

Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

Minutes: November 12, 2014

Veterans Affairs Committee meeting called to order by Veterans Affairs Committee Vice-Chairman Jack Hunn at 2:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance–Moment of Silence.

Roll-call of committee members:

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| • | Chairman | Rodger Seidel, | Present, by |
| | | | Conference |
| | | | phone |
| • | Vice-Chair | Jack Hunn | Present |
| • | Secretary | Samuel Gray, | Excused |
| | | | Absence |
| • | Member | George “Rob” Beam, | Present |



Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office Staff:

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|---|--------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| • | Director | Scott C. Losey | Present |
| • | Service Officer | Kristina S. Higgins | Present |
| • | Administrative Assistant | M. Luann Cape | Present |
| • | Temporary Employee | Matthew Honeck | Present |

Just a note: Between Matthew and Marjie Haynes, the administrative backlog is nearly all caught up. Ms. Haynes left last week for a job at Stryker, Mr. Honeck is with us until the end of the year to finish up.

Agenda Changes:

- Publications
- Emergent Needs Procedure
- Status of Committee Member Applications
- Summarize action items at the end of the meeting

Citizens' Time:

None.

Applications for Emergency Assistance from the Calhoun County Veterans' Relief Fund:

Voucher #: 14-02. \$475 for Security Deposit. \$150 to Meijer's for cleaning supplies. \$51 for 60 Bus Passes. Each Committee member was telephoned and gave their approval.

It was stated that for Emergent Needs we usually refer to the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (MVTF). Residency is a requirement for that program, but the statute is somewhat vague concerning that issue. Mr. Wilcox said (outside this meeting) that as long as the person being assisted was going to live in Calhoun County, that was acceptable. MVTF is agreeable to helping with first months rent, not security deposit.

With the Calhoun County Veterans Relief Fund program, we can request a check be issued one time during the month because of the Calhoun County Finance accounts payable schedule.

Currently the HUDVASH program has more vouchers than they have veterans to utilize them.

In summary, the veteran (Voucher 14-02) was very grateful for all of our help. He may be seeking us out again for Non-Service Connected Pension.

The second emergent need situation that surfaced this month was for an elderly chronically ill person that needed a handicap ramp installed at their place of residence. After pursuing several possibilities, Director Losey discovered that the VA Hospital Occupational therapy would handle the installation at no charge, since he is a patient at VAMC. This program is new to us. It may even be installed before Thanksgiving.

Correspondence:

None.

Administrative Updates:

Mr. Wilcox was attending Budget meetings elsewhere in the county so there were no Administrative Updates this month.

Minutes:

It was agreed that the minutes could be more of a summary and less detailed. Minutes are now due the Wednesday, one week after the meeting. It was pointed out that the website is

not up to date with the minutes. Mr. Beam moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Seidel seconded the motion via conference phone. All were in favor. Agendas are due the Monday before the meeting.

Old Business:

There are eight applications for the Committee Member opening. It was noted that the applicant needs to be endorsed by a Service Organization, and have a letter to that effect. The selection board for the county consists of: The Commissioners: Derek King and Sue Dunn, Brad Wilcox, Carl Gibson from Senior Services and Director Losey.

Mr. Seidel added that he spoke to Mr. Wilcox about the applications, and he recommended that the committee screen them. They will need information on their branch of service and anything else we are looking for with regard to requirements for serving on the committee.

New Business:

The Veterans Resource Team was started and is currently headed up by Ashley McKee-Thompson. The purpose is for coordination and collaboration of veterans benefits. Discussion ensued.

Discussion concerning the requirements of Veterans to be exempt from their property taxes. It was noted that the website needed to be updated in the tax section.

Director Losey wrote a letter of appreciation to Arnold Arquette. The question of what to do for Dave and Phil? It was suggested that the same be done for them.

Strategic Planning Updates:

We are well ahead of the plans.

As far as filling employee vacancies, the Service Officer position has been posted internally, and needs to be posted externally. This is in accordance with union requirements.

The question was raised, "What do we do to meet an emergent need that needs an immediate response?" Are vouchers a possibility? Discussion ensued. Director Losey pointed out that when he gave out bus passes, every morning there would be a line down the hallway with the same people. Vice-chair Hunn thought the office could be responsible for a low cost handout of some sort. Service Officer Higgins stated she was uncomfortable with that idea.

The possibility of the Director having the authority to approve monies to a certain amount.

Director Losey stated that he needed to inform the Committee of when the finance

department normally did accounts payable. More discussion ensued.

Publications:

Mr. Wilcox was able to get a contract price for 20 copies of the State of Michigan version of Veterans Benefits. It was noted that he was extremely busy because it is budget season. The county could duplicate the State version, not federal. One has to order the federal version from the government printing office.

End Notations:

The December agenda needs to have a reminder of what the Strategic Plan requires as we near the end of the year.

Mr. Seidel is working on a new draft for the by-laws. He would like comments by the end of the month so it can be completed by the December meeting. Changes will be noted in red. Director Losey suggested a complete re-write.

Mr. Seidel also shared that he had gathered some performance appraisals from the base. He would like committee members to be forthcoming with their opinions in reference to the appraisals.

- Check on Thanksgiving baskets from VSO's.
- The Monday before the Wednesday meeting the agenda needs to be distributed.
- Mr. Beam—draft procedures for emergent needs by December meeting.
- Vice-chair Hunn—Trust Fund brief before the next meeting.
- Seven days following the meeting the minutes should be done.
- Director Losey will contact Human Resources on the status of the job posting—by next week.
- Vice-chair Hunn—obtain the State of Michigan's version of Veterans Benefits Booklet from Mike Nofs office.
- Colonel Seidel will continue with performance appraisals and by-laws.
- Director Losey will draft and deliver a thank you note for Arnold Arquette by next week.
- Everyone—review Committee Applications and the Strategic Plan
- Director Losey will write thank you notes to Dave and Phil
- Director Losey will coordinate with Human Resources Director, Kim Archambault for the external posting of the Service Officer position.
- The Committee needs to screen the Committee member applications for their branch of service and other requirements for serving.

Good of the Committee:

Director Losey stated that we are all making progress and everyone is heading in a good direction.

Adjournment:

Mr. Beam made a motion to adjourn, Colonel Seidel seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned 4pm.

Jack Hunn
Vice-Chairman, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs Committee

Scott C. Losey
Director, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs