



Winnebago County Veterans Affairs Commissioners Board Meeting

Monday, October 28, 2024 – 10:00 am
Winnebago Co Health Department Board Room

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge

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

2. Review and Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes

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

3. Veteran Services Officer Report

- a. Monthly VA numbers: Mary Lou shared the statistics for September 2024.
- b. County Outreach Efforts – Mary Lou will be attending several Veterans Day events in November.
- c. Review Monthly Expenditure Report for Approval - The Commissioners and Mary Lou reviewed the expenditures for September. Thompson motioned and Peterson seconded to approve the September expenditures. All in favor. The September expenditure report was approved and the Commissioners signed off on the report.

4. Old Business

- a. Third Home Base Iowa Recipient – There was no further discussion needed for this topic.
- b. New Winnebago County Financial Assistance Request – There was no further discussion needed regarding the financial assistance request as it was thoroughly addressed last month.
- c. Adoption of New Policies for Financial Assistance Requests – This topic was discussed last month at length. The Commissioners would like to review a couple of policies for Winnebago County VA each month to determine if there needs to be updates or changes to the policies.

5. New Business – VA New and Emerging Information

- a. VA New and Emerging Information – Discussion regarding state grant allocation and training/travel allocation – budget line items, budget amendment, BOS – Mary Lou advised that at Fall Training there had been much discussion about the new travel allocation from the state which went into effect on 7/1/2024 providing \$3,000 for national training for VSOs. During the discussion at the training, it was advised that Veteran Affairs budgets have line items for the state grant allocation as well as a new line item for the training allocation. IDVA plans to send a letter regarding the new training allocation to each county and county auditor to provide relevant information about the new allocation. Mary Lou asked how this need should be approached for the current fiscal year as well as the development and review of the upcoming 2025-2026 fiscal year. The Commissioners felt that Mary Lou should schedule an appointment with Auditor Karla Weiss to discuss the new needs for the budget based on the allocations as well as determining if there needs to be a budget amendment for FY24-25. Then at the November Commissioner meeting, the Commissioners and Mary Lou can begin developing the 2025-2026 FY budget based on the information that Karla Weiss provides.

- b. Discussion regarding Commissioner and VSO Fall Training – Mary Lou reported that she felt that the Fall training by Iowa Department of Veteran Affairs (IDVA) was valuable, especially the networking with other VSOs. Mary Lou advised that at the Fall Training, a new name was successfully adopted for the association of CVSOs and County Commissioners. The new name is Iowa Association of County Veteran Services (IACVS). Mary Lou also attended Mental Health First Aid training the day before fall training and felt it was very practical and applicable for her work with veterans. Both Peterson and Thompson attended the Commissioner training and felt it was much better than in previous years. Thompson also attended the social event for Commissioners on Sunday evening and felt he made some valuable contacts from that event. He had an opportunity to talk at length to Todd Jacobus, Commandant of IDVA, and that was a significant conversation.
- c. Upcoming change about VA rating for tinnitus and hearing loss & discussion of how to notify veterans about the change – Mary Lou stated that at Fall Training the VSOs were advised that in April 2025 the conditions of hearing loss and tinnitus would no longer be separate ratings for disability compensation. Rather, with the change, the VA will now be combining both conditions for consideration as a single service connected rating. Veterans who are already service connected for tinnitus will be grandfathered in and will not lose their compensation for tinnitus. It will likely be much harder to be service connected for hearing loss/tinnitus starting in April 2025. Therefore, Mary Lou feels it is important to notify veterans of this upcoming change and the need to file claims for them regarding hearing loss and especially tinnitus before April 2025. The Commissioners felt it would be advantageous to record 15 second ads and then have those ads played by KLOW during basketball games. Playing the ads during basketball games will provide much exposure for the change.
- d. Next Meeting Date: November 25, 2024 at 10:00 am at the Winnebago County Courthouse

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

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