



MONTHLY REPORT

AUGUST 2024

Includes Meeting Minutes from
Special Meeting Held 8/13/24

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

8-28-2024

- I. Call to Order & Salute to the Colors
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Chaplain's Prayer
- IV. Roll Call of Officers
- V. Reading & Approval of Meeting Minutes/Special Meeting Minutes
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
 - a. Office Activity
 - b. Property Update
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

7-24-24

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Phil Harth - AmLeg - Mendota / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Paul Siembab - MarCorpLeg - Post 078 / Mike Mallie - MarCorpLeg - Post 078
Other: Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniacki - EXCUSED
Guard – Elton Murphy
Chaplain – Harold Olsen

Employees Present

Christa Hammers – Superintendent
Lissa Olson - Assistant Superintendent
James Sturtevant- VSO
Emily Hackler- VSO
Kelli Rietgraf - Administrative Assistant

Meeting MINUTES

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes as presented:

Motion by Lance Sires and seconded by Phil Harth. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the office participated in the first ever Warriors and Guardians 5K with the Peru Police Dept. The office was able to assist with runners checking in, maintaining safe roadways for the runners and with the awards.

Christa told the board that the office will be meeting with the Veterans Advisor for Congressman Darin Lahood on August 2nd. We look forward to maintaining great relationships with our Congressmen/women.

Christa also discussed that the office will host a IVAC "before hours" breakfast that is open to the public. This will allow fellow business members to come in and ask questions about what we do and get more people aware of our office.

Christa then told the commission that the office is also putting together an event for area highschoolers that may be interested in joining the service. This will be a Q&A session with a panel of Veterans from every branch we can. This will be at LP Auditorium on September 10th from 5-8pm.

Christa then stated that there will be some employees attending state training for CEU's. Christa, Lissa and James will be in attendance the week of Sept 16-20. The state association has invited VAC Boardmembers to attend friday morning for a session with the AG's office on the MVAA. Three VAC Board members are permitted to attend and if interested- please let us know.

We continue waiting on a response from the AG's office on the property purchase. At this time we have spoken through our realtor and the seller is ok with pushing back until mid-August but would like to know as soon as we do on what to expect. The company regarding the land came out to take images/history of property and hope to have that result by end of July.

Meeting

MINUTES

Continued:

Christa then explained that there were a few on-going issues with the County not wanting to pay bills for events attended. Christa informed the commission that she had spoken to our attorney regarding that matter and he would be working on a letter for them. Christa submitted all VAC policies to the attorney so he can view them and use them for his letter as well.

The VAC continues to see new clients and the amount phone calls increase monthly. The VAC as brought in over \$5.7 million to Veterans and families through the end of June.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Elton Murphy and seconded by Mike Mallie. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

Bonuses for Employess:

Lissa, Kelli, Emily, James and Christa presented for Raise/Bonus.

The VAC Commission discussed and decided that the employees would each receive a bonus of \$5,000 each and it was understood that it would be a net payout or at the very most a reduction of the Federal amount of 22%. Christa would let them know if there were any issues with this happening.

Motion to approve the bonus for each employee for FY24 made by Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Mike Harden. Motion passed unanimously.

For the Good of the Commission

Elton brought up that burger night is at the LaSalle VFW tomorrow night (7/25/24).

Phil mentioned the Mendota Sweet Corn festival is Aug 8-11.

Harold stated that there has been a replacement for the Activity Aide at the LaSalle VA Home.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Harold Olsen and seconded by Elton Murphy.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:55pm.

Special Meeting MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING - August 13, 2024

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 4 pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Ron Sisco - AmLeg- Mendota / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Paul Siembab - Marine Corps Leg / Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Thomas Shea - AmLeg - Ottawa
Other: Jack Leininger - VFW - Marseilles

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki
Guard – Elton Murphy
Chaplain – Harold Olsen

Employees Present

Christa Hammers – Superintendent
Lissa Olson - Assistant Superintendent - EXCUSED
James Sturtevant- VSO
Emily Hackler- VSO- EXCUSED
Kelli Rietgraf - Administrative Assistant

Special Meeting MINUTES

Due to the nature of a special meeting- no old minutes were presented for accepting.
President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 4pm.

Opening Prayer/Pledge and Roll Call was taken.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that they have convened to go over an update on the Bonus program and verbiage used in the memo.

Christa informed the Board that the County has given estimates for the Bonus payouts and they were far lower than the Board expected. Asked for guidance and offered the Bonus re-written by the Commissions Attourney as an option.

The VAC Board was in agreement that the payout should be net and that the resolution revision was to be approved.

Christa informed the VAC board that this matter should be handled but if anything more was to come up, we would discuss at next meeting.

The below was discussed and voted on via individual vote by delegates/alternates present:

Motion to move that the revision to the Bonus program is put into effect made by Louis Sekula, seconded by Elton Murphy.

A roll call vote was called:

Mike Harden - "yay"

Lance Sires - "yay"

Roscoe Mazur- "yay"

Dennis Znaniiecki - "yay"

Louis Sekula - "yay"

Ron Sisco - "yay"

Gary Graffis- "yay"

Paul Siembab- "yay"

Elton Murphy - "yay"

Harold Olsen- "yay"

Charles Erb- "yay"

Motion to revise and implement the Bonus system as a net payout is unanimous.

Special Meeting MINUTES

Public Comment

John Duback stated that there is a need for drivers at the LaSalle VA Home if anyone is available to assist.

President Andy Ruggerio asked for closing prayer and salute to colors.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Harold Olsen and seconded by Elton Murphy.
Motion passed unanimously at 4:15pm.

END OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES.

AUGUST

Office Activity:

Christa and Lissa met with the new Veterans Advisor for Congressman Darin LaHood on Friday, August 2nd. The advisor requested to stop in and meet the staff and introduce himself so we can begin a working relationship. It was a great meeting and we look forward to working together to solve any Veteran issues that may arise.

Friday, August 9- our office hosted an IVAC Buisness Breakfast “before hours” and allowed area people/businesses to view our office and talk about what we do here. We had about 30 people come through and see our spaces and learn about our services.

On August 21st the office took a “field trip” to the Dupage VAC Veterans Expo to see what services they may have that we can bring into our area.

Unfortunately we had a instance of bedbugs being in the office and Orkin had to come in and fumigate. Thankfully, that coincided with the Dupage trip and we were able to be out of the office and not have to turn away clients. We have a secondary spray coming up on Sept 6th and the office will be closed.

On September 10th our office is putting together a Veterans Q&A Event at LP Highschool. This event is for those who are interested in joining one of the branches to come and talk to Veterans who have been there and can answer them. The event will be from 5-8PM in the auditorium.

The office will have their state training/CEU’s the week of September 16th and this year the state association has invited 3 of each counties board members to join them on the morning of Friday, September 20. We have three VAC Board members signed up, so thank you.

The budget is still being worked on due to no answer from AG office as of yet. But the attorney advised that we proceed as if the response will be in our favor so we are not short for next year. We will proceed with budget approval at September meeting regardless of if we have had an AG response.

JULY Office Activity			
Office Visits	118	Intent to File	35
Phone	721	Intital Claims	34
Outstation	22	Appeals	16
Mendota	5	VA Healthcare	12
Streator	7	Pension/DIC	4
Marseilles	10	Other	176

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- JULY			
PTSD GROUP	22	WALK-INS:	64
FLUTES	4	APPT MADE	21
VHA	1	QUESTIONS	43
MidWest Shelter	0	TOTAL:	91

Our Office
EVENTS

JULY Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
70%	10/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,630.44	\$ 1,804.06
100 P&T	9/15/2023	Dec-24	\$ 58,224.90	\$ 3,737.85
back pay		Dec-24	\$ 22,609.13	\$ -
50%	11/20/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,428.04	\$ 1,075.16
60%	12/2/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,401.84	\$ 1,577.88
dependent	2/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 1,768.00	\$ 104.00
70%	10/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 32,907.85	\$ 1,716.28
60%	10/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,195.37	\$ 1,361.88
10%	3/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,580.73	\$ 171.23
70%	4/22/2024	Dec-24	\$ 23,699.60	\$ 1,861.28
100%	3/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 56,325.99	\$ 4,078.99
100% P&T	8/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 68,009.28	\$ 3,946.25
survivors pension	5/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 6,501.00	\$ 366.00
100% P&T	3/19/2024	Dec-24	\$ 72,585.29	\$ 4,884.71
90%	5/22/2024	Dec-24	\$ 39,750.21	\$ 2,844.91
90%	2/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,506.40	\$ 371.90
100% P&T	5/30/2024	Dec-24	\$ 47,836.77	\$ 3,737.85
10%	10/12/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,419.29	\$ 171.23
90%	4/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 30,470.91	\$ 2,374.65
100% P&T	2/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 82,213.23	\$ 3,946.25
70%	4/4/2024	Dec-24	\$ 25,744.20	\$ 1,716.28
50%	3/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 15,742.80	\$ 1,311.90
20%	2/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,065.44	\$ 338.49
30%	2/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 7,778.64	\$ 524.31
90%	2/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 40,256.43	\$ 2,428.91
70%	7/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 22,735.69	\$ 682.12
60%	8/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 33,012.67	\$ 1,506.88
80%	8/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,577.12	\$ 2,161.01
50%	5/24/2023	Dec-24	\$ 23,667.34	\$ 1,255.16
60%	2/8/2024	Dec-24	\$ 17,489.44	\$ 1,361.88
60%	8/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,138.30	\$ 1,361.88
CRDP	8/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 19,764.52	\$ -
70%	6/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 44,046.46	\$ 1,861.28
10%	3/18/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,739.68	\$ 171.23
100% P&T	5/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 90,290.94	\$ 3,946.25
60%	4/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,581.13	\$ 1,361.88
	Total		\$1,085,695.07	\$62,121.82
	Year to Date Total		\$6,812,002.61	\$571,493.04

The VAC is happy to report that we are keeping on trend with an increase to benefits paid out to our Veterans and Families! Totalling OVER \$6.8 Million by the end of July 2024. This is over \$2.5 MILLION more than where we were FY23. We continue to see new clients daily and thank all our Veterans and Families for trusting us with their claims process.