

Veterans Assistance Commission
Minutes 9/10/84

On Sept. 10, 1984 the first meeting of the "Veterans Assistance Commission of La Salle County," met at the La Salle V.F.W. Post 4668 at 7:30 P.M.

At this meeting the delegates and alternates for the Commission were given by the respective veterans organizations.

Martin Rue, of La Salle-Peru Amvets Post 78 acted as chairman pro-tem. A lengthy discussion ensued. The need for the commission was explained by comrade Rue and questions answered.

Comrade Rue had done a thorough research on the commission, such as lawyer contact and getting information from other commissions.

A report was made on the meeting with the legislative commission of the La Salle County Board. It was explained that, according to the Bogardus act, the La Salle County Board is mandated by law to assess a tax of .003¢ per \$100.00 of assessment. This would bring about \$300,000. per year for the V.A.C. (if needed). It was also brought up that we would not ask for more than the 3 mil. assessment, if we did, it would have to be put on a referendum, and as we all know it would be defeated.

A discussion then followed as to who would head the commission, Martin Rue expressed his interests and said he wanted to apply for the position of Superintendent.

He then stated his qualifications. Since no one else applied, the delegates present voted Mr. Rue in as superintendent. A meeting of delegates was then held by the delegates, fixing the salary of the superintendent at \$18,000 per year plus 20¢ a mile when his vehicle is used on V.A.C. business. It was also brought up that a minimum of 40 hrs. had to be worked per week plus other emergencies that would arise.

The need of a secretary for the office of the superintendent was then brought up. This position would pay between \$9000 & \$10000 per year with a 40 hr. work week. The secretary hired would have to be approved by the delegates as the position is one of great confidentiality and discretion.

The need of transient veterans was discussed. It was decided that the commission would only help those in La Salle County.

The handling of V.A.C. funds was raised. It was explained that no cash is given to indigent veterans. The help he or she would receive would be in the form of vouchers.

An election of officers was then held, the following will assume their positions at the next meeting.

Robert Wachowiak Chairmen V.F.W. Post 4668

Ralph Adler - Vice Chairman A.L.

Francis J. Perra - Adjutant Amvets Post 78.

The meeting then adjourned. The next meeting of the V.A.C. will be held at La Salle V.F.W. Post 4668 on 10/10/84 at 7:30 P.M. Secretary Perra will send out notices to all delegates and alternates in this regard. Also, Veterans organizations are asked to donate to the V.A.C. to help us defray expenses as many letters and miscellaneous expenses will be incurred.

At the next meeting, we will draft up our by-laws and resolutions by which we will abide.

VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION MINUTES FROM 12 December 1984

Meeting opened at 7:30 PM with proper ceremonies by chairman, Bob Wachowiak. Roll Call of delegates and alternates showed 11 delegates present, 1 excused, 6 absent, 3 alternates present, 3 excused, 9 absent.

Minutes from the previous meeting of 13 November 1984 were read and approved with corrections.

The budget offered by the LaSalle County Board, for the operation the Veterans Assistance Commission was presented to the members of the V.A.C.

Chairman Wachowiak stated he had talked to the members of the Commission prior to tonites meeting to get their opinion on the proposal.

The Board did approve the \$18,000 annual salary for Superintendent Rue but only \$8,200 annually for the secretary. However, the secretary's salary could be \$9,600 annually as of 1 January 1985.

Other items that were cut on the V.A.C. proposed budget were, telephone, travel and transportation, contingencies etc. However, it was a budget we could live with at the present time. The Commission also decided that Superintendent Rue be on the payroll as of 1 December 1984. He has already religiously worked with indigent veterans prior to this time but we need our office as soon as possible.

Mr. Rue stated that the County Board is offering office #411 in the Old Court House Building for the V.A.C. It is a 2 room office on the 4th floor.

The Commission also requested an official copy of the Boards budget. As of now it has not been drafted. We want it in writing.

Francis Perra, AMVET Delegate Post 78 made a motion that the Commission accept the Boards proposal and follow the above. It was 2nd by Howard Smith American Legion Delegate Post 33. Mostion passed unanimously.

A discussion followed, as to who on the County Board would have access to the names of the indigent veterans we assist. It was unanimously decided that the only Board member who would have access, would be the County Board Chairman or a County Board member that is selected by the Chairman to represent him. This priveledged information will be held in the strictest of confidence and will not be divulged to the Press, Public or anyone else.

