

McHenry County Veterans Assistance Commission

Minutes of the General Meeting

May 18, 2011

Chairman Joe Kersten called the meeting of the Veterans Assistance Commission to order at 1921 the meeting took place at the County Government Center, 667 Ware Rd Woodstock IL.

Chairman Joe Kersten led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Joe Kersten presented the Invocation

Secretary, Mike Wisniewski called the roll. A quorum of officers and posts were present.

Officer's present: (*Appointed)

Chairman	Joseph Kersten	Sr. Vice Chairman	Ted Andersen
Jr. Vice Chairman	Randy Granath	VAC Inc Treasurer	Gerald Raske
Judge Advocate	Raymond Rigsby	Sergeant At Arms	Jim Koch
McHenry County Board Rep.	Mary Donner	Parliamentarian*	Raymond Rigsby
Chaplain*	Excused	IACVAC Delegate*	Excused
IACVAC Alternate*	Raymond Rigsby	Secretary *	Michael Wisniewski

Posts Represented:

American Legion	#119 Fox River Grove Del <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	#171 Crystal Lake Del <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
	#192 Marengo Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>	#253 Richmond Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
	#265 Harvard Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>	#276 Cary Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
	#412 Woodstock Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>	#491 McHenry Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	#606 Hebron Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>	#673 Huntley Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
	#1231 Lake In the Hills Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>	
	AMVETS	#245 Cary-Grove Del <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
Veterans Of Foreign Wars	#4600 McHenry Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	#5040 Woodstock Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
	#8249 Harvard Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>	#11496 Crystal Lake Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
Marine Corps League Del <input type="checkbox"/> Alt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Polish Legion Del <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VietNow Del <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alt <input type="checkbox"/>
Guests	Mrs. Marie Honeywell as the TLS & Family Services Representative Mr. Randy Patterson as the Drop-In Facility Veterans' Representative	

Officers Remarks – No officer's remarks.

Routine Reports:

The April Minutes – A copy of the April Minutes was made available to all Delegates and Alternates. A motion to accept the April minutes was made by Robert DePauland seconded by Tom Aellig. A unanimous vote passed the motion.

Corrections: 1. Junior Vice Cmdr, Randy Granath was absent during the April general meeting.

2) Mary Donner was absent from the meeting.

3) The Cary/Grove delegate was present at the April general meeting.

VAC Financial Report – A copy of the April financial report was made available to all delegates and alternates.

The proposed VAC budget useage Year to Date was to be 41.7% of the allotted funds.

The actual VAC budget useage Year to Date came out to 30.65% of the allotted funds.

The sharp increase in the Line Item 3000 section of expenses disbursed for salaries was due to three paydays occurring in April instead of the usual two paydays.

A motion to accept the Superintendent's report was made by Mary Donner and seconded by Ted Andersen. A unanimous vote passed the motion.

Public Participation – The guests. Mrs. Marie Honeywell and Mr. Randy Patterson spoke of the 5-year mental health grant that was awarded to McHenry County and Lake County to provide outreach services to assist homeless veterans and veterans with PTSD issues along with the affected veteran's families. Veterans' Outreach Centers were set up in both counties and the center located in McHenry County is the Drop-In Center @ 5330 W. Elm Street, McHenry. The McHenry facility is also known as Firebase Alpha and is now open Monday thru Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Mr. Randy Patterson will be one of the veteran's counselors at Firebase Alpha and Mrs Marie Honeywell will be the family services representative who will oversee Firebase Alpha and also will be available at TLS. The staff at Firebase Alpha will work closely with the VAC to get veteran clients access to the various services that are available to them. The Firebase Alpha staff are also planning to hold seminars such as a credit counseling session on June 23rd at 6 PM.

Correspondence –

- 1) The VAC received a thank-you letter from the IACVAC Treasurer, John Farrow for the VAC Inc donation of funds to support their IACO/IACVAC Spring Conference Hospitality Room.
- 2) The McHenry County Marine Corp League will host an outing on Saturday, August 13rd for 100% disabled veterans from McHenry County and the Capt. Lovell FHCC hospice at the Three Oaks Recreational Center (the old Vulcan Lake gravel pits).
- 3) The BraveHearts Therapeutic Riding Center in Harvard is sponsoring a fundraiser to help defray the costs of running their stable by offering donors to support a horse of your choice for a year or just give a smaller donation to support the BraveHearts facility.
- 4) The TLS Veterans Shelter is always in need for funds to operate their facility and programs to assist veterans and the latest fundraiser is a raffle that could win you a HARLEY Davidson XL 1200 Sportster motorcycle and instructions in riding it or one of two cash prizes. The prize drawing will be on Saturday, November 5th, 2011 at the Woodstock Harley-Davidson dealership and tickets will be \$20.00 each. The number to call for more information is 1(815)334-0540.

