

LaSalle County Veterans Assistance Commission

MONTHLY REPORT

J U N E 2 0 2 3



Prepared By:
Christa Hammers
Superintendent

AGENDA

MEETING 7/26/2023

- I. Call to Order & Salute to the Colors
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Chaplin's Prayer
- IV. Roll Call of Officers
- V. Reading & Approval of the Meeting Minutes
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
 - a. Office Activity
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. Presentations by Staff
 - b. ****Closed Session for Discussion****
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

6/28/2023

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

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

Delegates & Alternates Present

Greg Stock - Am Legion- Marseilles / Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa / Paul Siembab - MC League- Oglesby / Mike Harden - Am Legion - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Roscoe Mazur - Am Legion - Oglesby / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / Mike Mallie - MC League - Oglesby / Elton Murphy - VFW - LaSalle / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Tom Shea - Am Legion - Ottawa / Lance Sires - Am Legion - Marseilles

Officers Present

President – Harold Olsen

Vice President – Dennis Znaniiecki

Guard – Bill Paterson

Chaplin – Andy Ruggerio

Employees Present

Christa Hammers – Superintendent - EXCUSED

Lissa Olson - Assistant Superintendent

James Sturtevant- VSO- In-Training

Emily Hackler- VSO - In-Training

Kelli Rietgraf - Administrative Assistant

Meeting MINUTES

Meeting started at 5:00pm.

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Harold Olsen and seconded by Elton Murphy. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment - None

Superintendent's Report

Lissa discussed NACVSO (National Association of County Veterans Service Officers) Training in Madison. She went over briefly the topics discussed- TERA (toxic exposure risk activity), VBMS Updates, Electronic Health Records, Camp Lejeune Justice Act/PACT to name a few. Also discussed the leadership we had the honor of hearing from, VA Secretary Denis McDonough, NCA Under Secretary, Matthew Quinn and VBA Under Secretary, Josh Jacobs. Also discussed that we had a wonderful women's Veterans lunch with Brigadier General Joane Mathews.

Lissa then discussed how Christa attended CVA courses June 3-4 and that they were refresher classes, always able to learn something from the great advocates and teachers we have.

Lissa then talked about how our office would be hosting the IACVAC Division II SAVE Training on June 30th. Training for New VSO's and others who have never been through the program.

Lissa then discussed how the Peru PD would be coming to our office to put together a safety plan on June 30th. Lissa stated that Christa would put this in a procedure manual so everyone is aware.

Lissa also talked about Humana Insurance coming to the office for our Veterans to be able to ask questions about Medicare/VA Healthcare and Humana working together. Fridays from 10-3.

Lissa also stated that our office was holding a PACT Act day for Intent filing. August 5th from 9am-1pm. Stop on in and we can help you out!

Lissa then told the board that Christa was chosen for Congresswoman Underwoods Veteran Advisory Council, also that Christa would be taking over as the liaison between IDVA and the county VSO's throughout the state.

There was a correction to the DMV License Plates: Veterans HAVE to be Service-Connected at 50% or more to receive no cost plates/stickers.

Meeting

MINUTES

Lissa then discussed the office brought in over \$3.2 Million in payouts to our Veterans and Families through May 2023. We look forward to surpassing our last years total.

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

Old Business- NONE.

New Business- NONE.

For the Good of the Commission

Dennis Znaniiecki discussed that July 3rd the Pistol Shrimp are hosting a Vets night. Memorial Group will be there- arrive about 5:30pm. Also, if you haven't used them (Vettix.org) is great for getting tickets for concerts and games.

Harold stated that they are trying to get the Veterans from the VA Home to one of the Pistol Shrimp games. They are currently on lockdown again due to upper respiratory. 84 beds currently occupied.

Elton Murphy stated that he got an email from Todd Volker from Habitat for Humanity. Needing help with build. If interested his number is 815-434-2041. Also, the VFW has karaoke from 7p-11p in LaSalle on June 30th.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Dennis Znaniiecki.
Motion passed unanimously at 5:30pm.

JUNE:

Training:

Emily has her accreditation number and is now waiting on her PIV card. She is working with both Christa and Lissa to take on some claim work and is doing well.

PACT Act:

Veterans who may qualify for any compensation under the new PACT Act should see one of us before August 10, 2023. That is the last day for filing a claim and having it backdate to August 10, 2022- when the Act was signed. After that date, it will be from date of claim.

OUR OFFICE IS HOLDING INTENT DAY- August 5 from 9-1pm. Walk-ins welcome. Please bring your DD214. We will set you up with follow-up appointment. Hold your date, come see us!

**PACT Act is Liberalizing Law... meaning if the Veteran has the diagnosed PRESUMED condition BEFORE the PACT Act passed (August 10, 2022)- NO MATTER the time the Veteran files, they will get a year of backpay. No intent truly needed unless other conditions apply or if the Veteran was diagnosed AFTER the PACT Act passed. **

Our office hosted the VA SAVE Training for Division II IACVAC- it was a great event, great turn out and everyone thought it was excellent training.