Carl Kirar C.W.V. Delegate, Post 883 praised the work done by the Commission. He said in comparison to other V.A.C. Budgets we have done very well.

Howard Smith then asked, "When are we going to get started?" Rue, said we started September 10, 1984. Rue and Perra are going to Ottawa tomorrow to find out when the office will be available.

Al Strozewski, A.L. Delegate, Post 426, asked what will we have to do now and who is to be notified? Mr. Rue said we have officially been a Commission since we organized in September. Have our clients call me if they need assistance.

VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION MINUTES FROM 12 DECEMBER 1984

Meeting opened at 7:30 PM with proper ceremonies by chairman, Bob Machowski. Roll Call of delegates and alternates showed 11 delegates present, 1 excused, 6 absent, 3 alternates present, 3 excused, 9 absent.

Minutes from the previous meeting of 13 November 1984 were read and approved with corrections.

The budget offered by the LeSalle County Board, for the operation the Veterans Assistance Commission was presented to the members of the V.A.C.

Chairman Machowski stated he had talked to the members of the Commission prior to tonight's meeting to get their opinion on the proposal.

The Board did approve the \$18,000 annual salary for Superintendent Rus but only \$8,200 annually for the secretary. However, the secretary's salary could be \$9,500 annually as of 1 January 1985.

Other items that were out on the V.A.C. proposed budget were, telephone, travel and transportation, conference fees, etc. However, it was a budget we could live with at the present time. The Commission also decided that Superintendent Rus be on the payroll as of 1 December 1984. He has already previously worked with indigent veterans prior to this time but we need our office as soon as possible.

Mr. Rus stated that the County Board is offering office #111 in the Old Court House Building for the V.A.C. It is a 2 room office on the 4th floor.

The Commission also requested an official copy of the Board's budget. As of now it has not been drafted. We want it in writing.

Francis Perry, AMVET LeSalle Post 78 made a motion that the Commission accept the Board's proposal and follow the above. It was 2nd by Howard Smith American Legion Gate Post 33. Motion passed unanimously.

A discussion followed as to who on the County Board would have access to the names of the indigent veterans we assist. It was unanimously decided that the only Board member who would have access, would be the County Board Chairman or a County Board member that is selected by the Chairman to represent him. This privileged information will be held in the strictest of confidence and will not be divulged to the press, public or anyone else.

Carl Kivir, C.W.V. LeSalle Post 883 praised the work done by the Commission. He said in comparison to other V.A.C. Boards we have done very well.

Howard Smith then asked, "When are we going to get started?" Rus, said we started September 10, 1984. Rus and Perry are going to Ottawa tomorrow to find out when the office will be available.

Al Stojanowski, A.L. LeSalle Post 436, asked what will we have to do now and who is to be notified? He said we have officially been a Commission since we organized in September. Have our clients call me if they need assistance.

Carl Kirar then brought up 3 incidents of which he was familiar. He said that when comrades Francis Panneck and Barrentini had gone to Iowa City and Walter Smoron to Peoria with health problems, they had no problems getting taken care of.

Mr. Rue went on to say, that may be so, however the influx at Hines and Westside is much higher and VETS are having problems getting taken care of at these facilities. Mr. Rue also told of an incident where an indigent veteran had to go to Pontiac. He had tried to get a veteran to take him there, but none could do it. That's one reason why we have to get started now. Mr. Perra's wife ended up taking the veteran and Mr. Rue took Mr. Perra to work. Mr. Rue then said that a conversation between him and a Post Commander had taken place after the meeting last month in Ottawa. This conversation, involving an indigent veteran, was also heard by other members of the Commission. Now we all know that, at our closed meetings, nothing should be discussed with anyone who is not a member of the Commission. Yet, when Mr. Rue had gone to Ottawa on business, this particular case was thrown up to him in front of other people. We must keep these meetings and discussions in strict confidence. The Privacy Act must be respected. Our clients have pride and their personal problems are not public information.

