

Veterans Assistance Commission

Executive Board Meeting

The VAC Executive Board convened at the McHenry County Government Building on December 21st 2011.

The purposes of the VAC Executive Board meeting was for the board to review VAC activities during 2011 and determine if the VAC met all its goals in helping the McHenry county veterans community and to discuss what the VAC can do to improve in helping the McHenry county veterans community for 2012.

Chairman, Joe Kersten called the meeting to order at 1610 hours.

The roll call of Executive Board members were taken and the following members were present=

Chairman, Joe Kersten; Junior Vice Chairman, Randy Granath; Judge Advocate/Parliamentarian, Ray Rigsby; McHenry County Government Representative, Mary Donner; Sergeant-At-Arms, Jim Koch; Secretary, Michael Wisniewski; VAC Superintendant, Michael Iwanicki, Guest, Peter Austin-McHenry County Government Administrator.

Chairman, Joe Kersten thanked the membership for attending and stated the purpose of the meeting.

The VAC accomplishments for 2011 were as follows:

1. The VAC has processed 190 VA service-connected disability claims and is waiting for VA decisions on a total of 220 VA service-connected disability claims in the VA claims queue.
2. McHenry county veterans were awarded some \$855,000.00 in VA service-connected disability payments from 68 favorable VA claims decisions.
3. The VAC is becoming better known to McHenry county veterans and they are taking advantage of VAC services.
4. VAC transportation service usage is about the same and the pickup point system is working smoothly.
5. The VAC staff has worked to resolve any transportation issues that have cropped up and these issues were few and infrequent.
6. The VAC Outreach Office vehicle is almost ready and should be ready to roll by January 2012.
7. The VAC has a "new" fully qualified VSO now that Jane Dorfner has completed her third phase of VSO training and is fully certified as a VSO.
8. Jane Dorfner has earned a "Bravo Zulu" from the board for her work in assembling a whole bunch of Christmas Baskets for needy veterans.
9. The VAC Superintendant has been keeping the county government human services department in the loop regarding various VAC employee issues.
10. The McHenry county VAC is one of only two county VAC's with direct access to the VA database and allows the VAC staff to show clients on the status of pending VA disability claims.

The McHenry county VAC is watching an interesting legal case involving the Grundy County VAC. Their Commission denied six veterans' service organizations participation in the Commission. This happened just before the VAC's 4 year reinstatement vote of the Superintendent. As a result, the disenfranchised posts

persuaded the States Attorney to file an injunction stopping the election until the issue is resolved. The court approved the injunction.

The board than discussed some goals for the VAC for 2012 to continue to assist McHenry county veterans in the most practical ways possible. This is a listing of these goals:

1. The VAC has space issues at its present location. There is no room for expansion for increases in staff needs. Although the present office meets ADA requirements, the VAC has been seeing an increasing number of disabled veterans. We believe there is a need for each of the VSO offices to meet ADA requirement rather than just the Superintendent. The VAC superintendant is vetting possible locations in McHenry, Crystal Lake, and Woodstock.
2. The preferred location for the VAC is still at the present location at 667 Ware Street, however space needs would need satellite office locations and/or off site county location.
3. Could the Regional Superintendants office move to an off-site location and the VAC get the use of the "old" Regional Superintendant s office suite.
4. The company that supplies the VAC with the "Virtual Veteran" software is continuing to have issues with the software. The office may have to consider switching to another program.
5. Review VAC Transportation Guidelines and make necessary changes.
6. Review the VAC Inc. by-Laws and the VAC By-Laws and amend them as needed.
7. The VAC will need to replace vehicles—does the VAC use Pace Bus leasing (Very good use of taxpayer funds to obtain new and durable buses) or look into other replacement options.
8. The increase in VAC workload for assisting veterans will need more money from the county budget to get more office space and support VAC programs – Randy Granath is asking for a grassroots push to increase the VAC budget beginning in2012.

The VAC Superintendant gave the following report:

1. Michael Iwanicki is likely to be elected the president of the Illinois IACVAC to serve a term of two years at the next IACVAC meeting.
2. The VAC budget has funds to allow the County Board Rep to attend the annual IACVAC\IACO legislative meeting in Springfield.
3. A "Bravo Zulu" should be awarded to the County Budget Committee for approving the long overdue pay raises to VAC staff and drivers.
4. Most of the 300 Club raffle tickets are sold except for a couple of books. The first two winners will be drawn from the drum at the January 18th 2012 General Meeting and go back in the drum.

The meeting adjourned at 1710 hours.

Respectfully Submitted

Michael Wisniewski

Michael Wisniewski (Electronically Signed)