

PREPARED BY:  
CHRISTA HAMMERS  
SUPERINTENDENT



# SEPTEMBER 2025

Monthly Report

Fiscal Year 2025

# MEETING AGENDA

9-24-2025

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- 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
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
  - a. Office Activity - August
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

# Meeting MINUTES

**08/27/2025**

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

Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Harold Olsen - AmVets - Mendota / Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa / Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles

## Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio  
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki  
Guard – Elton Murphy - EXCUSED  
Chaplain – Ken Troyan

## Employees Present

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

# Meeting MINUTES

Approval of July meeting minutes as presented:  
Motion by Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

## Public Comment

NONE.

## Superintendent's Report

Christa told the Commission that we have heard from the grant committee about the DCEO Grant that we applied for back in April. They stated that there were many submissions and unlikely to hear anything until October.

Christa also discussed that Kelli finished her notary classes and officially recieved her documents - if anyone has the need for a notary, she is available.

Christa informed the Commission that Emily completed her social media classes and started to re-introduce the staff online. She is already getting more engagement and has started discussing a newsletter that would be done quarterly.

Christa then told the Commission that we are still looking for our local Veterans stories. We would love to honor our local heroes by highlighting them and their time in service. Get ahold of us and we can discuss it further.

Christa then stated that the backpack drive was successful and we were able to help out 7 different families and only had one bag remaining out of 10. If anyone is still in need, please let them know to contact us.

Christa discussed that James is working on the scholarship for a Veteran/Veteran's child that attends IVCC. The application process is closed this year, we hope to have it available for next year.

Christa further discussed that the IL AG office has graciously put together a training for funding of VAC's intended for VAC Staff/Board and County Board officials to attend. Christa stated that she sent an invite to the LaSalle County Board Chairman, Auditor, State's Attourney and Finance Chair. This training will be September 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am via Zoom.

The VAC office will be closed for Labor Day - September 1st.

Christa, Lissa and Emily will be attending State Association Training Sept 15-19 in East Peoria.

## Meeting

## MINUTES CONTINUED

Christa and Lissa will be attending a meeting on Sept 10<sup>th</sup> in Will County in partnership with Kankakee, Grundy and Will Counties to discuss crisis response ideas. Each county is having their share of their share of issues with crisis response and getting situations responded to in the best ways possible. We are going to collaborate and find solutions to these issues.

HB 1352/ SB1368 for MultiCounty VAC's have both passed the House and are in the Senate. There have been minimal changes to these bills and it looks like they are aiming to pass them by the end of year, if not beginning of 2026.

Christa then reported that we have been able to assist Veterans and Families receive over \$7.469 Million in NEW benefits so far this year. Over \$657 Thousand where we were at this time last year.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Harold Olsen and seconded by Bill Luther. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

Christa stated that per By-Laws we needed to call for a vote to re-hire her as the Superintendent. Board agreed that Christa should stay on as Superintendent. Mike Harden called for the vote to keep Christa on as Superintendent- Vote was cast by roll-call:

Mike Harden - yay

Greg Stock- yay

Roscoe Mazur- yay

Dennis Znaniiecki- yay

Louis Sekula - yay

John Duback - yay

Harold Olsen - yay

Bill Luther - yay

Tom Troutman - yay

Chuck Erb - yay

Christa was re-hired as Superintendent with a unanimous vote.

Meeting  
MINUTES CONTINUED

Christa then stated that the Board needed to approve the FY26 Budget. Board agreed to approve the budget as proposed. John Duback made a motion to approve the budget as proposed. - Vote was cast by roll-call:

Mike Harden - yay

Greg Stock- yay

Roscoe Mazur- yay

Dennis Znaniiecki- yay

Louis Sekula - yay

John Duback - yay

Harold Olsen - yay

Bill Luther - yay

Tom Troutman - yay

Chuck Erb - yay

Budget was approved by unanimous vote.