Mr. Rue then told of a letter put out by the Veteran's Affairs Committee dated 20 November 1984, in it, it stated the V.A. is being asked to cut back on medical expenses as funds are not available. What this means is that the V.A. will not service veterans unless they are service connected. Only 1/3 of our veterans in the U.S. have service connected disabilities. The majority of our veterans would not be entitled to medical care. It would be hard to justify keeping V.A. Hospitals open.

An example of what a veteran is thought of can be compared to the fact that a veteran gets \$300 for burial expenses in the county, yet Public Aid gives its recipients \$600.

Since our last meeting, Mr. Rue has interviewed 3 persons for the position of secretary for the office of the Veterans Assistance Commission. The prospects were given secretarial test in LaSalle and Ottawa at the unemployment office, after evaluating the applicants qualifications, Carl Kirar made a motion; he said Mr. Rue will be working closely with the secretary, it should be his decision as to who should be hired. Francis Perra 2nd. Motion carried unanimously.

The following guide lines will be used for the secretarial position.

1. Abide and follow By-Laws of Commission
2. Respect of Privacy Act
3. 60 day Probationary Period
4. Observe holiday schedule of County employees
5. One week paid vacation after one year employment, two weeks vacation after two years. In essence after one year-one week, two years-two weeks, three-four years-two weeks. Over five years of employment the Commission will meet and make a decision in regards to additional vacation. (The vacation schedule is the same as the one of the Superintendent) It must be understood that the Superintendent and secretary may not be on vacation at the same time. The office will be open 52 weeks a year.

Carl River then brought up 3 incidents of which he was familiar. He said that when comrades Francis Hancock and Garretting had come to Iowa City and Walter Swanson to Peoria with health problems, they had no problems getting taken care of.

Mr. River went on to say, that may be so, however the influx at Illinois and Missouri is much higher and VETS are having problems getting taken care of at these facilities. Mr. River also told of an incident where an Indiana veteran had to go to Peoria. He had tried to get a veteran to take him there, but none could do it. That's one reason why we have to get started now. Mr. River's wife ended up taking the veteran and Mr. River took Mr. River to work. Mr. River then said that a conversation between him and a Post Commander had taken place after the meeting last month in Ottawa. This conversation involving and indigent veteran, was also heard by other members of the Commission. Now we all know that at our closed meetings, nothing when Mr. River had gone to Ottawa on business, this particular case was thrown up to him in front of other people. We must keep these meetings and discussions in strict confidence. The Privacy Act must be respected. Our clients have pride and these personal problems are not public information.

Mr. River then said of a letter put out by the Veterans Affairs Commission dated 20 November 1984. In it it stated the V.A. is being asked to cut back on medical expenses as funds are not available. What this means is that the V.A. will not service veterans unless they are service connected. Only 1/3 of our veterans in the U.S. have service connected disabilities. The majority of our veterans would not be entitled to medical care. It would be hard to justify keeping V.A. hospitals open.

An example of what a veteran is thought of can be compared to the fact that a veteran gets \$500 for burial expenses in the country, yet Public Aid gives the veterans \$200.

Since our last meeting, Mr. River has interviewed 3 persons for the position of secretary for the office of the Veterans Assistance Commission. The persons were given secretarial test in Dallas and Ottawa at the unemployment office. After evaluating the applicants qualifications, Carl River made a motion to ask Mr. River to be working closely with the secretary. It should be his decision as to who should be hired. Francis Penn, Sam. Boston carried unanimously.

The following guidelines will be used for the secretarial position.

1. Ability and follow B.V.A. of Commission
2. Respect of Privacy Act
3. 30 day probationary period
4. Reserve holiday schedule of County employees
5. One week paid vacation after one year employment. Two weeks vacation a year after two years. In absence after one year-one week, two years-two weeks, three-four years-three weeks. Over five years of employment the Commission will meet and make a decision in regard to additional vacation. (The vacation schedule is the same as the one of the Superintendent). It must be understood that the Superintendent and secretary may not be on vacation at the same time. The office will be open 88 weeks a year.

6. Three personal days will be allowed per year. One week notice required prior to taking a personal day. Personal days can not be carried into the next year if they are not used; they will be lost and not compensated for.
7. In the event of a absenteeism; if the employee is off over 3 days, a release must be obtained from the doctor before work can be resumed. Extenuating circumstances will be given consideration.
8. Two days funeral pay limited to: Demise of Grand Parents, Parents, Children, Spouse, Step-Parents, Step-Children, Brothers and Sisters. Does not include In-Laws.
9. Will not be eligible for Jury Duty, because of nature of job.
10. Work week will be Monday through Friday, with the exception of observed holidays.
11. Work day is 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with 1/2 hour off for lunch.
12. Be willing to stay after 5:00 PM if emergency arises, without compensation.