Peru PD stopped out and created a plan, ran through scenarios and did "what if" Q&A with the VAC staff on June 30. We thank Peru PD Chief, Sarah Raymond for her help on setting us up for success should the worst happen.

Christa had to take some time off for a week due to surgery and she thanks the staff at the VAC for covering and making sure the office ran smoothly in her absence. It was nice to know all was well when in recovery.

Christa had her first meeting with the Advisory Council for Congresswoman Lauren Underwood- it was a basic, who is who and what do we do for the community meeting. What her office is currently working on and what has passed. Congresswoman Underwood has secured over \$20 million in Community Project Funding for Illinois' 14th district - for projects that may otherwise not have money to be done. Whether that is daycare, libraries, parks or otherwise, she is looking for ideas to best spend that money. Also, her Inflation Reduction Act has passed. Meaning people that need the medication and are on Medicare will pay no more than \$35/mo for it.

Also, Congresswoman Underwood will be hosting a series of Town Halls coming up. August 7th will be one in LaSalle County and August 28th will be Bureau County. Her office is looking for a moderator for the Bureau County event. If anyone knows someone who may be interested- please have them contact us or her office.



Our Office
EVENTS

Also, Congresswoman Underwood will be hosting a series of TownHalls coming up. August 7th will be one in LaSalle County and August 28th will be Bureau County. Her office is looking for a moderator for the Bureau County event. If anyone knows someone who may be interested- please have them contact us or her office.

The moderator is charged with welcoming the audience, sharing the rules of the event (and holding constituents accountable to those rules!), and calling on constituents to ask questions. In very rare circumstances, the moderator may need to keep the discussion on track by asking constituents who are preventing other constituents from asking questions to not interrupt and let them know that additional follow up can be provided after the town hall if they have more questions.

REMINDER:

The LaSalle County VAC and AllenForce are partnering with Cedar Creek Ranch for a Veterans Event. This event will be September 15 from 10am-4pm. Registration opens online August 5. Access registration by going to our website via computer (found on homepage) or cell (found under event flyers tab). Event is for Veterans only. MUST be able to mount/ride horse without assistance. Any questions- please contact our office.

JUNE Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2023 Amount	Monthly Amount
70%	5/26/2022	Dec-23	\$ 34,417.15	\$ 1,663.06
Granted	1/4/2023	Dec-23	\$ 28,566.58	\$ 1,562.74
40%	1/26/2023	Dec-23	\$ 16,657.04	\$ 731.86
10%	3/30/2023	Dec-23	\$ 3,610.40	\$ 165.92
10%	4/27/2023	Dec-23	\$ 2,488.80	\$ 165.92
10% Legacy	10/2/2019	Dec-23	\$12,047.42	\$811.86
10%	5/10/2022	Dec-23	\$3,736.48	\$165.92
DIC	4/20/2023	Dec-23	\$23,441.10	\$1,562.74
20%	8/10/2022	Dec-23	\$4,584.16	\$327.99
40%	4/3/2023	Dec-23	\$9,006.13	\$731.86
10%	1/20/2023	Dec-23	\$2,156.96	\$165.92
100% P&T	6/7/2023	Dec-23	\$25,946.10	\$1,729.74
10%	2/9/2023	Dec-23	\$2,488.80	\$165.92
50%	11/19/2022	Dec-23	\$18,752.76	\$1,041.82
60%	10/24/2022	Dec-23	\$27,256.73	\$1,440.65
90%	1/19/2023	Dec-23	\$39,782.24	\$2,486.39
80%	10/19/2021	Dec-23	\$26,337.10	\$1,791.68
70%	12/22/2022	Dec-23	\$16,867.40	\$992.20
90%	11/28/2022	Dec-23	\$42,361.02	\$2,353.39
70%	5/10/2022	Dec-23	\$46,123.52	\$1,881.14
		Total	\$386,627.89	\$21,938.72
		Year to Date Total	\$3,647,101.15	\$443,352.46

Our Office

OVERVIEW

JUNE Office Activity			
Office Visits	84	Initial Claims	41
Phone	151**	Appeals	4
Outstation	15	Board Appeals	18
Mendota	7	VA Healthcare	5
Streator	8	Pension/DIC	4
Intent to File	33	Other	160

**Updated Number will be provided next month

Group Numbers:
PTSD: 16 Flutes for Vets: 11 SAVE: 10

OFFICE OVERALL TOTALS:

We have continued getting grants for submitted claims, bringing our total for FY23 to just over \$3.6 million so far. We have had many phone calls for questions regarding PACT Act still. We are currently booking into September with the hope of shortening wait times soon- Emily is just waiting on PIV and attending outreach locations with Lissa.

We continue to strive to do all that we can for our Veterans & Families.

