applications every year. These are some alternatives up for discussion. Further discussion continued on the process of using the Trust Fund.

There is a need to educate counties that they need to ensure that they consider all other funding sources before they submit a trust fund application. There is tremendous value-added to the counties when County VSOs bring federal dollars into the counties through compensation and pensions. We, as a State, need to do a better job of explaining the secondary effects of these efforts. There is a report available at <http://www.va.gov> that provides data and statistics relative to the amount of compensation and pensions coming into each county. Need to make sure that counties, especially boards of supervisors, are aware of this.

There is an incredible amount of information available on-line on the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Web Site at <http://va.gov/> and on our own State web site at <https://va.iowa.gov/>. There are many initiatives taking place now that will help the veteran's community, and we need to understand that the VA is in the process of turning a very, very large ship.

The Military Homeownership Program is currently out of money. The Governor's Office is aware and will probably be addressed by the Legislature. The good news is that veterans are aware of the program and are using it.

Upcoming Events

- Veterans Day at the State Capitol, January 18th, 9:00 a.m. for vendors, MG Orr's address at 10:00 a.m. and the program begins at 11:00 a.m.
- Spring School for County Commissioners/County Directors will be held at the Embassy Suites in downtown Des Moines from April 24-26

Public Comment

None

Determine next Commission meeting

The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 4, 2012 at the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown. The location at IVH will be determined at a later date. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Trust Fund Applications

After discussion of application #00517 requesting \$2,014 for dental expenses, Commissioner McAllister made a motion to approve and Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00519 requesting \$2,024.47 for dental expenses, Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00520 requesting \$2,430.98 for vehicle repair, Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of application #00521 requesting funds for dental expenses, Commissioner McMartin made a motion to defer until dental insurance coverage has been determined. Commissioner Gannon seconded the motion to defer. Motion carried; deferred unanimously.

After discussion of application #00523 requesting \$435 for vision expenses and \$2,500 (max.) for dental expenses, Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve the \$435 for vision expenses. Commissioner Gannon seconded the motion to approve the vision expenses. Motion carried; approved unanimously. Regarding the \$2,500 for dental expenses,

Commissioner Wallace made a motion to defer the dental so applicant can look into a lower estimate at the VA Iowa City Medical Center. Commissioner McAllister seconded the motion. Motion carried; deferred unanimously.

After discussion of application #00524 requesting \$130 for dental expenses, Commissioner Gannon made a motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

The Trust Fund application process adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mari Mielke
Recording Secretary

- Cc:** Jeffrey Boeyink, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office
Ted Stopulos, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
Sandra Hurtado-Peters, Department of Management
Barbara Galloway, Assistant Attorney, Attorney General's Office
Jennifer Acton, Legislative Fiscal Agency
Jenny Lawrence, Auditor's Office
Steven Ainger, Department of Administrative Services
David Worley, Commandant, IVH
Michael Hines, Administrative Assistant, IVH
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 Committee, Vice-C
Representative Jerry Kearns, House VA Committee, RM
- Jerry Hansen, President, IACCVSO
Lisa Breun, Director, VA Regional Office
Barry Sharp, Director, VAMC, Iowa City
Don Cooper, VAMC, Des Moines
John Derner, Adjutant, American Legion
Jon Schneider, President, PVA
Reginald Richardson, Pres., Reserve Officers Assn.
Larry Jatho, Adjutant, DAV
David Hunter, Commander, Marine Corp. League
Ron Healy, Iowa UAW Veterans Committee
Julie Simon, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff
Tom Ashworth, Senate Republican Caucus Staff
Zeke Furlong, House Democratic Research Staff
Jill Jennings, House Republican Caucus Staff