

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum
Wednesday, July 7, 2021
Beginning at 10:00 a.m.
7105 – NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

Present: Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair
George Mosby
Carol Whitmore
Gary Wattnem
Mary Van Horn
Kenny Lloyd
Greg Paulline
Darlene McMartin
Steve Hyde

Staff: Steve Lukan, Executive Director, IDVA
Karl Lettow, Public Information Office - IDVA
Mari Mielke, IDVA – Recording Secretary
Penny Cutler-Bermudez, Acting Commandant IVH

Guest: Gail Graham, Des Moines VACIHC
Julie Simon, IA Senate Demo. Caucus
Kristi Catrenich, VARO
Timothy Shawn Hippen, VACIHC
James Kessler, American Legion
Michael Mortensen, IACCVSO
Roger Elliott, VVA
Laurel Degelau, IVH
Bruce Berston, VVA
Sue Cahill, IA House VA Committee

Wayne Marek, Des Moines Vet Center
Doug Maccfen, American Legion
Ron Sackett, VARO Acting Director
Janelle Besinick, Iowa City VA
Mellissa Bierman, Chickasaw Co. VSO
Pat Sweeney, Polk Co. VA
Alyssa Flood, Bombshell Patriots
Peter Welch, USS Iowa Comm. Committee
Tom Hudson, UUS Iowa Committee

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE WHEN DATED AND SIGNED BY THE MEETING CHAIR

APPROVED: Elizabeth Ledvina Date: 10/6/2021
Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Call to Order:

Chairperson Ledvina called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

Chairperson Ledvina led the Pledge of Allegiance and followed with a moment of silence for our departed veterans, POWs and those missing in action and those on active duty at this time.

Roll Call:

Recording secretary took roll call. Commissioner Cressler was not present.

Welcome/Introductions of Guests:

Guests introduced themselves.

Presentation:

Pete Welch from the USS Iowa Commissioning Committee did a presentation regarding the UUS Iowa SSN 797 Commissioning coming up in 2023. Distributed a packet of the event to the Commission. He distributed information of the upcoming christening next year spring and copies of a PowerPoint presentation.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Commissioner Van Horn made a motion to approve the conference call minutes of April 1, 2021 and was seconded by Commissioner Lloyd. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve the minutes of the quarterly meeting on April 7, 2021 and was seconded by Commissioner Wattnem. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Hyde made a motion to approve the conference call minutes of May 6, 2021 and was seconded by Commissioner Whitmore. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to approve the conference call minutes of June 3, 2021 and was seconded by Commissioner Van Horn. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

VA Regional Office Update

Acting Director Ron Sackett gave an update for the VA Regional Office.

VA Medical Center – Iowa City – Update

No update from the Iowa City VA Medical Center.

VA Medical Center – Des Moines Update

Director Gail Graham gave an update for the Des Moines Medical Center.

Veterans Home Update

Acting Commandant Penny Cutler-Bermudez gave the Commission an update for the Iowa Veterans Home. Also asked the Commission to approve the IVH proposed rulemaking changes related to Chapter 10 to the Iowa Administrative Code. After discussion Commissioner Van Horn made a motion to approve the proposed rulemaking changes to Chapter 10 of the IAC. Commissioner Hyde seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

IDVA Update

Executive Director Steve Lukan gave an update for the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs and on the Cemetery construction of a new columbarium wall going up.

Missy Miller the Administrator for the Trust Fund and the License Plate Fund gave a brief update on the Veterans Trust Fund changes that the Commission put in motion for more assistance in the dental and vehicle repairs/replacement categories.

New Business

After discussion of the License Plate Project request from Allamakee Historical Society, requesting \$48,000, Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Van Horn. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After lengthy discussion of the License Plate Project request from Polk County Veterans Affairs office requesting \$238,820.40 to hold a monthly drive thru pantry and acquire food purchases from the Food Bank of Iowa, the Commission decided to lower the amount requested to \$40,000. Commissioner Paulline made a motion to approve \$40,000 on a one time basis and Commissioner Wattnem seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of the License Plate Project request from Alyssa Flood from the Bombshell Patriots for the State of Iowa Female Veteran Conference costs request of \$1,000, the Commission's discussion was a better requested amount of \$10,000 would be more suited for this projects conference costs for more participants to attend the conference. Commissioner Whitmore made a motion to approve the \$10,000 amount change and Commissioner Van Horn seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Elections:

Commissioner Van Horn made a nomination to elect Elizabeth Ledvina to remain the Chairperson of the Commission and Commissioner Wattnem seconded the nomination. The nomination was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Whitmore made a nomination to elect Darlene McMartin to 1st Vice-Chair of the Commission and Commissioner Wattnem seconded the nomination. The nomination was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Ledvina made a nomination to elect Gary Wattnem to 2nd Vice-Chair of the Commission and was seconded by Commissioner McMartin. The nomination was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Commander James Kessler of the American Legion updated the Commission regarding the ceremony of the American Legion's signage project on Highway 20.

Wayne Marek from the Vet Center gave a short update of the Center's activities and services.

Next Commission meeting

Next quarterly meeting for the Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, October 6, 2021, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at Noon.