



**Winnebago County Veterans Affairs Commissioners
Board Meeting
Monday, August 28, 2023 – 10:00 am
Winnebago Co Health Department Board Room**

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge

Present: Steve Bosma, Dave Peterson, Troy Thompson and Mary Lou Kleveland; Thomas Coffman

2. Review and Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes

The July monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. Thompson motioned, seconded by Peterson to approve the July minutes. All in favor. July minutes were approved.

3. Veteran Services Officer Report

- a. Monthly VA numbers: Mary Lou shared the statistics for July. There were no questions about the numbers for the July activities for the VA office.
- b. County Outreach Efforts – Mary Lou will be sending information regarding the new benefits and criteria for veterans who experienced toxic exposure while serving to Thompson. The PACT Act put into law these new benefits and criteria on 8/10/2022. Thompson will work on putting together copy for radio ads and Mary Lou and Thompson will work on developing the ads to be run on KIOW.
- c. Review Monthly Expenditure Report for Approval /Approval & Consideration of purchase of Grave medallions - The commissioners and Mary Lou reviewed the expenditures for July. There were no questions about the expenditures so Thompson motioned and Bosma seconded to approve the July expenditures. All in favor. July expenditure report was approved and all of the commissioners signed off on the report. Mary Lou advised that she needed to order grave medallions as there have been many veteran deaths recently and her supply of medallions was depleted at Memorial Day. Mary Lou asked for approval to make this expenditure. Thompson questioned why Mary Lou needed to get approval when the VA budget had already been approved and there was a line item for grave medallions. Thompson did not feel the Commissioner's approval was necessary for items already budgeted. Mary Lou explained that the current policy only permitted Mary Lou to make certain purchases without the Commissioner's approval. After discussion, the Commissioners asked that the policy for prior approval for purchases be put on the September agenda to determine if a new policy needs to be adopted. For the current need to purchase grave medallions, Bosma motioned for the purchase of grave medallions. Peterson seconded the motion. All in favor. Purchase of grave medallions is approved.

4. Old Business

- a. Resignation of Hancock County & Cerro Gordo County VSOs – Mary Lou reported that James Welsh had been hired as the new Hancock Co VSO and he would be starting in this position next week. Mary Lou advised that she had gotten one inquiry from a Hancock County veteran and another had called about submitting a claim during the time that the Hancock Co office was closed.
- b. Transportation Policy – Mary Lou advised that she did not transport the veteran the end of July because the veteran's surgery was cancelled. Due to Mary Lou's current work load she had not had time to work on developing an updated transportation policy for Winnebago Co VA. Mary

Lou also shared that transportation had not been a huge need in the past 2 years of serving as a VSO. Mary Lou stated that previous commissioner, Barney Ruitter, had done some transportation of veterans before his death. Dave Peterson stated that he would be willing to help with transportation of veterans. He stated that he would need a minimum of one to two weeks' notice of the need and Mary Lou advised that she agreed that there she should be advance notice of at least 2 weeks for a transportation request to be granted.

5. New Business – VA New and Emerging Information

- a. VA New and Emerging Information – Mary Lou advised that the IACCVSO Fall School for Commissioners would be taking place on Monday, October 9th in Altoona. Mary Lou asked if any of the Commissioners were interested in attending. Thompson stated that he would definitely be attending. Mary Lou advised that she would get him registered for the training. Peterson and Bosma will let Mary Lou know by 9/15 if either of them want to attend. Mary Lou had the opportunity to meet Presidential candidate, Ron DeSantis, at FAVA on 8/26. In addition to Mary Lou, FAVA representatives, Beth Bilyeu, Economic Development and Mayor Ron Holland were also present. These individuals shared their concern regarding the lack of adequate mental health resources in rural communities as well as other concerns regarding veterans. After Ron left, the individuals listed above discussed how they can work more consistently with one another to improve the services provided to Winnebago residents and specifically the ever increasing needs of veterans. It was a productive time of networking. Mary Lou will be on vacation from September 14th to September 19th so the office will be closed. Mary Lou will have a greeting on her phone voicemail advising about the office closure and when the office will re-open.
- b. Discussion and possible approval of Success Agreement – Mary Lou gave copies to all of the commissioners with the changes that had been made to the Success Agreement. The Success Agreement will be given to the veteran at the initial office visit. Thompson motioned to approve the amended Success Agreement and Bosma seconded. All in favor. Use of the amended Success Agreement is approved.
- c. Next Meeting Date: September 25, 2023 @ 10 am at the Winnebago County Courthouse.

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

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