

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting
Wednesday, July 9, 2014, beginning at 10:00 a.m.
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum
7105 - NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

Present: Kate Myers, Chair until later election
Richard Goebel
Dan Gannon
Monica Blakley
Elizabeth Ledvina
Larry Spencer
Bill Wallace
Jon Wille
Mickey Williams

Staff: Robert King, Executive Director, IDVA
Mari Mielke, IDVA - Recording Secretary

Jodi Tymeson, Commandant, IVH

**Guests/
Presenters:** Bart Quick, VA Central Iowa HCS
Dave Thornburg, DAV/Iowa Veterans Council
Kristi Kielhorn, House GOP
Mary Maguire, Survivor Outreach Services
Mysty Stumbo, Survivor Outreach Services
Jerry Hansen, Montgomery County VA
Patty Hamann, Cedar County VA
Jevon Robinson, Black Hawk County VA
Brett McLain, Story County VA

Mike Kuhn, Marion County VA
Terri Beer, Director, VARO
Darlene McMartin, Pottawattamie Co. VA
Melinda Stoner, Survivor Outreach Ser.
Greg Hapgood, Iowa National Guard
Sue Rich, Washington County VA
Ray Chambers, Jefferson County VA
Gary Boseneiler, Johnson Co VA
Julie Simon, IA Senate Demo. VA Comm.

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

APPROVED: 
Richard (George) Goebel, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Date: 10/07/2014

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order by Chair Kate Myers at 10:02 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

Pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Myers followed by a moment of silence.

Roll Call:

Recording secretary took roll call.

Welcome/Introductions of Guests:

Chair Myers welcomed everyone in attendance and asked guests and Commission members to introduce themselves.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Commissioner Gannon made a motion to approve the Commission minutes of April 2, 2014 quarterly meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Wallace, motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wille made a motion to approve the minutes of the Trust Fund meeting of April 3, 2014 and was seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the minutes of the Trust Fund meeting of May 1, 2014 and was seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Goebel made a motion to approve the minutes of the Trust Fund meeting of June 5, 2014 and was seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

VA Regional Office Update

Terri Beer, Director of the VA Regional Office provided the following update.

The Des Moines RO currently has 117.8 employees compared to 102.6 in July 2013. In March 2014, the Veterans Service Center FTE was increased by 10 which includes a position for an Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager. The RO administers benefit programs and provides service to approximately 233,815 veterans in the state. 72.88% of the employees at the RO are veterans. Monthly comp and pen payments for beneficiaries total \$33.2 million for June 2014.

The RO reduced the inventory of one-year-old claims by 93.0% in FY13 to 125 as compared to its peak of 1,783 in December 2012. We have made significant strides in rating related claims completed during the last year. 20.8% increase in completed claims through May of FY14 as compared to completions through May FY13. This is an increase of 64.1% since May 2012.

Going to Centralized Mail on July 18, 2014. Going to National Work Queue in FY15. Since December 2012, FDC receipts went up from 3.5% to 59.1% in June 2014. The Des Moines and Iowa City VAMC now have DBQ Clinics. The VR&E has extended outreach to include all 99 county VSOs, 15 Iowa CBOCs, 3 Iowa Vet Centers, 2 neighboring state Vet Centers, 5 neighboring state VAMCs, and the Warrior transition units in Rock Island and Omaha. This has resulted in better

identification of and service delivery to atypical veteran populations located in rural catchment areas.

A written report was submitted from the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System for the record.

Des Moines VA Medical Center Update

Bart Quick, Outreach Coordinator updated the Commission for the Des Moines VA Medical Center on behalf of Director, Judy Johnson-Mekota.

Mr. Quick reported on the construction projects currently going on include: Radiology project is 97% completed and looking at a completion time frame of September 2014. A new MRI machine is being installed hopefully done in October 2014. The Sterilizing Processing Center has not yet started but looking to be completed September 2016. The emergency room is 87% completed with a December 2014 completion date. The Boiler plan completed June 2015, the Chiller Plan May 2016. Pharmacy repair from a water leak incident completed in the next week or so. Reconstruction of the main entry into 6M, which is the out-patient clinic is ongoing.