Motion made by Francis Perra to adopt the above, 2nd by Ralph Adler, A.L. Delegate, Post 235. Commission vote unanimous to accept.

A discussion of what indigent veterans could benefit from our services then followed. Those who could benefit from the services of the V.A.C. are those VETS of the War Era that is, those who served under Honorable Conditions prior to 1975.

It was decided that the V.A.C. will furnish up to \$20.00 per month for the veteran for personal hygiene and up to \$5.00 per month for each of his or her dependents. This does not mean that a veteran with a wife and two children would automatically get \$35.00 per month, it means he can get up to, but not over \$35.00 per month. There will be no waiting period for the veteran to receive assistance.

Travel pay for drives in the assistance of veterans and/or families will be 20¢ per mile.

Discussion followed in regards to electing a Chaplain and 3 Trustees. These positions are to be held for 1 year. At the end of the term, another election will be held.

It will be the duty of the Trustees to check the books of the Superintendent each month. Sam Maggio nominated C. "Nick" Pacetti for the office of Chaplain. Being no further nominations, the adjutant cast 1 unanimous ballot for Pacetti.

For Trustees, nominated were Jim Cappellini, Jim Massat and Sam Maggio. Being no further nominations, the adjutant cast 1 unanimous ballot for Cappellini, Massat and Maggio for Trustees.

Bonding of the Superintendent was then discussed, it was made clear; that he will be bonded.

Mr. Rue than read a letter that Ed Thornton, had written to Gov. Thompson. The letter urges the Governor to issue the certificate of need for the Domiciliary Care Unit we have been fighting for.

2. Three personal days will be allowed per year. One week notice required prior to taking a personal day. Personal days can not be carried into the next year if they are not used; they will be lost and not compensated for. In the event of a resignation, if the employee is off over 3 days, release must be obtained from the doctor before work can be resumed. Extenuating circumstances will be given consideration.

3. Two days funeral pay limited to: Unions of Grand Parents, Parents, Offspring, Spouse, Step-Parents, Step-Children, Brothers and Sisters. Does not include in-laws.

4. Will not be eligible for jury duty, because of nature of job.
10. Work week will be Monday through Friday, with the exception of observed holidays.

11. Work day is 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with 1/2 hour off for lunch.
12. Be willing to stay after 5:00 PM if emergency arises, without compensation.

Motion made by Francis Burns to adopt the above, and by Ralph Adler, A.L. Delegate, Post 338, Commission vote unanimous to accept.

A discussion of what independent veterans could benefit from our services then followed. Those who could benefit from the services of the V.A.C. are those VETS of the War Era that is, those who served under Honorable Conditions prior to 1948.

It was decided that the V.A.C. will furnish up to \$50.00 per month for the veteran for personal hygiene and up to \$25.00 per month for each of his or her dependents. This does not mean that a veteran with a wife and two children would automatically get \$100.00 per month, if means he can get up to, but not over \$50.00 per month. There will be no waiting period for the veteran to receive assistance.

Travel pay for driver in the assistance of veterans and their families will be \$25 per mile.

Discussion followed in regards to electing a Chairman and 3 Trustees. These positions are to be held for 1 year. At the end of the term, another election will be held.

It will be the duty of the Trustees to check the books of the Superintendent each month. Sam Magdo nominated C. "Buck" Tacey for the office of Chairman. Being no further nominations, the adjutant cast 1 unanimous ballot for Tacey.

For Trustees, nominated were Jim Landonini, Jim Passaro and Sam Magdo. Being no further nominations, the adjutant cast 1 unanimous ballot for Landonini, Passaro and Magdo for Trustees.

Bonding of the Superintendent was then discussed, it was made clear that he will be bonded.

Mr. Landonini read a letter that Ed Thompson, had written to Gov. Thompson. The letter urges the Governor to issue the certificate of need for the Community Care Unit we have been fighting for.

