

MINUTES OF THE
VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF LAKE COUNTY

9/16/15
(DATE)

Forrestal Village
(LOCATION)

The regular meeting for the Veterans Assistance Commission was brought to order by President Norm Arnswald at 10:30 A.M. with 20 members attending

Colors were presented by Delegate Nickerson, Delegate Kozar offered prayer with President Norm Arnswald leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Superintendent Peck announced that a quorum was present

The minutes from the June 17, 2015 meeting were presented to the delegates. Corrections needed to be made to the minutes to include correct spelling of Scott Lietzow's name and Delegate Patterson mentioned that on page 2 paragraph 4, corrects that donations also received were \$100.00 each from American Legion Post 1943 and Play Post 25. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Delegate Kozar and seconded by Delegate Risley. A unanimous vote passed the motion

The V.A.C. monthly report for June 17, 2015 was reviewed Superintendent Peck asked Mary Ann Kornau Bandurski if she had anything to add, only that Com Ed and North Shore Gas were still taking applications for utility assistance. Superintendent Peck also mentioned that at a budget meeting it was requested to take a 2% decrease across the board for the annual budget. He also mentioned that the VAC has not requested an increase in the budget in more than 8 years. A motion to accept the VAC monthly report was made by Delegate Zelent and seconded by Delegate Marciciak. A unanimous vote passed the motion

Mary Carmody, director of Midwest Veterans Closet gave a brief report (see attached copy)

Superintened Peck stated that Sherry Kruse was involved in dental grant. Sherry Kruse stated that we are running low on funds using the current dental grant and are only using the money for emergencies. We will apply next year for a dental grant when funds are expended. Mary Ann Kornau Bandurski stated that we had a veteran that found out they had tongue cancer and needed all teeth extracted before chemo.

Superintenednet Peck reviewed the performance measurement report and is hoping to be able to reach out to veterans and wives before the veteran passes.

Delegate Villareal menionted that vetererans court at this time has no set dats for graduation. The veterans go through either a 12, 24 or 36 month program. Possible graduation may be held in November. He also stated that the Veterans History Project will one again be held on Veterans Day at the court house on 11/11/15 from 9:00-2:00 for WWII and Korean veterans. Marine Corps League Post 1395 will be offering breakdfast, toast, eggs etc,. The judges and stenographers are hosting this event. Delegate Zelent mentioned that he went last year and he was treated like a king. Delegate Villarreal stated that young junior marines help escort veterans throughout the process including helping in and out of vehicles if the need arises. He also stated there would VIP's there, no specific names were mentioned

Delegate Kozar stated that the Veteran Center at the VAC office is still avaiable for veterans and all the computers are working

Delegate Konz stated that there are vet centers all over Lake County so they are not all being used to capacity. He also metioned that the volunteer hours still need to be turned in for the annual governors report. The hours are taken individually which include funerals, paradaes, etdc.

Superintendent Peck stated that at the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon, the lifetime achievement pin would be distributed instead of the gold, silver and bronze pins as previously.

Delegate Ayres stated he has been working with 6 new veterans that are interested in job placement which are offered through the VAC – he also stated that computers are available. We have gotten more email addresses and will try to email newsletter on a monthly basis. He is also planning a snail mail to our current database and hopes to clean up the database. There are a lot of addresses in the system that due to the fact that veterans are moving so much, the database is not updated. He is also working on the VAC facebook page. Also in process is an updated post names and address list and another list for interested others. He also mentioned that 3 laptops were donated to CLC for veterans. He is also assisting VRU at James A Lovell with job placement. Delegate Konz suggested putting signs in all vet centers for job placement services available.

Delegate DeReu is working on the Swingin for Vets Golf Outing – Dinner costs \$50.00 – they will be recognizing Senator Link and Rep Mayfield for their efforts with the Homestead Exemption for veterans. The golf outing will have 2 Acuras and a Ferrari for a hole in one as the grand prize.

Scot Litso from Congressman Dold's office was also in attendance and he stated that May is marked as Military Appreciation Month. If anyone needs help with DD214's or medals – they can assist. He also stated that the Gurnee gym had a Suicide Awareness program scheduled.

Superintendent Peck requested that Mr. Litso look into the VA Accountability Act HR1994. Mr. Peck was told that HR at the VA have a difficult process to go through to eliminate employees. Conduct and performance on VA employees is reviewed.

Superintendent Peck again mentioned that Sherry Kruse has been working diligently with processing and advising veterans of the current Homestead Act for Tax Exempt. We received a list of approximately 2500 names of veterans which we have tried to contact and advise of the Homestead Act. There is also a senate bill waiting to get passed that would change the allowance for the Homestead Act.

