

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting  
January 7, 2015 beginning at 10:00 a.m.  
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum  
7105 - NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

**Present:** Richard Goebel, Chair (**No quorum**)  
Dan Gannon  
Elizabeth Ledvina  
Larry Spencer  
Jon Wille

**Absent:** Monica Blakley  
Kate Myers  
Mickey Williams

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

<b>Guests/ Presenters:</b>	Mike Carstens, Des Moines VAMC	Ron Healey
	David Thornburg, IA Veterans Council	Steven Hyde, MOPH
	Kent Ohms, LSA	Mary Neubauer, Iowa Lottery
	John Derner, American Legion	Terri Beer, VARO
	Jevon Robinson, Black Hawk Co. VSO	Mitch Holmes, Cass County VSO

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

**APPROVED:** Monica Blakley Date: 1 Apr 15  
Richard (George) Goebel, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

**Call to Order:**  
Meeting was called to order by Chair Goebel.

**Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:**  
Recited the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence on behalf of Commission Member Bill Wallace who passed away December 2, 2014. Commissioner Gannon spoke a few words of his dedication to the Commission.

**Roll Call:**  
Recording secretary took roll call and it was determined there was not a quorum.

**Welcome/Introductions of Guests:**  
Chair Goebel welcomed everyone in attendance and asked guests to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Commission Minutes:**  
Since there was not a quorum, minutes would be approved by electronic mail.

**VA Regional Office Update**  
Terri Beer, the Director of the Des Moines Regional Office was present for an update.

We currently have approximately 117 employees and continue to hire. Our compensation and pension payments totaled 32,000,000 last month and have 233,000 Iowa veterans and beneficiaries that the RO assists. The RO continues to broker in cases from two additional offices about every two weeks because we are able to do our work plus additional claims. We have become more efficient and do the claims very well and quickly. We have decreased our backlog by 75% since July of 2012 from 5,100 to 3,100.

We did a Town Hall with the Des Moines Medical Center at the Medical Center the second week of December. We had a claims clinic, so anyone to check a claim or file a new claim. We will be doing another one sometime in March at the same Medical Center.

#### **Iowa City VAMC Update**

No report.

#### **Sioux Falls VAMC Update**

Written report submitted.

#### **Des Moines VAMC Update**

A good news story is the Pharmacy staff is 78% either board certified or in a residency program, which is quite unusual for a pharmacy program. Held a Town Hall meeting the second week of December that was quite successful and will continue to have them at different times of the day.

Regarding our homeless veterans; the end of December we have 43 veterans in emergency shelters, 34 in transitional housing, and about 19 veterans that are unsheltered. We are looking at how we can better serve these veterans. When we had our Stand Down in late September 2014 we served about a 1,098 veterans vs. a 1,000 the prior year.

Discussed quick facts about the new veterans "Choice Card." Visit [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/) for more information. To verify your eligibility call: 866-606-8198.

#### **Veterans Home Update**

Commandant Jodi Tymeson not present - written report submitted.

#### **Camp Dodge Office Update**

Col. King updated the Commission on the following items:

- Senate File 2352: Exemption of property taxes for Individual Unemployables has been reviewed by the Department of Revenue and sent to LSA for editing.
- 2,290 Cemetery interments; one disinterment and reinterred with husband
- Headstone placement is at 100% within 60 days, and the accuracy of the headstone inscriptions is at 100% received with no errors
- Our temporary employee from Vocational Rehab has been extended until March with all costs borne by the US VA working 20-25 hours a week
- Received an unofficial verbal proposal to our Superintendent Keith Blum at the Cemetery from the Sons of the American Legion to donated monument. Discussion followed
- Cemetery construction is complete, continuing to pay bills
- The Veterans Trust Fund has approved 923 applications since July 1, 2007
- Military Home Ownership Grant program of 2014 Senate File 303 increased funding to \$2.5M
- Camp Dodge alone has approved over 1,000 applications for the new "veterans" designation on driver's licenses and Statewide has issued approximately 18,000

- Veterans Day at the Capitol will be Wednesday, January 21 with program beginning at 10:00 a.m.
- Website update continues for cleaner appearance and easier navigation
- Veterans Day at the Capitol is Wednesday, January 21; program begins at 10:00 a.m.

### **Old Business**

The Marine Corps League, Larry Nehring Detachment #103 submitted proposal will be voted on by email, since there is not a quorum at today's meeting.

### **New Business**

Mary Neubauer from the Iowa Lottery presented to the Commissioner a Proposed 2015 Change to Stabilize Lottery Proceeds to the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund. The proposal, in short, is the Lottery proceeds to the IVTF have been on the decline for the past few years. FY2014, for the first time since it began raising money for the cause, it did not reach its publicly stated goal of providing between \$2 million and \$3 million for the IVTF; it only raised \$1.8 million.

As part of its long-term business plans, the Lottery is considering changes to its pull-tab product, which would also necessitate a change in Iowa Code language referencing the IVTF.

In order to stabilize ongoing proceeds to the IVTF and provide the Lottery with the business flexibility it needs to maximize its overall proceeds to state causes, the Lottery suggests that the Code references to Lottery support for veterans' causes be changed in 2015. We are requesting that a specific amount in Lottery proceeds (\$2.5 million) be dedicated annually to the IVTF. This amount is the midpoint of the lottery's publicly stated goal for this ongoing initiative. Lottery proceeds to the IVTF in individual years have varied, with overall results both higher and lower than that amount, so the Lottery anticipates no fiscal impact to the Trust Fund from this change. The impact would be positive, with Lottery proceeds to that cause being stabilized.

### **Public Comment**

Ongoing during the meeting.

### **Next Commission meeting**

On April 1, 2015 at the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown in the Mallory Recreation Leisure Hall.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.