In the mental health area there a currently 60 beds in the domiciliary program which includes PTSD, substance abuse, and homeless patients. There are also 10 acute psych beds that are short term. These beds are for patients who have either have suicidal tendencies or have gone off their medication and need to come in and have a med break, or med vacation and get reevaluated.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the Delta Dental Insurance now offered to veterans and how it will affect the Trust Fund applications from counties requesting funds for dental expenses for veterans.

New Business

Presentation of Survivor Outreach Services by Support Coordinator, Mysty Stumbo. Survivor Outreach Services mission is to build a unified program which embraces and reassures survivors that they are continually linked to the Army Family for as long as they desire. The Iowa Survivor Outreach Services has three regions with three support coordinators. Surviving family members of all branches of services of service regardless of date or type of loss; they serve the spouse, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, etc.

Please contact her at: Mysty Stumbo, 700 Corporal Snedden Drive, Boone, IA 50036, 515-252-4852 or at mysty.r.stumbo.ctr@mail.mil.

Old Business

- Commissioner Gannon did an update from the Legislative Coalitions 2014 Initiatives. Among these initiatives included funding to retain veterans in Iowa retired pay by exempting of federal military pensions from state income taxes; language changes to the Iowa Code on Chapter 35B. Removed "Iowa" from the definition of "Guard" and "Reserve" for 35.1, which allows property owners that retire from other states can benefit from the property tax exemption in Iowa. Another significant initiative accomplished this last year was property tax exemption for 100% service-connected disabled veterans for DIC.
- The Commission discussed the sub-committee assignments and Kate Myers will be putting together a new list that will include the new Commission members designated to specific sub-committees.

- Review of the License Plate Fund: Col. Bob King briefed the Commission on the past expenditures of the Fund which included purchasing of 50,000 Quick Books to be distributed to all the counties VA offices (this was done twice) and \$5,000 was allocated for advertising and marketing for the Veterans Career Fair held at the Camp Dodge Freedom Center. Col. King proposes to use the License Plate Fund to look into using the IT Division of the Department of Public Defense to build programs and let them put together an electronic site similar to the Quick Book Series of veteran information.

There was discussion about ways to use the License Plate Fund for miscellaneous programs and assisting Iowa's veteran community. The Commission also discussed the possibility of creating an application and setting up a process to use the application to help benefit veterans programs and outreach efforts throughout the state. The Commission has the discretion of how these funds are used.

Camp Dodge Office Update

Col. Robert King (Ret) briefed the Commission on:

- Legislation: 1) Home Base Iowa Act, Senate File 303 – exemption of federal military pensions from state income tax. 2) License Plate Fees – eliminates the special plate issuance fees for first plate. 3) Senate File 2352 exemption of property taxes for 100% service-connected disability veterans and dependents and DIC recipients.
- Iowa Veterans Cemetery: 2,050 interments as of today. June 2014 was the busiest month to date; 59 interments in 21 days. \$1.2M (\$919,612 U.S. Veterans Administration cemetery grant/\$250,000 FY'13 State legislature appropriation) Construction Program is complete!
- Veterans Trust Fund: To date (calendar year) there have been 100 applications for a total of \$119,500 approved.
- Injured Veterans Grant: 2014 – 6 applicants for a total of \$57,500; balance \$426,397
- License Plate Fund balance is \$438,071.26
- Military Home Ownership Grant Program: 2013 total – 339.
- County Allocations: the annual reports continue to be received by the July 31 due date. 2015 allocation checks will be sent to counties beginning the first week of August for those that have submitted acceptable FY'14 reports.
- Events: Several Memorial Day activities, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day ceremony, dedication of the Ex-Prisoners-of-War monument at the Veterans Cemetery, Governor's Volunteer Recognition Program ceremony on June 18, and Purple Heart Day is August 7. The Iowa State Fair Veterans Day Parade is Monday, August 11 and 2014 Fall School of Instruction for County Veteran Service officers is October 22-24 at the Embassy Suites, Des Moines.