Superintendent Peck also mentioned that since he opened an office at Lovell, our database has increased by about 250 clients. Lisabeth Risley is volunteering in that office and he and Lisabeth are now notary public. He also mentioned that Vice President Nick Konz has been very active at the VA.

Delegate Villarreal gave a brief review about Veterans Court. The last graduating class had 6 active participants. Graduation usually occurs every 3 months. Veterans Court is a 24 month program. They also have a shorter program which is 12 months. Mentors attempt to help the veterans but unfortunately the courts had a few veterans drop out of the program.

Vice President Konz again mentioned the fact that each post should be turning volunteer hours from their posts so we can report the hours to the governor in our annual report. This is simple request but an important request.

Superintendent Peck again mentioned SB107 – This is going before the House and Senate. He also stated that 70%-100% will be exempt, 50-60% should receive \$5000.00 off of their taxes and veterans that are rated at 30-40% would be eligible to receive \$2500.00 off of their homestead taxes. These are off of the assessed value of the home, not the appraised value.

Superintendent Peck reviewed his Report (see attached)

The superintendent report was reviewed and presented to the delegates. A motion to accept the superintendent report was made by Delegate Patterson and seconded by Delegate Frangquist. A unanimous vote passed the motion.

Mundelein American Legion donated \$4,426.00 from the poppy fund to the VAC NFP
Donations also received were \$100.00 each from VFW Post 1943 and Post 25

Superintendent Peck stated that a used car was purchased with dollars split between the VAC and Allen J Lynch Foundation for a veteran

Superintendent Peck also stated that effective July 1, 2015, state drivers license will have the word "veteran" on them. Carl Sorenson stated that the DMV told him he must have his DD214 stamped by the Illinois Dept of Veterans Affairs and then taken to DMV.

Superintendent Peck mentioned that on Sept 25, 2015 Al Lynch is holding a golf outing

Delegate Report was given as:

Delegate Ayres, Employment rep for VAC, stated that he has connected new veterans with job contacts. Also working on integrating facebook with our newsletter – first attempt has been made. Also in contact with College of Lake County for them to donate 3 laptops to CLC veterans – Also in the works is to set up a link between a veteran and a used car

Delegate Frangquist stated that American Legion Post 771, Gurnee that the grade school has a Great American Program. After school program covering material not presented in class (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, etc). At present 107 students have completed the program

Delegate Geary, American Legion Post 911, Wauconda wrote that Wauconda has a great Memorial Day Parade lasting about 1 hour and 45 minutes followed by a Memorial Service at Wauconda's Memorial Park. After that, Post 911 American Legion color guard held brief memorial service and rifle salutes at each of our two cemeteries. On the 3rd of July, the Village of Wauconda will have their annual fireworks. On the 4th of July, the Village of Island Lake will have motor parade and will end at Veterans Memorial Park with a village picnic and games for the kids. Wauconda American Legion Post 911 also held a flag retirement ceremony and respectfully disposed of about 1000 tattered American flags by burning them

Delegate Early VFW mentioned that Post 4551 will march in the Antioch 4th of July parade. They will pass out 4,000 or more small American Flags during the parade route. They will have 2 floats in the parade. All are invited.

Delegate Kozar, VFW Post 11020 of Lake Zurich will host a cookout for vets from Lovell FHCC on July 4th at Paulus Park in Lake Zurich. The Village of Lake Zurich will donate a shelter free of charge veterans admission (verbatim)

Delegate Shebenik PLAV Post 25 announced that on July 14th, the Polish Legion will host Polish dinner for the patients at the James A Lovell FHCC at 11:30 am in Bourke Hall

Delegate Villarreal reiterated that Vets court frequency of graduation varies – it could be on average of 3 months – depends on the nature of the offense. He also stated that Marine Corps League 1395 marched in the Wauconda Parade.

Delegate Johnson stated that Lake Zurich Post 964 will be retiring flags

President Arnswald also stated that American Legion Libertyville will be holding a parade for Memorial Day. He so stated that a Captain in Air Corp who was a pilot in Iraq and Afghanistan will be the speaker. Ceremony will go to Lakeside Cemetery for a short service and refreshments will be served.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Delegate Patterson and seconded by Delegate Nickerson
A unanimous vote passed the motion

Meeting was adjourned

Next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 16, 2015 starting at 10:30 am. There will not be any meetings during the month of July and August as summer hiatus is acknowledged.

Thank you

Stan Villarreal
Secretary