

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Wednesday, April 2, 2014 - 10:00 a.m.
Iowa Veterans Home
1301 Summit Street
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158

Present: Kate Myers, Chair
Col. Todd Jacobus
Dan Gannon
Darlene McMartin
Becky Dirks-Haugsted
Larry Spencer
Jon Wille
Mickey Williams

Absent: Bill Wallace

Staff: Robert King, Executive Director, IDVA Jodi S. Tymeson, Commandant, IVH
Michael Hines, IVH – Recording Secretary

**Guests/
Presenters:**

Terri Beer, VA	Marie Lofgren, VA
Mike Kuhn, Marion County VSO	Valerie Buckingham, Iowa City VAHCS
Bart Quick, Des Moines, VAMC	Emily Gilbert, University of Iowa
Amy Beller, Senator Tom Harkins	Jenna Ringler, University of Iowa
David Thornburg, DAV	Kratie Kranovich, University of Iowa
Mari Mielke, IDVA	Melody Mata, University of Iowa
Angelina Galbreath, University of Iowa	Justin Lane, University of Iowa
Lynn Lounsberry, University of Iowa	Annie Cox, Goldstar Widow
Sophia Cox, Goldstar Kid	John Mikelson, Midwest Military Outreach
Gary Marqvarot, VFW Dept IA Cmdr	Gary Boseneiler, Johnson County CVSO
Patty Hamann, Cedar County CVSO	Jevon Robinson, Blackhawk County VSO
Kyra Moore, Home for Heroes	Lisa Char, Home for Heroes
Sunny Griffin, Homes for Heroes	Judy Johnson-Mekota, Central Iowa VAHCS
Sandra Horsman, Iowa City VAHCS	

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

APPROVED: Kate Myers
Kate Myers, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Date: 7/9/14

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order by Chair Kate Myers at 10:01 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 to introduce themselves.

New Business:

Jon Mickelson gave a presentation on Midwest Military Outreach, Inc. services. Midwest Military Outreach is a connected organization that provides navigational services for veterans. Jon presented a power point and spoke on the services and the upcoming events that the Midwest Military Outreach provides for the veterans. Col. Jacobus asked how the organization is funded; Jon explained that it is funded with donations and that they are still working on grants for funding.

Commissioner Gannon introduced students from the University of Iowa School of Social Work as well as a Gold Star family. Two representatives spoke on better legislation and their experiences in support of Gold Star families. Lynn Lounsberry from the University of Iowa, who has been an intern with the military the last three years, spoke on her experiences on different bases. While doing a needs assessment; we found several stories of survivors struggling in our own state and don't have the financial need to support themselves when a spouse has been killed in combat or has become 100% disabled. While comparing Iowa's laws with other states, Texas proposed an amendment to their tax amendment which was that there can be 100% tax exemption for their homestead, 100% disabled veterans, and 100% tax exemption for spouses for an individual killed in combat. Texas did pass this law and went into effect this year. Lounsberry introduced Annie Cox, Gold Star widow. Annie told the story on how her husband was killed. Annie explained that she assisted the State of Texas in introducing the bill there. Annie told the audience about her experience at the Capital and how she felt that the State of Iowa had forgotten about her and the Gold Star families. Col. Jacobus thanked Annie Cox for speaking to the audience and commission.

Commissioner Gannon spoke on the current issues with legislation for veterans.

Commissioner Gannon gave an update/overview on the 5 initiatives that were put together during this legislative session. The initiatives were funding for various organizations such as Iowa Veterans Home, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Trust Fund, County Allocation Fund, Injured Veteran Grant Program, Military Homeownership Program, Veterans License Fee Fund, Retired Military income state tax exemption (SF303), Iowa Code Chapter 35B (language changes), Property Tax Exemption (military tax credit) for 100% service-connected, Gold Star, and increase in military homestead tax credit (\$1,852 off your assessed value and hasn't been changed since the 1940s), license plate fees (veteran type plate you won't pay the initial issuance fee but

will pay the annual fee which goes into the drivers license fee fund which separate). Col. Jacobus recognized Commissioner Gannon and DAV (Disabled American Veterans) President Dave Thornburg for their work and representation with the Iowa Legislatures this General Assembly.

Col. Todd Jacobus introduced the representatives from Waterstone Mortgage in Urbandale, Iowa. Representing Waterstone Mortgage was Sunny Griffin, Lisa Char, and Kyra Moore. They briefed the commission and audience on what the company has to offer in regards to mortgage financing.