For the Good of the Commission

Andy asked that all the posts come together to attend funerals and perform services for fallen comrades. States that the Peru Memorial Group has attended several that have been "other towns" responsibilities because they were contacted by funeral homes due to no one helping.

The Board agreed and decided to create a call sheet to contact eachother in the event something like that happens again.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Znaniiecki and seconded by Roscoe Mazur.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:25pm.

AUGUST**Office Activity:**

Christa and Lissa had a meeting with Kendall County VAC at our Peru office about the services we provide through our resources and outreach. Given the space we have and abilities to allow resources to come to our location it is an added benefit for our Veterans and Families. Christa did a deep dive on research and found Objective Zero.

Christa wanted to make the Board aware of a free app that is available to download called Objective Zero. It has trained Veterans available at any time to talk to someone in crisis. The app also has resources for families and caregivers.

The AG Office has very nicely put together training for VAC Staff and County Boards to attend regarding the MVAA and funding. This will happen on Sept 4<sup>th</sup> and Christa invited the LaSalle County Board Chairman, Auditor, Finance Chair and State's Attorney to join along with Board members they saw fit to be on the call.

Christa, Lissa and Emily were in Peoria for the week of Sept 15-19 for our state associations training. We learned more about what other VAC's are going through with their counties, Clear Communication techniques, CRDP/CRSC, we had a class with VLJ Teresa Raymond on effective BVA's and Appeals. We also learned more about secondary conditions, caregiver support services and ancillary benefits that are available to our Veterans.

Christa had her quarterly meeting with the IVAC Committee (Illinois Veterans Advisory Counsel) - This is where all the state chartered Veteran organizations come together to discuss Veteran issues and talk about what each of them do. Christa is the liaison between the IACVAC and IVAC.

Lissa and Emily will be attending Senator Sue Rezin's resource fair on Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9-11 at IVCC. They will also be at the Streator YMCA for their Senior Expo on Oct 15<sup>th</sup> from 9-11.

The entire staff will be once again attending the Naplate Safety Day on Oct 4<sup>th</sup> from 9 -3pm.

Kelli, Emily and James will be attending a Cemetery Ceremony for the fallen that have no families at Abraham Lincoln Cemetery on Oct 9<sup>th</sup>. Emily and James were unable to attend the last one.

The office will be closed Monday, Oct 13<sup>th</sup> for Columbus Day.

Our Office  
**EVENTS**

# Office Claims/Program DATA

AUGUST Office Activity			
Office Visits	106	Intent to File	22
Phone	460	Intital Claims	31
Outstation	19	Appeals	25
Mendota	4	VA Healthcare	10
Streator	10	Pension/DIC	4
Marseilles	5	Other	218

The VAC tracks things like forms submitted, outreach clients and office visits. The “other” is things such as faxes, emails, mailings, other forms not listed etc. This is done to see where the bulk of our work and effort is done and to show that the claims processes often times take muliple forms to complete correctly.

AUGUST OTHER OFFICE ACTIVITY			
PTSD GROUP	32	WALK-INS:	48
Flutes	7	APPT MADE:	15
VHA	1	QUESTIONS:	33
Sen Resource	7	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>95</b>

The office is utilized by other entities to have services. Places such as Hines VA Healthcare, Flutes for Veterans, Peer-led PTSD groups and Senior Resource Meetings are just a few that use our spaces.

Currently we have brought in over **\$8.5 Million** in **NEW** benefits for our Veterans/Families. These numbers are NOT CUMULATIVE and start new each FY. We are over \$595 Thousand above where we were this time in FY24. We continue to see new clients daily and thank all our Veterans and Families for trusting us with their claims process.



