

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting
Wednesday, April 3, 2019 - 10:00 a.m.
Malloy Leisure Resource Center
Iowa Veterans Home
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158

Present: Daniel J. Gannon, Chairperson
Chuck Connors, Member, Commission of Veterans Affairs
Kate Myers, Member, Commission of Veterans Affairs
Gary Wattnem, Member, Commission of Veterans Affairs
Mary Van Horn, Member, Commission of Veterans Affairs

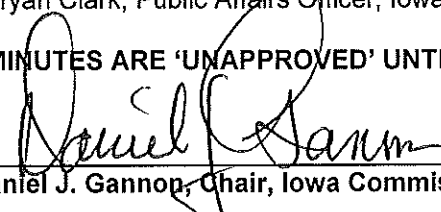
Absent: Steve Hyde, Member, Commission of Veterans Affairs
Elizabeth Ledvina, Member, Commission of Veterans Affairs

Staff: Timon M. Oujiri, Commandant, Iowa Veterans Home
Steve Lukan, Executive Director, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Nancy Morford, Administrative Assistant, Iowa Veterans Home – Meeting Secretary

**Guests/
Presenters:** Orene Cressler, future member, Commission of Veterans Affairs, IACCVSO
Kenneth Lloyd, future member, Commission of Veterans Affairs, PVA
Darlene McMartin, future member, Commission of Veterans Affairs, Public at Large
Gregory Paulline, future member, Commission of Veterans Affairs, VVA
Carol Whitmore, State President, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Nate Ristow, Governor's Office
Dean Brand, Coordinator, Iowa Army National Guard Funeral Honors Program
Jacob Knapp, Veterans Empowerment Center
Stephen Doran, Veterans Empowerment Center
Roger Elliott, Vietnam Veterans of America
Bruce Beeston, Vietnam Veterans of America
Michael Minard, The Titan Project
Dave Allen, Senator Grassley's Office, Des Moines
Brenda Safranski, Senator Ernst Office, Des Moines
Mike Mortensen, President, IACCVSO
Kristi Catrenich, Public Affairs Officer, Des Moines VA CIHCS
Sara Ackert, VA Central Iowa Health Care System
Fred Peel, VBA, Des Moines VA Regional Office
Ryan Dickson, VBA, Des Moines VA Regional Office
Rod Derringer, Des Moines VA Regional Office
Althena Delgado, VBA, Des Moines VA Regional Office
Sue Nan Jehlen, NCA/Rock Island and Keokuk National Cemeteries.
Nick Praska, Dallas County VSO
Dave Thornburg, Disabled American Veterans
James Tuner, Iowa City VAMC
Bryan Clark, Public Affairs Officer, Iowa City VAMC

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE 'UNAPPROVED' UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

APPROVED:


Daniel J. Gannon, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Date:

7/10/2019

Call to Order:

Meeting Chairperson Gannon called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Gannon followed by a moment of silence for our departed veterans, POWs, those missing in action (MIAs) and those on active duty at this time.

Roll Call:

Chairperson Gannon took roll call. Commissioners Hyde and Ledvina were absent. Chairperson Gannon introduced Carol Whitmore who will be representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars beginning in July. Darlene McMartin will be coming on in May representing the public at large. Orene Cressler will be coming on in May representing IACCVSO. Kenneth Lloyd will be coming on in May representing the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Gregory Paulline will be coming on in May representing Vietnam Veterans of America.

Welcome/Introduction of Guests:

Chairperson Gannon welcomed everyone in attendance. A round table of introductions was held.

Presentations:

The Titan Project:

Michael Minard from the Titan Project passed out flyers. The Titan Project is a non-profit organization based in Des Moines. Michael briefed attendees on the veteran social on April 25 at The Hall in Des Moines and the 2019 fishing tournament to be held on June 1 in Clear Lake. Backyard Frat is another project where they redo landscaping, trim trees, knock down fences and clean up the outside for veterans. Let him know if you know of any veteran who needs help with their outdoor yard work.

VA Regional Office Update:

Althena Delgado attended on behalf of Bruce Voigt, Director of the VA Regional Office. Mr. Voigt is attending the National DVA Director's Symposium. She introduced Fred Peel, Public Contact Team Coach.

Fred briefed attendees on a new program called tele-benefits. Veterans can make appointments to discuss their benefits by going to their closest CBOC and doing it by tele-benefits instead of traveling miles to Des Moines or Iowa City.

Mr. Peel also briefed on the Quad Cities Veterans Experience Action Center (VEAC). It is an event that will be July 19 and 20 at St. Ambrose University in Davenport.

VA Medical Center – Iowa City Update:

Chairperson Gannon introduced James Tuner, VA Medical Center, Iowa City. Mr. Tuner gave a report on the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Davenport CBOC, and several others that will be happening in the next couple of years.

Mr. Tuner gave a report on the electronic health care record sharing project. They are working diligently to enroll more veterans in the VA system.

Bryan Clark, Public Affairs Officer, stated there are many veterans who are not service connected but they have an income threshold so cannot use the VA hospitals. We would like to see that raised by 20% so many more veterans and their families would be able to use our services.