The License Plate Fund was discussed by the commissioners. There is currently over \$400,000 in that fund. Commissioner Gannon informed the committee that it was at the discretion of the commission on how we use the funds. Commandant Tymeson suggested that we look at the Administrative Rules. Commissioner McMartin commented that the commission had no line items budget and that the commissioner's hotel bills, travel, etc. come out of License Plate Fund. Commissioner Gannon suggested a web drop-down site for veteran benefits on the IDVA web site versus making more veteran booklets called "Quick Book" that list benefits. Veteran benefits are changing constantly and a web site would be better. For instance, when this legislation is done, we are going to have new benefits through the Home Base initiative.

VA Regional Office Update:

Terri Beer Director of the VA Regional Office presented the Commission with an update on the VA Regional Office.

Average day pending is 163 and about half that number is broken claims and makes up half of the inventory. That number fluctuates depending on the number of claims that are taken in at the Regional Office.

Director Beer commented on that they continue to proceed production every month to include the high leave month; November, December, and January. The office continues to work on being paperless; 90% of the office is currently paperless. The Regional Office was one of the first 18 offices to go paperless.

The DOC in the RO (Regional Office) is doing about 200 exam opinions a month; along with some ACE (Acceptable Clinical Evidence) exams which are 50-60% of the 200 exams.

Director Beer thanked everyone for the hiring fair that took place at the Gold Star Museum. We hired 6 veterans from the hiring fair. We have also just received another 9 positions (Veterans Service Representative) for the office and will be advertising for that as well.

Director Beer briefed the commission that they were working with the CVSOs and VSOs with their remote access code.

VA Medical Center - Iowa City Update:

Sandra Horsman, Acting Director, presented the VA Medical Center Iowa City Update.

Director Horsman briefed the commission on some key vacancies. The Director position will be going out for its second recruitment and will close this Friday. The initial recruitment did not yield any substantial candidates. There is a tentative candidate for the Chief of Staff and are going through the approval process. We hope to have a Chief of Staff in the office by mid-May. We also

have hired 4 new Nurse Supervisors to help us organize the nursing staff and to continue to provide additional medical support to our veterans.

Director Horsman gave an update on the parking garage. Phase 2 started on April 1st. Parking Maps/Flyers were distributed to meeting attendees. The long term goal will give us an additional 200 parking spaces. There are currently 2 shuttles that are running through the parking lot from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Director Horsman reminded everyone that there is no parking out front.

Dubuque and Bettendorf CBOCs have been given an initial approval for relocations from the Secretary. They will now go through the contracting process. We are still waiting on the relocation package for Cedar Rapids CBOC. Elected officials, stakeholders, and media will be contacted as soon as we start going through the request for proposal process.

The casting away fishing trip is going on. This is a collaborative between the PVA, Iowa Eagles Club, and the Iowa City VA Health Care System. It is scheduled for June 7 - 14 in Ely Minnesota.

Director Horsman briefed the Veterans Homelessness & Outreach Program for the following centers:

Cedar Rapids (FY13) - 4,512 encounters (4,335 males & 177 females) Top visits were for - Clothing, Pantry, Food Table and Free Bin, Computer usage

Rock Island, ILL (FY13) - 3,3347 encounters (2,995 males & 352 females) Top visits were for - Coffee (1,046 visits), Clothing, Pantry, and Computer usage

The Iowa City VA has just recently purchased an audiology van. We will be receiving it this spring. It will be used for our clinics in the area and for outreach. The plan is use some of it for homeless stand-downs as well. Director Horsman informed the commission that we have 2 veteran transport vans (special mode transport). The primary focus of them is to provide door to door service for our harder to reach areas; still within the 50 mile radius.

We just recently received our numbers for Comp & Pen. Our average processing days are down to 26 days. There is a Comp & Pen representative that is going out and doing some training with providers.

Director Horsman spoke about the delays for appointments in our specialty clinics. We have hired several new staff, nurses, staff support providers, and additional contracts to meet the wait times. The surgical operating rooms are going to be relocated, renovating and expanding space for patient support programs, expanding Bldg# 1 for our PAC program. We are also re-designing and re-configuring our domestic water as a precautionary measure against Legionella. We plan to do preventive maintenance.

The VA has recently sent out the guidance and information regarding the elimination of the Means Test recording requirements. For the vast majority of veterans they will not have to have Means testing because we will go to the IRS and SSA.

Question from the audience was about veteran's private insurance being billed by the VA. This is to include veterans that are service connected 70% or higher.

VA Medical Center – Des Moines Update:

Director Judy Johnson-Mekota introduced herself and presented the Des Moines VA Central Iowa Health Care System update.

Director Johnson-Mekota briefed the commission on the key vacancies (providers), and Hospitalist position within the facility. In terms of administrative positions we are still looking for a Human Resource Chief and a HIBS Chief (record keeping).