Col. King would like to request from the Commission funds from the License Plate Fund to produce and purchase brochures about the Iowa Veterans Cemetery to put in the packets for the families of their fallen veteran.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to provide up to \$500 for IDVA to produce the brochures for the Cemetery packets and to have IDVA look into the costs for DPD's IT department to create an electronic site that would provide information similar to the Quick Books in an electronic format. Commissioner Gannon seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wallace mentioned to Col. King about some of the counties requesting assistance from the Veterans Trust Fund seem to have a problem providing all of the pertinent

information at the time of application, which makes it difficult to assist the veteran with incomplete applications; would it be appropriate for a letter from you to the county directors, letting them know that if the lack of information provided at the time of application continues that a letter from IDVA will be forthcoming to your county Board of Supervisors?

Col. King said that he would talk with Missy Miller the Trust Fund Administrator to see about drafting such a letter.

Veterans Home Update

Commandant Tymeson distributed her packet of information which includes:

- Current census: 583 (nursing care = 476/residential care = 107)
- Completed the Recognition Survey (VA) in conjunction with moving residents into the renovated Malloy North Tower. This was also the opportunity to ensure the correct number of certified beds – 509. Waiting for final paperwork from the Secretary, but indications are we passed the survey deficiency-free
- The month of May began our window for the DIA annual survey; we are still in that window.
- Began the budget process several months ago with all IVH budget managers. Will be submitting budget requests for FY'16 and FY'17 by the October deadline. Will be asking your budget approval in September. Will need to request some additional state matching funds for construction of the new 60-bed CLC.
- Five-Year Strategic Plan distributed.
- Marketing and Outreach Plan distributed and is an action item.

IVH has put together a marketing plan with 28 action steps to generate to the press and media IVH's mission and getting the word out about the Veterans Home and developing more active relationships with the community and community leaders and the TV and press community.

We had an informal discussion at the last meeting about the License Plate Fund and how those funds could be used. IVH is requesting \$6,000 from the License Plate Fund to cover the following: \$2,000 for DVD production/reproduction of an updated marketing video promoting the Iowa Veterans Home; \$2,000 for a graphic designer to redesign the IVH website and production of more current brochures; and \$2,000 for specific radio/newspaper advertising for events and for volunteers. This is a one-time expenditure to get IVH off the ground to market what IVH has identified to move forward.

Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve the \$6,000 request for marketing and outreach efforts for the Iowa Veterans Home. Commissioner Gannon seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

Elections

Commissioner Gannon made a motion to nominate George Goebel as the new Chair effective immediately. With no other nominations, Commissioner Wille seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to nominate Monica Blakley as the 1st Vice-Chair beginning immediately. With no other nominations, Commissioner Wille seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wille made a motion to nominate Bill Wallace as 2nd Vice-Chair beginning immediately. With no other nominations, Commissioner Goebel seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

Meeting Comments

Commissioner Spencer wanted to take this opportunity to voice his appreciation how well all the veterans service organizations, the veterans service offices, the county offices, Des Moines Regional Office and the Des Moines and Iowa City Medical Centers have been working together and communicating on behalf of all Iowa's veterans and their families really does pay off. Thank you all for what you do and your commitment to helping the veteran community in the State.

Commissioner Wille distributed a National Executive Committee of the American Legion from May 4-5, 1988, Resolution No. 37: Reaffirmation of the American Legion Policy Concerning Affiliation with Other Organizations. There was lengthy discussion of opinions from several of the Commission members regarding this issue and why the American Legion will not become a member of the Veterans Council and the Veterans Legislative Coalition.

Next Commission meeting

The next quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 1, at the Iowa Veterans Home, Marshalltown beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Malloy Leisure Center.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.