Rock Island/Keokuk/Quincy National Cemeteries:

Sue Nan Jehlen, Director of the Rock Island/Keokuk/Quincy National Cemetery, gave an update on a couple of pinning ceremonies for 150 veterans at Rock Island and 70 at Keokuk. Keokuk will soon have a new columbarium. Rock Island will be expanding and will have a design contract awarded soon. Sue also gave more information on the VEAC event July 19 – 20.

VA Central Iowa Health Care – Des Moines Update:

Kristi Catrenich, CIHS – Des Moines, let everyone know they should be checking the Great Iowa Treasure Hunt to see if there are any funds for your organization. There were quite a few funds found for the Des Moines VA.

Kristi also asked everyone to put the crisis hotline in your phone (1-800-273-8255) just in case you come across a veteran (or anyone) who needs help. You will have this number available to you quickly.

Kristi introduced Sara Ackert, Associate Director of Resources for Central Iowa Healthcare System – Des Moines.

Sara updated attendees on several construction and leasing projects.

Iowa Honor Guard:

Dean Brand, retired from the Army National Guard, is the State Honor Guard Coordinator and gave a report to the Commission on the Iowa Army National Guard Funeral Honors Program.

There were 742 services so far during FY19.

We have 5 soldiers working full time, will be adding one in the near future, which will give us three in Cedar Rapids garrison and three at Camp Dodge.

There have been a number of events we have helped with across the state including the Governor's inauguration. Hosted the Mortuary Science class from DMACC to teach them about military honors.

The 2019 funding is still good. Through the end of March we have had 74 out of the 742 services at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery.

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Update:

Executive Director Steve Lukan briefed the Commission on IDVA.

Karl Lettow has been hired as our Public Information Officer and will begin duties on May 3.

Spring School for the IACCVA Service Officers will be held April 16 – 19.

A group of volunteers will be helping with spring cleanup at the Veterans Cemetery Friday.

We are helping with the May 7 Vietnam Veterans Appreciation Celebration on the Capitol grounds.

Iowa Veterans Home Update:

Commandant Oujiri presented the Iowa Veterans Home Update:

Governor Reynolds and Lt. Governor Gregg will be at IVH for our Volunteer Award Ceremony. We will be taking a bus load of residents to the Vietnam Veteran Ceremony in Des Moines on May 3. On May 3 we will have Colonel (Retired) Gary Barry speak to our veterans at IVH. He was the Marine pilot that flew the Ambassador out when Saigon fell.

We have been fully funded for an electrical power house in our Power Plant that is being upgraded. It is in partnership with the VA, we will be funded 65% by the VA and 35% by the State of Iowa. Our Pharmacy was also approved for an upgrade through the same 65%/35%.

In March we had our annual Iowa DIA inspection/survey. We had zero deficiencies and IVH staff did a great job.

We just completed our satisfaction survey that is sent to resident families. We received the highest rating we have ever had. Timon read some of the questions and the percentages.

Timon introduced Emily Hall, Director of Recreation. Emily gave a demonstration of the It's Never 2 Late (IN2L) computers for residents. Four of these were purchased with Veterans License Plate funds approved by the Commission in October 2018. Commandant Oujiri thanked the Commission for their generous donation.

Meeting break was taken from 11:37 – 11:50 a.m.

It was announced Commissioner George Goebel passed away in January. A moment of silence was held in memory of Commissioner Goebel.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to approve Commission minutes of January 2, 2019, quarterly meeting. Second by Commissioner Myers. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Trust Fund Applications:

Commissioner Van Horn made a motion to approve minutes of Trust Fund conference call of January 3, 2019. Second by Commissioner Connors. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Connors made a motion to approve minutes of Trust Fund conference call of February 7, 2019. Second by Commissioner Van Horn. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to approve minutes of Trust Fund conference call of March 7, 2019. Second by Commissioner Connors. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Update on Therapy Terrain Gardens

It was decided by the VAVS committee that no state funds would be used for projects at a federal facility. Commissioner Van Horn gave an update on the Veterans Therapy Terrain Gardens.

License Plate Fund

Chairperson Gannon asked all Commissioners and those in attendance to come up with ideas/suggestions of ways to use the money in the License Plate fund.

Update on Commission's 2019 Legislative Initiatives

Reviewed and discussed the Commission's 2019 Iowa Legislative Initiatives.

New Business:

Commission's Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson Gannon passed out an overview of the duties and responsibilities of this Commission and reviewed same. A copy of the Commission Administrative Rules was also handed out.

Commission's Subcommittee Assignments

A list of the subcommittees and members were passed around. Chairperson Gannon asked all Commissioners (including new ones in attendance) to sign up for whatever subcommittee they would like.

License Plate Fund

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Vietnam Veterans Day Recognition Day

Chairperson Gannon briefed attendees on the program to be held on May 7.

After short discussion it was moved and seconded to pay for the use of a PA system for that program. Approved unanimously.

Next Commission Meeting

It was decided to move the next Commission meeting to July 10, 2019.

Public Comment:

Discussion continued revolving around legislation.

The Commission needs to look ahead to our future, set goals. Will discuss in July.

Next Commission Meeting:

The next quarterly meeting will be held at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge on Wednesday, July 10, 2019, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.