Construction update - We are currently on target for a minor for the emergency department. We are hoping that it will be open sometime this summer. We are looking at expanding our sterile processing services. Currently, it is not optimal space for the sterile operations. Our 3B expansion minor (med surgery area) is being delayed. We are converting to 26 private rooms to include adding space so that we can assist with our oncology patients and for some other service patient in event that they may need a bed. This ward should be open sometime in June 2014. It will help with privacy concerns as well. We do have 3 new minors that have been approved for design this year. We are designing for the cottages for a new Community Living Center (CLC) of care take this year. This is a new concept model for community living center care. We are also expanding our OR (Operating Room) and needs to be remodeled. A mental health building will be designed and built as well. Our last big project is associated with our imaging services. We will be adding a Pet CT scanner and will be adding a myography and will be a great benefit for our female veterans. We are hoping that this will be complete by June.

There are no concerns for budget execution this year. We are doing very well with Comp & Pen and are a national best practice in terms of a VA hospital. Director Johnson-Mekota shared a success story with the commission about a veteran who had a 1 day service.

The Homeless Veteran Outreach program will be meeting with some city planners and share our best practices that we have learned nationally and incorporate that into the community. The homeless population in Des Moines is currently 50% veterans.

CBOCs update was given; Director Johnson-Mekota stated that she has not been to all of them due to some scheduling and weather issues. Carroll CBOC serves about 1,302 veterans. Carroll is waiting for an optometrist to be hired and a podiatrist for this. A wide of specialty care is offered there. In Fort Dodge we are servicing about 3,500 veterans. We will also be offering an optometry service there as well along with telehealth services. Knoxville serves about 2,005 veterans. Hopefully, the new contract for the Knoxville CBOC will be awarded soon. The Marshalltown clinic serves about 1,400 veterans. They are waiting to hire a podiatrist. The optometry need is growing and we are looking at hiring a dedicated optometrist. The advantage for the Marshalltown clinic has a provider that is experienced in prolong exposure therapy/PTSD. She has implemented a 12 week program. Mason City offers a variety of care and services. Des Moines VA will be talking with Iowa City VA about using the audiology van to assist in the back log in Des Moines.

Contact information was given to an individual in the audience who had a question about how to when the same physician name being brought up.

Recognition of Outgoing/Incoming ICVA board members:

Chairman Kate Myers addressed the commission and everyone in the audience of the outgoing and incoming commissioners. Each outgoing member was introduced as well as the incoming commissioner. Outgoing commissioners are Becky Dirks Haugsted (VFW), Col. Todd Jacobus (Iowa National Guard), and Darlene McMartin (American Legion). Incoming commissioners are Monica

M. Blakley (Iowa Air National Guard), Richard Goebel (VFW), and Elizabeth Ledvina (American Legion). All other commissioners remain the same.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Commissioner Dirks Haugsted made a motion to approve Commission minutes of January 8, 2014 quarterly meeting. Second by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Trust Fund Applications:

Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve minutes of Trust Fund Meeting of January 9, 2014. Second by Commissioner Dirks-Haugsted. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve minutes of Trust Fund conference call of February 6, 2014. Second by Commissioner Col. Jacobus. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wille made a motion to approve minutes of Trust Fund conference call of March 6, 2014. Second by Commissioner McMartin. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Old Business:

No Report

IDVA Update:

Col. Robert King updated the Commission on the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs.

Col. King briefed that IDVA had 1 audit finding in the state audit. There is a 10 day requirement for transfer of receipts at the cemetery to the comptroller's office and then to the state treasury.

Col. King is please with the legislation and The Home Base Initiative. The budget for the department is status quo. Interments in the cemetery as of last night were 1,874. The construction program should be done at the end of the month. The Veterans Trust Fund has had 33 apps approved for \$50,000, Injured Veterans Grant 6 apps for a total of \$58,000, Honor Guard 18 apps for a total of \$6,000. Col. King continues to sign off on Drivers License Requests. The Homeowner Grant Program approved a total of 339 apps last year.

Col. King informed the commission that a new maintenance worker II has been hired.

Col. King briefed the commission that three weeks ago that he went to the National Cemetery Administrations Cemetery Representative Course.

Col. King briefed the upcoming events: Spirit of 45 was completed; Veteran Service Officer County School is coming up the 15th of April; Job Fair coming up the 24th of April; Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day is May 7 at the Capitol grounds; There are two Memorial Day events; Senator Beall will speak at Vets and Lt. Governor Reynolds has been asked to speak at the Cemetery; Col. King will be going to Cherokee for the WWII recognition on June 7; On June 7th, the Ex-POW monument will be unveiled and recognized in the cemetery; The State of Iowa Veterans Day parade will be on August 11, 2014.