AUGUST Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2025 Amount	Monthly Amount
60%	09/30/24	Dec-25	\$ 24,885.78	\$ 1,361.88
Burial Benefits	07/22/25	Dec-25	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
Dependent	07/21/25	Dec-25	\$ 2,720.00	\$ 170.00
100 P&T%	11/08/23	Dec-25	\$ 118,021.36	\$ 381.30
Dependent	07/22/25	Dec-25	\$ 3,458.00	\$ 266.00
90%	08/28/24	Dec-25	\$ 5,990.01	\$ 253.07
100% P&T	11/25/25	Dec-25	\$ 155,220.63	\$ 4,288.45
100 P&T	07/28/25	Dec-25	\$ 50,171.64	\$ 4,180.97
20%	10/09/24	Dec-25	\$ 8,292.96	\$ 346.95
Effective Date Error/	07/12/23	Dec-25	\$ 2,659.01	\$ -
60%	05/08/24	Dec-25	\$ 28,168.92	\$ 1,048.98
70%	07/25/24	Dec-25	\$ 43,808.11	\$ 1,759.19
30%	02/05/25	Dec-25	\$ 9,673.56	\$ 537.42
100% P&T	11/22/23	Dec-25	\$ 50,151.42	\$ 1,533.34
20%	3/26/2025	Dec-25	\$ 7,615.98	\$ 346.95
90%	4/2/2025	Dec-25	\$ 27,575.52	\$ 2,297.96
10%	2/27/2025	Dec-25	\$ 2,983.67	\$ 175.51
10%	2/21/2025	Dec-25	\$ 3,510.20	\$ 175.51
40%	7/24/2025	Dec-25	\$ 9,289.92	\$ 774.16
Burial	8/19/2025	Dec-25	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
MOD	MOD	Dec-25	\$ 4,044.91	\$ 4,044.91
60%	4/9/2025	Dec-25	\$ 16,751.16	\$ 1,395.93
100%	4/15/2025	Dec-25	\$ 119,344.40	\$ 4,288.45
40%	6/17/2025	Dec-25	\$ 12,386.56	\$ 774.16
60%	2/27/2025	Dec-25	\$ 27,698.26	\$ 1,680.93
A&A/DIC	8/5/2025	Dec-25	\$ 28,963.44	\$ 2,413.32
10%	6/12/2025	Dec-25	\$ 2,281.63	\$ 175.51
70%	6/24/2025	Dec-25	\$ 26,363.64	\$ 1,908.19
90%	6/6/2025	Dec-25	\$ 17,315.74	\$ 1,331.98
90%	4/1/2025	Dec-25	\$ 3,850.98	\$ 275.07
Burial	8/3/2025	Dec-25	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
80%	1/28/2025	Dec-25	\$ 24,143.87	\$ 1,270.73
90%	7/22/2025	Dec-25	\$ 3,468.84	\$ 289.07
60%	4/30/2025	Dec-25	\$ 4,450.46	\$ 317.89
50%	6/24/2025	Dec-25	\$ 13,224.48	\$ 1,102.04
80%	7/9/2025	Dec-25	\$ 30,449.38	\$ 2,508.89
40%	6/16/2025	Dec-25	\$ 7,732.52	\$ 601.42
dependent	2/6/2025	Dec-25	\$ 1,332.00	\$ 74.00
DIC	8/25/2025	Dec-25	\$ 21,489.91	\$ 1,653.07
MOD	8/25/2025	Dec-25	\$ 4,502.06	\$ -
Burial	8/25/2025	Dec-25	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
80%	7/24/2024	Dec-25	\$ 7,639.62	\$ 306.70
60%	9/24/2024	Dec-25	\$ 30,116.24	\$ 1,395.93
backpay	8/30/2024	Dec-25	\$ 13,295.65	\$ -
100% P&T HB	7/31/2025	Dec-25	\$ 32,880.38	\$ 2,529.26
100%	6/26/2025	Dec-25	\$ 24,751.20	\$ 2,062.60
40%	2/13/2025	Dec-25	\$ 3,101.00	\$ 85.00
90%	6/9/2025	Dec-25	\$ 6,286.35	\$ -
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$1,050,061.37</b>	<b>\$52,382.69</b>
<b>Year to Date Total</b>			<b>\$8,519,631.03</b>	<b>\$437,534.74</b>

New Claims

# OVERVIEW