



Winnebago County Veterans Affairs Commissioners Board Meeting

Monday, May 23, 2022

10:00 am

Courthouse Board Room

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge

Present: Barney Ruitter, Steve Bosma, and Mary Lou Kleveland. Absent: Dave Peterson

2. Review and Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes

The March monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. Bosma motioned, second by Ruitter to approve the March minutes. Minutes were approved.

3. Veteran Service Officer Reports:

- a. Monthly VA numbers: Mary Lou shared the statistics for April.
- b. Community Outreach –There were new ads running on KLOW during the month of April and May. Mary Lou continues to do the voiceovers for the ads, and new ads will be recorded for June. Mary Lou also reported that she had ordered magnets and sticky notes to use for community outreach from Bison Graphics.
- c. Review Monthly Expenditure Report Approval – The May expenditure report was reviewed and approved. Bosma motioned to approve the May expenditure report and Ruitter seconded the motion. Barney Ruitter signed the May report.

4. Old Business

- a. Resolution for Outreach Activities - Mary Lou shared the Resolution of Public Purpose for Veterans Affairs Outreach Activities. Mary Lou will attend the next Board of Supervisors Meeting so that the resolution can be signed and approved. Ruitter and Bosma did not have any questions about the resolution.
- b. Hancock County Issues Update – Mary Lou will be billing Hancock County for the work she has already done on the Hancock County claims. Mary Lou asked for approval of billing Hancock County. Bosma stated that he thinks the Board of Supervisors needs to approve the billing so Mary Lou will need to attend a BOS meeting. Mary Lou shared that there is lots of work to do on the Hancock County cases so will need to bill them regularly/monthly as the work is completed. The Hancock County VSO is supposed to leave on July 1st. Hancock County is trying to hire a new part time VSO. Mary Lou shared that she has 5 Hancock cases and that she didn't think she could handle more than that as she is quite busy with Winnebago cases. Bosma and Ruitter agreed that 5 cases were enough.

5. New Business

- a. Mary Lou shared that she has become nationally accredited as a veterans services officer. She is also cross accredited with Disabled American Benefits and is working on cross accreditation for The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Mary Lou has already begun working on

getting her PIV card which will allow her access to veterans records which will better help her to help them in filing claims. Mary Lou stated that VA recently changed the process for appeals. Appeals will now only be done virtually, rather than in person. The change should help expedite the process of appeals. However, there are likely veterans who do not have computer access and/or are not familiar enough with technology to attend an appellate hearing virtually. In order to serve these veterans, Mary Lou reported that in the future, it may be necessary for the Winnebago County Veterans Affairs office to have both a private room and computer so that veterans can come into the office for the virtual hearings and Mary Lou can also assist them in the process.

b. Review of current Winnebago County VA policies – Those present briefly discussed some needed changes to the financial assistance policy, especially in emergency/time sensitive situations. Mary Lou shared a statement for financial assistance that she will propose being added as part of the financial assistance process. Due to time constraints, it was decided that further discussion regarding possible policy changes will occur at the June meeting.

c. Next Meeting Date: June 27, 2022 @ 10 am

5. **Adjournment** – Bosma motioned; Ruitter second. Meeting adjourned.

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