

Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

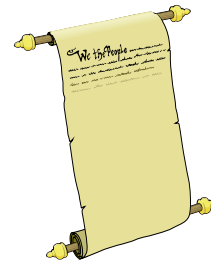
Minutes: July 9, 2014

Veterans Affairs Committee meeting called to order by Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Rodger Seidel at 2:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance–Moment of Silence.

Roll-call of committee members:

Chairman,	Rodger Seidel,	Present
	Samuel Gray,	Present
Vice-Chair	Jack Hunn,	Present
	George “Rob” Beam,	Present
Director:	Scott C. Losey	Present
Service Officer:	Kristina Higgins	Present
Administrative Assistant:	Luann Cape	Present
CC Assist. Adm.	Brad Wilcox	Present



Citizens’ Time:

None.

Reading of the June 11, 2014 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee (hereafter: CCVAC) Meeting Minutes:

Following review, Mr. Samuel Gray made a motion to accept the June 11, 2014 CCVAC Meeting Minutes as presented, Mr. Beam seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 4-0, the CCVAC Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

Metrics: Director Losey shared an overview of the office’s metrics. Written copies were distributed, Chairman Seidel pointed out that hopefully soon we will have our own projector.

Applications for Emergency Assistance from the Calhoun County Veterans’ Relief

Fund:

None. There was one, but he didn't show up for his appointment.

Correspondence:

There has been some positive feedback. As a result of the generosity of Conant Case, roses are being delivered once a month to the office. It's his way of saying thanks.

Old Business:

Director Losey gave a copy of the legal opinion having to do with Public Acts 191 and 192, to Vice-Chair Hunn directly following the June meeting that Mr. Hunn had requested. It was reaffirmed that it would take legislative action to change the definition of a Veteran.

Concerning the budget: In June, 50% of the year has passed, and about 50% of the money has been allocated. The County fiscal year is January to December. It was pointed out that once salaries and administrative costs are covered, \$72,000 is left for discretionary expenditures. \$46,000 of that amount was rolled over from last year. It was suggested by Mr. Wilcox that we should keep 11-15% on hand for emergent needs. Some of the money spent this year was allocated for things that will not be repeated, hopefully, anytime soon. The office remodeling is one of those expenditures. The former budget would also have not included the Administrative Assistant. Chairman Seidel communicated that our administrative costs, a large portion of which goes to payroll, may seem a little high, but without the staff, who would directly advocate for the Veteran? Don't those finances directly go to serve the Veteran? Mr. Beam reminded everyone of the success rate of the office staff and the high percentage of successful claims for Veterans directly relates to this office's skilled advocacy.

Mr. Wilcox explained that the millage money carries over from year to year.

Director Losey stated that 27% of the aggregate budget had been spent. One bill has not been paid since Brian Parker has not gotten back with us concerning items not satisfactorily completed. The project remains unfinished, though we have attempted to contact him several times. Mr. Wilcox may need to step in to aid us in a successful resolution. About \$11,000 to \$12,000 worth of bills still need to be paid.

Director Losey shared that we have around 450 claims that await administrative closure (logged in on the computer and diary pages finalized). He emphasized that no one is waiting to be seen. There are 21 new claims this month. Discussion ensued concerning how many cases are awaiting information from the Veteran, and how many have been finalized here, but awaiting Detroit's decision and to communicate that clearly on the metrics.

Chairman Seidel suggested that if there was anything in the metrics that was not clear, please say something in an e-mail to that effect. He also stated that anyone who contacts the office should be called back within three days, anything longer is unacceptable. Also keep track of how many people you attempt to reach and are unable to.

Director Losey related that Kristina attended Calhoun County Veterans Resources Meeting on the last day of the month. Director Losey met with the reference coordinator over at the Haven of Rest, as well. It was suggested that if anyone attends an outside event that involves Veterans, that they e-mail the whole group to tell about it, to make note of it.

Concerning Veterans Treatment Court: It was scheduled for three times this month, but Judge Line made it just two.

The point was made by Director Losey, that every claim this office files is done through a Veteran Service Organization. They help establish a paper trail and Phil Smith (Vietnam Veterans of America) serves as our eyes and ears in Detroit.

We had 66 walk-ins last month, not bad for June. About 25 phone calls per day, 4 or 5 walk-ins and about 5 scheduled appointments. This is the year the National Academy will come out with more Vietnam presumptives and we will be extremely busy for 6 months following. We expect this early fall.

Two articles were published within the last month, one about the new hours and one advertizing the Committee opening. Copies were distributed to each person present.

Director Losey would like a list of addresses of the Service Officers in the county. Vice-Chair Hunn suggested he contact Jerry Schmidt for the most comprehensive list.

New Business:

Chairman Seidel pointed out that Strategic Planning needs to be on the Agenda for the next meeting. He then highlighted some task updates as well as, plans to improve the web-site. Mr. Wilcox mentioned the web-site designer that the County uses out of Chicago, American Eagle. They could really help with a more professionally done presentation.

Chairman Seidel emphasized the danger of adding too many tasks.

Director Losey thought the administrative backlog could be tackled by December 2014.

For the good of the committee:

Chairman Seidel thought a long-sleeved dress shirt for the office would be a good idea for the office personnel. The County logo is not copyrighted, so it is available. Mr. Wilcox has that logo.

Adjournment:

Mr. Gray motioned for adjournment and Vice Chair Hunn seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:36pm.

Rodger Seidel
Chairman, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs Committee

Scott C. Losey
Director, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs