

Winnebago County Veterans Service Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 12, 2021

Present via Phone: Bob Warnke, Tom Snider, Lucy Burr, Roy Rogers, Jerry Schultz, Jeff Bucholtz & Judy Steckbauer

Absent: None

Others Present: None

Bob Warnke called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Bob Warnke requested a motion for the acceptance of the meeting agenda. Tom Snider so moved, second by Lucy Burr. All ayes, motion carried.

Bob Warnke called for Public Comments. None.

Bob Warnke requested a motion to go into closed session. Lucy Burr so moved at 1:02 p.m., second by Roy Rogers. All ayes, motion carried. Convened in closed session for the purposes of acting on applications for financial, medical, social, or personal histories of such applicants which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or date, as provided in sec. 19.85 [1] [f], Wisconsin State Statutes.

Bob Warnke requested a motion to come out of closed session. Tom Snider so moved at 1:05 p.m., second by Lucy Burr. All ayes, motion carried.

Bob Warnke called for approval of meeting minutes dated March 8, 2021. Tom Snider so moved, second by Lucy Burr. All ayes, motion carried.

Bob Warnke called for approval of the financial report dated April 12, 2021. Tom Snider so moved, second by Roy Rogers. All ayes, motion carried. New balance after today's approval is \$20,760.77. Bob Warnke stated that if we stick to about \$2,500 in approvals per month for the remainder of the year, we should be fine.

Jeff explained the Fox Valley Veterans Council (FVVC) spreadsheet that was distributed. FVVC has distributed \$10,719.14 in assistance to Winnebago County Veterans in the 1st quarter of this year. Per our MOU, we agree to reimburse them half, which is \$5,359.57. Office is trying to send bigger ticket items over to them so we can split. Questions raised if all of the FVVC applications come from referrals from our office? Jeff stated no, because veterans can apply directly with FVVC but agency does keep us in the loop as to what is requested and what is approved. The current MOU is for a 1-year period. Will look at possible adjustments for next year after we have some experience. Some funding from the CARES Act could trickle down to the FVVC.

Old Business: Jeff commented that it is great to see Veteran Service Organization events starting up again.

The National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) conference that was slated for this spring in Madison has been cancelled and they are planning a virtual training in July with only a few delegates attending in person, location to be determined.

Keven Jurgella is currently doing VA Advanced Appeals training virtually. Lydia Wilz & Karen Winkel have previously completed this training.

The Menasha Elks Club is applying for the Freedom Grant and would like to partner with us to distribute proceeds that will fulfill the grant requirements. An idea was presented to the Elks Club to create a small mental health library of resources to be housed in our offices. These resources could be checked out by veterans to read and return to try and help curb the issue of suicide and rising mental health rates. Tom Snider commented that the CDC is warning that mental health issues are sky rocketing due to COVID.

Jeff commented on WDVA's proposed budget. Some wonderful provisions but the proposed increase to the county & tribal veterans service officer grant is 5% which is \$650 for Winnebago County. This is not a substantial increase so if you speak to any state legislator regarding this issue, encourage them to increase this funding.

New Business: Tom Snider spoke on Senate Bill 243 which proposes to reduce the service connected disability rating required to receive the Veteran & Unremarried Surviving Spouse Property Tax Credit Program eligibility to 70%. Currently veterans rated 100%, widows of those veterans and widows receiving DIC are eligible. Jeff will send a copy of this bill out to all commissioners and it has already been included in last Friday's weekly news & events e-mail. All encouraged to support.

The federal CVSOS Act will be reintroduced late this week or next week per Tom Snider. It has been slightly revised emphasizing the CVSOS/TVSO, taking suicide language out because some confusion if this was health care legislation. Currently have not secured this funding by-passing WDVA and being distributed directly to CVSOSs. The maximum grant would be 10% of overall annual funding with a minimum of 25 grants being distributed. Not yet sure what this 10% of overall funding means. Is it 10% of the CVSOS total budget or 10% of the total amount of funds put aside for this issue? More clarification to come.

The next meeting date is Monday, May 10, 2021 @ 1:00 p.m. via phone conference. Tom Snider moved to adjourn, seconded by Roy Rogers. All ayes, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Steckbauer
Veterans Benefits Supervisor