Col. King asked the commission to have the authority to spend up to \$5,000 out of the license fund to promote the Job Fair on April 24, 2014. Commissioner Col. Todd Jacobus made a motion

to approve the funding up to \$5,000. Second by Commissioner Dirks-Haugsted. Motion carried; approved unanimously to spend up to \$5,000 from the License Plate Fund.

At the previous meeting commissioner McMartin asked about the KIOSK in the cemetery being able to do different things. Mindy checked into the request and it will be a minimum of \$4,000. Col. King thought that it end up costing more with equipment as well.

Veterans Home Update:

Jodi Tymeson, Commandant of the Iowa Veterans Home, gave the update on the Iowa Veterans Home. Jodi handed out copies of IVH Insights, Weekly Schedule of Recreation Activities, and briefing comments for today.

1. Current Census: 582 (Nursing Care = 477/Residential Care = 105)

Waiting List: No Issues

Declining census does create budget issues

2. VA was here for the annual survey March 11-14, and we have received their report. Jodi will email that to the commission. We will submit the Plan of Correction within 10 days. Jodi informed the committee that there are 158 standards for the VA survey. There were defiances in 4 areas. Jodi felt that they were isolated and we will write a plan of correction to the VA in 10 days.

3. We will need to complete a Recognition Survey (VA) in conjunction with moving residents into the renovated Malloy North Tower. This is also the opportunity to ensure the correct number of certified beds. We have asked that this be something after May 5 or sometime the first week of June. Anytime that there is major construction or renovation; it is the same process of the annual survey and will re-set the date for our annual survey. So our recognition survey will become our annual survey. We feel that this is a good opportunity to ask for a decertification on of some our beds. Currently in Nursing, we are certified for 573 beds and will asking for 509 certified beds.

4. May begins our window for the DIA annual survey.

5. The State Audit Report should be released soon. We have one reportable item: One capital asset valued at \$41,595.19 was not correctly capitalized (incorrectly coded).

6. Legislative Session: We do not have a departmental bill. No concerns with the budget bill at this time.

7. Status of FY – 14 Budget: Closely monitoring due to drop in census.

8. Strategic Plan Goals: (plan development in process for 5-year plan)

a. Provide the highest quality of care for our residents to maximize their quality of life

b. Continue facility upgrades to ensure safe and modern buildings and grounds; complete transition to all residents in private living spaces.

c. Improve facility-wide communication and employee programs that result in staff feeling respected and valued.

d. Implement a staff development program focused on building effective teams

e. Maximize resources to ensure current and future operations

9. Marketing Committee putting together strategies to inexpensively market IVH.

10. Construction Update:

- a. Malloy North Tower – planning to move residents early May
- b. Malloy South Tower – renovation will begin as soon as residents are moved out
- c. New Community Living Center – award letter received – design in progress
- d. Initial discussion for additional new construction and renovation needs of remaining building

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Commissioner Gannon informed everyone about the Vietnam Veteran Recognition Day is May 7; south of the state capital. We are looking at this as the 50th anniversary. The keynote speaker will be Bob Myers who is the CEO of Casey's and is a Vietnam Veteran.

Determine next Commission Meeting:

The next quarterly Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 9, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in the Gold Star Military Museum, Camp Dodge, Iowa.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Hines
Recording Secretary

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jerry Hansen, President, IACCVSO Matt Hinch, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office Sandra Hurtado-Peters, Dept. of Management Barbara Galloway, Attorney General's Office Jennifer Acton, Legislative Fiscal Agency Jenny Lawrence, Auditor's Office Steve Ainger, Dept. of Administrative Services Jill Joseph, Outreach Coordinator, IDVA Jodi Tymeson, Commandant, IVH Michael Hines, Staff Assistant, IVH Senator Daryl Beall, Senate VA Comm. Chair Senator Jeff Danielson, Senate VA Comm. VC Senator Ken Rozenboom, Senate VA Comm. RM Rep. Dwayne Alons, House VA Comm. Chair Rep. Sandy Salmon, House VA Comm. VC Rep. Jerry Kearns, House VA Comm. RM Colin Tadlock, House Republican Research Staff Zeke Furlong, House Democratic Research Staff Tom Ashworth, Senate Republican Caucus Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terri Beer, Director, VA Regional Office Barry Sharp, Director, VAMC, Iowa City Director, VAMC, Des Moines Lyle Schaffer, Commander, American Legion John Derner, Adjutant, American Legion Larry Winther, Commander, VFW Jon Schneider, President, PVA Dale Purdy, Commander, AMVETS David Thornburg, Commander, DAV Allan Packer, Commander, Ex-Prisoners of War William Gansemer, Commander, MCL Paul Pickard, Commander, MOPH Ray Hutchison, Commander, VVA Judy Johnson, Central Iowa VAHCS Sandra Horsman, Iowa City VAHCS Julie Simon, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff |
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