



Winnebago County Veterans Affairs Commissioners Board Meeting

Thursday, April 25, 2022

10:00 am

Courthouse Board Room

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge

Present: Barney Ruitter, Steve Bosma, and Mary Lou Kleveland. Absent: Dave Peterson

2. Review and Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes

The March monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. Bosma motioned, second by Ruitter to approve the March minutes. Minutes were approved.

3. Veteran Service Officer Reports:

- a. Monthly VA numbers: Mary Lou shared the statistics for March.
- b. Community Outreach –There were two new ads running on K1OW during the month of March. New ads have been running in April as well. Mary Lou continues to do the voiceovers for the ads, and new ads will be recorded for May and June.
- c. Review Monthly Expenditure Report Approval – The March expenditure report was reviewed and approved. Mary Lou shared the need for additional storage for the VA office and showed the commissioners a credenza that she was interested in purchasing for the entryway of the VA. Mary Lou will check about having the credenza paid for with State Allocation Money as this money must be spent by June 30, 2022. Mary Lou stated that she had learned at spring school that federal and county records MUST be stored separately. Federal records can only be seen by a VSO but county records can be reviewed by the commissioners so the files need to be kept separate. Bosma motioned to approve the March expenditure report with the purchase of the desk with state allocation money and Ruitter seconded the motion. Barney Ruitter signed the March report.

4. Old Business: There was no old business to discuss.

5. New Business

- a. VA New & Emerging Information - Mary Lou alerted the commissioners that she would be out of the office on 4/28 and 4/29 as well as 5/13. Mary Lou presented an old resolution that had been emailed to her by Karla Weiss, auditor. Mary Lou explained that Karla had emailed her to inform her that this resolution needs to be passed by the Board of Supervisors each fiscal year. Mary Lou stated that the need for the resolution was confusing because there is a \$10,000 state grant allocation for the county VA to use and promotional items/community outreach items for the VA are approved expenditures for state grant money. Also there is a line item in the approved 2021-2022 budget for the VA office to make these purchases. Ruitter, Bosma and Mary Lou went and spoke to Karla Weiss regarding the need for the resolution. Mary Lou expressed her confusion regarding the need for the resolution for the reasons stated in the meeting to the commissioners. Karla Weiss stated that it is a requirement for the state auditor. Mary Lou stated that it appeared

that it had not been done since 2017 and that the 2017 resolution also talked about a coffee event for veterans. Mary Lou told Karla she was unaware that there had ever been a coffee outreach. Karla stated that Thomas Coffman did them when he was VSO. Mary Lou pointed out that there were a couple of VSOs after Thomas and there were no records to indicate that those VSOs had gotten a resolution approved by the Board of Supervisors. Karla stated that the resolutions should have been done by the previous VSOs.

- b. Training – Mary Lou shared that she had had attended Spring School training in Des Moines the week of April 11th. Mary Lou also received extra training designed for new VSOs which was especially valuable. Mary Lou is awaiting her Office of General Counsel approval and then will be able to complete her security clearance and apply for a PIV card which will allow her to become cross accredited with other VA agencies and will allow her to better serve the Winnebago County veterans. She has already been nationally accredited with the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO).
- c. Hancock County Issues – Mary Lou reported that she has been getting new cases from Hancock County because the VSO there fails to provide the services the veterans need. Mary Lou presented two letters from Hancock County residents explaining why they refuse to have Hancock County handle their veteran affairs needs. Mary Lou explained that she will never turn away a veteran in need but that she also cannot service large numbers of Hancock County veterans when she is already so busy servicing Winnebago County veterans. Mary Lou will be charging Hancock County for the time she is spending on the Hancock County VA cases. Barney Ruitter stated he would reach out to the Board of Supervisors and/or Commissioners in Hancock County to discuss this issue. Discussion will continue on this issue at the May meeting.
- d. Review of current Winnebago County VA policies – At the next meeting Mary Lou will propose changes to the current financial assistance policy. Mary Lou reported that she had been getting several requests recently and the current policy has been difficult to manage, especially when she is contacted with urgent and/or time sensitive needs.
- e. Next Meeting Date: May 23, 2022 @ 10 am

5. **Adjournment** – Bosma motioned; Ruitter second. Meeting adjourned.

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