

# Winnebago County Veterans Affairs Commissioners Board Meeting



**Monday, June 26, 2023 – 10:00 am**  
**Winnebago Co Health Department Board Room**

1. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge**
2. Present: Steve Bosma, Dave Peterson, Troy Thompson and Mary Lou Kleveland.
3. **Review and Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
The May monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. Thompson motioned, seconded by Bosma, to approve the May minutes. All in favor. May minutes were approved.

## **Veteran Service Officer Report**

- a. Monthly VA numbers for May 2023 - Mary Lou shared the statistics for May. The activities for the VA office remain consistent.
  - b. County Outreach Efforts – Mary Lou has run KIOW ads regarding the PACT Act from mid-June to the end of June. The ads were a good way to remind Vietnam and Gulf War veterans about additional benefits available through the PACT Act and to utilize extra budget funds. Mary Lou also shared that Winnebago County had its first Home Base Iowa recipient, Michael Looker. PSAs were sent out about the first HBI recipient event and a picture and article were featured in the Winn-Worth Betco blog and Forest City Summit. Mary Lou initiated the HBI application with Michael and was a part of the HBI event, being quoted in the PSA and being a part of the presentation and picture.
  - c. Review May Monthly Expenditure Report and Approval of Report -The expenditures for May were reviewed. Bosma motioned and Thompson seconded to approve the May expenditures. All in favor. All three commissioners signed off on the expenditure report. Mary Lou advised that there were many expenditures in the May report as Mary Lou was purchasing items for the office to utilize the rest of the FY 22-23 budget. Mary Lou had a preliminary expenditure report for June which the Commissioners also reviewed. Thompson noted that all but 12% of the FY 22-23 budget had been spent.
4. **Old Business**
- a. PSAs produced by the VA for local radio stations - Mary Lou advised that KIOW had not run the PSAs in June since Mary Lou had purchased ads targeting the PACT Act. Mary Lou will touch base with Karl to ask if the PSAs produced by the VA could be run in July and August.
  - b. Donation of historical items – Mary Lou advised that due to time constraints that she had not had an opportunity to look into options for the donation of the historical items but will be following up on it.

5. **New Business – VA New and Emerging Information**

- a. VA New and Emerging Information – Mary Lou advised that there was an increasing issue with a few veterans (and especially one) who fail to give Mary Lou the requested documentation for their claim and then they are argumentative with Mary Lou regarding the progress and potential outcome of their claim. Mary Lou advised that she had discussed the situation with Chris Oliver and Chris shared that some counties are implementing a policy in which the veterans are given a list of their responsibilities in the claim process as well as the responsibilities of the VSO. Both parties sign if they are willing to abide by the outlined responsibilities. If the veteran fails to meet his responsibilities, then Mary Lou can notify him/her that she is withdrawing as POA due to non-compliance and the veteran will then need to deal directly with his/her POA organization to complete the claim. The Commissioners would like Mary Lou to develop a policy using policies from other counties as a guide and then bring it to a future Commissioner meeting for approval and implementation. Regarding the one veteran who has been non-compliant with providing documentation, Thompson suggested that Mary Lou give him specific dates for compliance over a specified period and advise him if he has not complied with any of those requests then Mary Lou will be withdrawing as POA. The Commissioners agreed this should be the process at the beginning of a veteran's noncompliance in the claim development
- b. Re-appointment of Commissioners– Mary Lou stated that Thompson had completed the Commissioner term left when Barney Ruitter passed away in July 2022 and now needed to be appointed to his term from 2023-2026. Mary Lou will talk to Karla Weiss about the appointment with the Board of Supervisors.
- c. Fuel assistance/gas cards- There was a discussion regarding veterans needing fuel assistance from Winnebago County VA. The problem is that the veterans cannot be provided with a gas card from Casey's or Kwik Star because there is no guarantee that the card will be used for gasoline since those stores also sell food, alcohol, cigarettes, etc. The fuel assistance/gas cards would have to be through the Farmer's Coop. The Commissioners advised Mary Lou to contact Farmer's Coop to see if it would be possible for gas cards to be purchased by Winnebago County Veterans Affairs in order to aid with fuel needs of veterans.

**Next Meeting Date:** July 17, 2023 @ 10 am at the Winnebago County Court House.  
**Please note that the July meeting will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, rather than the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday due to a scheduling conflict.**

**Adjournment** – Thompson motioned; Bosma seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

[veterans@winnebagoountyiowa.gov](mailto:veterans@winnebagoountyiowa.gov)  
641.585.5736 office  
641.585.5737 fax  
641.231.0178 cellphone