Committee Reports:

Executive Board Meeting – Nothing to report.

By-Laws Committee – Ray Rigsby observed that the VAC recognizes the veteran service organizations in the By-Laws of both the VAC and the VAC Inc but wants to know if special veterans service organizations such as the Sad Sacks; Military Order Of The Cooties; and the Voitures (40 & 8) also can be represented at the VAC meetings by delegates / alternate delegates designated by these units as long as the units are located in McHenry County and the stipulations in the By-Laws of the VAC and the VAC Inc are adhered to.

Corporate Report – The VAC Inc held their regular monthly meeting prior to the regular meeting.

Public Relations Committee – Ted Andersen gave the report.

Report of IACVAC Delegate – The VAC Superintendent, Bob Howe, and Ray Rigsby attended the IACVAC/IACO Legislative Session at Springfield, Illinois on May 5th through May 8th. The various VAC delegates worked on IACVAC issues and legislation affecting veterans. IACVAC issues are like why the Chicago Veterans Service offices are having difficulties in filing VA disability claims; or why the Illinois Department of Motor Vehicles is resisting veterans to be identified on state drivers licenses or ID's. The statehouse legislatures often have problem passing bills due to how they are worded and "shell bills" are often passed at the end of a legislative session to resolve bill language. The IACVAC does not approve of S.B. 1640 which would allow the state to "sell" beds at Quincy Veteran Home to out of state veterans who are willing to pay what the state wants to charge them. The IACVAC delegation heard Senator Pam Althoff and VARO service center manager, Tony Vela speak.

Superintendents Report – The general trend of transportation useage is slightly downward although the useage is approaching 4000 one-way trips this year.

The grant for the hightop van conversion into a mobile office has come in.

The VAC office is expecting the arrival of the second brand new Pace Bus prior to the June general meeting.

The process of setting up a VAC budget proposal for the 2012 year begins. A budget review committee needs to be set up with the VAC Superintendent. The committee needs 3 people and the VAC is expected to deal with a no-growth budget. Staff raises for the county government employees will likely not occur.

The VAC Outreach program is expecting a steady growth in clients.

The projected inflation rate is 2.38% for 2012.

Home Depot has a volunteer arm and the company has allocated 3 million dollars to go to projects in the northern counties. Should Home Depot work with the Habitat For Humanity organization?

Any veteran who served in Korea at or near the DMZ from 1968 to 1971 are considered to fall under the same guidelines as the VietNam era veterans who were affected by Agent Orange defoliants.

Chairman Joe Kersten opened the floor to Old Business

1) The planning for setting up the VAC booth at the McHenry County Fair was discussed. Should one of the VAC vehicles be parked nearby as a display? The VAC Superintendent is seeking special speakers to talk from the booth.

2) The talk by Ted Andersen on the Supportive Service for Veterans Families to be held at Firebase Alpha was dispensed with since our guests covered the topic in detail.

3) Grant Update: The \$7000.00 grant to redo the hightop van came in; the transportation grant of \$3000.00 was split to cover vehicle maintenance and fuel costs; The \$35,000.00 grant for veteran eyecare and dental care was recently awarded; and the request for \$10,000.00 for the VAC Outreach Program was denied.

Chairman Joe Kersten opened the floor to New Business

1) Veterans Lottery Grant Program update: Applicants must apply for grants on line only as hand-written grant request forms are not in use anymore. The applicant must recognize receipt of the grant with a publication sign or decal. Any non-profit agency can apply for a grant.

Chairman Joe Kersten opened the floor for the good of the association.

1) The VAC Superintendent attended a NACo Webinar session on how to use the web and associated electronic media like Twitter, Facebook, and the like to get the information on veterans issues and programs out. The NACo Webinar site is for use by VAC use only.

2) The AMVETS Post #245 will host their 24th annual Veterans Picnic on Wednesday, June 29th from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Lions Park at Cary, Illinois for hospitalized veterans from Hines VA Hospital and the Capt. Lovell FHCC Hospice.

Chairman Joe Kersten presented the Benediction.

Meeting Adjourned by Chairman Joe Kersten at 2053.

Michael Wisniewski

Respectfully Submitted
Mike Wisniewski
Electronically Signed