Jim Massat made a motion to accept the D.A.V. in our membership Maggio 2nd.
Passed unanimously.

Larry Anderson made motion to accept the NAM VETS, Al Strozewski 2nd ammended
to where NAM VETS be accepted but without a vote. Passed unanimously.

Next meeting will be Room 411 of the V.A.C. in Ottawa, at 7:30 PM on Wed.
January 8, 1985.

Francis J. PERRA, ADJ, V.A.C
1810 Fulton Street
Peru, Illinois 61354
(815)223-4696

Jim Massat made a motion to accept the D.A.V. in our membership. Motion passed unanimously.

Larry Anderson made motion to accept the NAM VETS. At Strozowski's recommendation to where NAM VETS be accepted but without a vote. Passed unanimously.

Next meeting will be room #11 of the V.A.C. in Ottawa, at 7:30 PM on Wed. January 3, 1985.

Francis J. PERNA, ADA, V.A.C.
1810 Fulton Street
Peoria, Illinois 61604
(815)323-4446

Commander Ernie Patton, Post 217 American Legion, submitted the following. If a Vet has to go to a hospital, contact:

The American Legion, Dept. of Iowa
Attention: Barbara J. Bowman
Hospital Contact Representative
Veterans Administration Medical Center
Iowa City, Iowa 52240 Phone (312) 338-0581 Ext. 205

A discussion then followed, in regards to the quotes made by Veterans and Board Members. Mr. Rue said that the letter was not to be aired to the public. He has proof of the statements, but did not want to bring out names at this time. He felt as though we were aware of the parties making the statements.

Superintendent Rue spoke of the meeting with the County Board earlier in the day. Upwards of 30 Veterans were there, representing all Veteran organizations in the county.

Gale Murren, Attorney and Veteran, spoke in behalf of the V.A.C. (our representative counsel). His interpretation of the meeting was that we must continue our fight for the V.A.C. proposed budget and maintain our stand. The consensus was that the following Board Members support our group and budget, they are: Smith, Hageman, Francetti, Armstrong, and Mrs. Woodrich, not sure of Morand. It is up to us and other Veterans to approach the Board Members requesting their support in our quest. It is the County Board's job to get us funded 100%. However, we must not take public aid. We do not want to follow any guide lines but our own.

One irritating factor in the County Board's proposed tax levy, is the fact that they want to taken aerial pictures of farm land at a cost of \$750,000. Smith was very much against it.

Gale Murren told V.A.C. members after the Board Meeting that afternoon, that any promise or other things say they will give us, we must get it in writing. Such things as office equipment, Xerox use, etc.

Two Board Members who must be approached and requested to speak in our behalf and support us are Madden and Panzica. Both men are Veterans, but did not speak in our behalf at the Board Meeting.

It was felt that being a service officer for a Veterans Organization, Panzica should have led the parade in our support, as he understands Vets needs and problems. He is in an excellent position to talk to the Board and explain the situation to them.

After the Board Meeting, Mr. Rue talked with Joe Hogan. Joe is Peru Township Supervisor and News Director of WLPO. He and other Township Supervisors, and officers of public aid support us.

It must be remembered that according to the Bodardus Act, the Veterans Assistance Commission is the overseer of the indigent Veteran. Some present superintendents of the V.A.C. only work on it as a part-time job, such as supplemental jobs, retirees, etc, in other words not a professional office per se. We, of the La Salle County V.A.C., feel as though if a job can't be done properly and thoroughly, it shouldn't be done at all. How strong

is the V.A.C.? Since 1940, it's strength has never been tested.

Organizational strength and power starts at the post level. In the past few years, the Vet has lost many benefits. It is up to each and every one of us to write to our Federal Senators and Representatives to reinstate the benefits that were taken from us and prevent future cut-backs on our present rights and benefits.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Next meeting at American Legion, Post 217, Streator, on 12 December 1984 at 7:30 p.m.

As a reminder, let it be noted that the next meeting of the "Concerned Veterans of the Illinois Valley," will be held on Thursday 7:30 p.m., 29 November 1984 at the American Legion, Post 237, 410 Clark Street, Oglesby, Illinois 61348.

Respectfully Submitted,

Franics J. Perra, Adj. V.A.C.
1810 Fulton Street
Peru, Illinois 61354
(815) 223-4696