

WINNEBAGO COUNTY COUNCIL OF VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS

DATE: May 12, 2016 @ 9:30 AM
LOCATION: J.P. Coughlin Building
PRESENT: Joe Aulik Judy Steckbauer
Ron Griffin Char Griffin
Shari Waldron Phil Moore
Rosemarie Pitz Duane Canon
Richard Daseke Roy Rogers
Jim Hoyman John Chevalier
John Straw Dave Thiede
John Bjorklund Dave Mix
Jim Romnek John Hoeft
Paul Baker George Gilles
Joe Maehl

1. Call to Order

Joe Aulik called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Joe led pledge of allegiance and moment of silence for those currently serving, POW's and MIA's. Two Winnebago County veterans recently took their lives so let's also remember them and what we can do to prevent this from happening in the future.

3. Roll Call/Introductions

Roundtable introductions. Again routed new calendar of veterans' events and attendance sheet.

4. Old Business

MVM will be open all week EAA and possibly the week before also. Volunteers always needed.

5. New Business

Roundtable of upcoming VSO events. Detailed in veterans events calendar.

-May is mental health awareness month. Joe recently attended a focus group in Oshkosh regarding this topic. Access to services seems to be the main problem. Not enough access even though the VA. Veterans need more than to be seen 1/month, especially when in crisis. We try to get into Vet Center for additional counseling since there is more access to services through the Vet Center.

-Issue brought up that MRI machine and also chemo therapy services being discontinued at the Green Bay CBOC. MRI machine was on loan while Milwaukee MRI services were down. Joe suggested contacting federal legislators regarding reduction in services or need for additional services. Question raised if the Green Bay facility was built too large since never able to full staff and not yet functioning at full capacity. Joe believes that this facility could be at capacity but the VA doesn't advertise their services. 50% of veterans do not know their benefits.

6. Training Topic – Wisconsin Veterans Home & burial pre-registration (King, Union Grove, Spooner)

Packets distributed on costs and application for pre-registration for burial. Also brochure on the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. King is the gem of Wisconsin. Veterans and spouses are eligible if you meet the criteria of needing skilled nursing home care. Cost of care is not free but all services are included in your cost to include medical, dental, prescriptions, etc. There is also a multitude of activities happening at the home. Many veteran actually get better there because of the comradery and activities. If a veteran is 70% service connected disabled, his cost of care is free at King or at any VA contracted facility. Joe briefly spoke on the criteria for Medical Assistance. Liquid assets have to be under \$2000. If a veteran is concerned about this, they should contact an estate attorney.

-Joe recently started a radio program the first Tuesday of each month on 14.90 AM. The office is also getting the website and Facebook up and running. He is very grateful for the VSO's in this county being engaged. Outreach

letter has gone out to all skilled nursing care and assisted living facilities in Winnebago County. If any VSO needs materials for Brat Fry's or other events, let the office know. Joe is also looking at starting a monthly newspaper article.

-Purple Heart Card – The EAA Museum is now on the list for free admission with this card. There are 18,000 PH recipients in WI and only about 500 participating in this program.

-New VA Health Care books distributed. If any VSO wants more, let us know. If you are a current patient utilizing VA Health Care, you are eligible for free eyeglasses and hearing aids. There is also a low vision clinic at the VAMC Milwaukee but to utilize you have to be enrolled in VA Health Care. The clinic will actually have someone come to your home to assess you needs.

-You can get 1 free credit report from the government each year and there are 3 different credit agencies that do the reporting.

-The Salvation Army Food Pantry is open 9-11:40 AM and a person can access once/month. All you need is an ID and a piece of mail with your address on. Following is a list of food pantries in the area: Cornerstone Community Church, Emmanuel United Church of Christ, Father Carr's Place To Be, His Church-World Outreach Center, Lord's Highlands Food Pantry, Lutheran Food Pantry, Omro Area Community Pantry, Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, Ruth's Pantry-Grace Lutheran Church, Salvation Army Oshkosh & Neenah/Menasha, St. Joseph Food Program, Inc., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Winneconne Area Assistance Center.

-There are about 22 million veterans in the US. With widows and dependents probably about 26 million. About 14,000 veterans in Winnebago County plus widows/dependents. Winnebago County has the 7th largest veteran population in the state. This is why we fight Regionalization/Consortium. Issue is again coming back in the fall legislative session. WDVA Secretary Scocos quoted that the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) is pushing this issue. When checked with WCA they stated that they are not pushing, just asking for more flexibility, more grant money.

-Joe Maehl has been contacted by Washington DC to work with them to put a PR packet together to present to Putin to help smooth relations between the US and Russia. Joe explained what was going on in the world at that time during WWII – Russian Transition Status. He recapped what happened to the 140 ships that assisted Russia against Germany.

-The Viper Ride (Visually Impaired Patriots Experiencing the Road, Inc.) slated for July 1, 2016. For applications: theviperide.org/application/tailgunner.pdf

-The Fond du Lac Honor Walk, Saturday September 17th 10:30 AM Taylor Park, 115 S. Hickory St., FDL

-Operation Badger Base, A Celebration of Military Service featuring The Wall That Heals and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier replicas. August 11-14 on the grounds of the Harley-Davidson Madison and Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison, 6200 block of Mill Pond Rd., operationbadgerbase.com

-FoodShare Helpline, Feeding Wisconsin 877-366-3635 or www.getaquestcard.org

-Handout on Protecting Your Information At Home

7. Next Meeting Time, Date and Place

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be June 9, 2016 @ 9:30 AM, James Coughlin Building, Meeting Room A. A different benefit will be covered each month and also any new information the office has received. Joe encouraged participation in this meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Steckbauer

