

LaSalle County Veterans Assistance Commission

MONTHLY REPORT

MAY 2023



Prepared By:
Christa Hammers
Superintendent

AGENDA

MEETING 6/28/2023

- 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
 - b. Office Events/Training- Madison, WI
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

5/24/2023

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

Officers Present

President – Harold Olsen
Vice President – Dennis Znaniiecki
Guard – Bill Paterson
Chaplin – Andy Ruggerio

Employees Present

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

Meeting MINUTES

Meeting started at 5:00pm.

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Elton Murphy and seconded by Andy Ruggerio. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment - None

Superintendent's Report

Christa discussed the Veterans Expo 2023: Had a fantastic turnout. 61 Vendors at event, about 200 attendees and praises from anyone in attendance. Look forward to continuing to partner with TBM Avengers and the Airshow.

Christa also discussed IACO Conferences that she and Lissa attended in Springfield. Talked about CMS applications online, National Cemetery updates, DMV License Plates and what the ILNG is doing to prevent Sexual Assaults within their ranks.

Christa then discussed that Lissa, James and herself will be out of office the week of June 5th for Nationals in Madison, WI. Christa will be attending CVA Course refresher June 3-4.

Christa then went over that the office is hosting a IACVAC Division II SAVE Training on June 30. If this is something that posts are interested in having, we can be the location. It is excellent training for those who make contact with Veterans suffering from suicidal thoughts.

Christa then discussed that the IL State Library is doing a "Illinois Veterans History Project" and it's in place to preserve the history of the Veterans of Illinois - names and stories on record so their contributions will not be forgotten. Get in touch with us if you want to learn more. Or contact your local library.

Christa also informed the commission that on Saturday, May 27- Lissa and herself will be at the LaSalle VFW for the Town Hall with Lauren Underwood and Mark Takano of California. Invited to come meet and greet and host a table.

Christa discussed the April claims summary. We have already are over \$2.6 million in benefits for our Veterans and Families. We continue to see new Veterans daily and hoping to get Emily her PIV Card soon so she can start taking clients and bring wait times down even more. Currently out about 2 months, even with James taking on clients.

Meeting MINUTES

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

Old Business-

The commission brought up what was going on with the doors/glass inserts for the offices. Christa informed them that she has had Kelli make a few phone calls, but nothing yet on where Dr. Garg had stated that he originally got the doors from. The person who placed the bid has not returned a call yet.

New Business- NONE.

For the Good of the Commission

Elton Murphy discussed that Burger night at the VFW is tomorrow. 5-8pm in LaSalle. Also, Lauren Underwood will be at a Town Hall from 12-3 on Saturday the 27th. Monday, Memorial Day there will be a car show from 9am-3pm.

Harold stated that they would be having a Memorial Day event on Monday (Memorial Day) at 10:30am at the Mendota Cemetery. Friday they will be placing flags.

Chuck stated that the Marseilles post is hosing Sue Rezin at 10am at the post for Memorial Day.

John Duback inquired about hunting/fishing licenses- Christa informed the commission that we can assist with these, but we are not the direct-givers of these licenses. Veteran needs to bring their DD214, drivers license, SOB letter and indicate which license they would like.

Dennis stated their Memorial Day event would be at 11:00am at Washington Park and they are assisting with one at the VA Home at 1:45. Roscoe stated that theirs was at 10am in Oglesby-Veterans Park.

Harold stated that the VA Home would like to have Veterans take outings- possibly to Bakers Lake for fishing? They aren't sure on details, but they wish to get Veterans out and about. Also, Bailey took over as Activity director. No replacement for her old position yet.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Andy Ruggerio. Motion passed unanimously at 5:35pm.

MAY:

Training:

Christa, Lissa and James attended NACVSO National Training in Madison, WI- learned about the Camp Lejeune Justice Act/PACT Act, TERA (Toxic Exposure Risk Activity), VBMS updates, Electronic Health Records, ProBono Legal (Veterans Consortium), heard from the C&P exam contracted companies (VES and QTC). Lissa and Christa attended a wonderful Women's Veterans lunch with Brigadier General Joane Mathews as the speaker. We also heard from VA leadership- VA Secretary Denis McDonough, NCA Under Secretary - Matthew Quinn and VBA Under Secretary- Josh Jacobs as well as BVA Chairman Jaime Areizaga-Soto. All of which were informative on what the VA is doing to make the claims go faster, smoother and how the VA can help our Veterans/Families more and what they are trying to do better.

Christa attended CVA Courses June 3-4. These were refreshers and continuing education classes about how secondary conditions, best appeals processes and how to determine dates of claims. Always informative, great refresh and continue to learn more each time Katrina and Jim host classes.

Our office will be hosting a IACVAC Division II (North East Corner of the state) SAVE Training here on June 30th for all new VSOs and those who have never had the training before.

Our office will also be having a safety plan put into place with Peru Police Department coming June 30th to go over scenario training and protocols. Christa will put this into a procedure manual and we can look back in case an event arises.

Humana Insurance will be at our office for our Veterans to ask questions about Medicare/VA Health care and Humana working together. Fridays from 10-3.

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!



Our Office
EVENTS

Christa was chosen to be on Congresswoman Lauren Underwoods Veteran Advisory Council, this is great for our office and Veterans throughout the state. She is also taking over as the liaison between IDVA and the state VSO's.

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.

CORRECTION:

DMV License Plates: In order to get them at no cost and use the letter- the Veteran HAS to be 50% or more Service-Connected. We apologize for any confusion.

May Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2023 Amount	Monthly Amount
Granted DIC	3/28/2023	Dec-23	\$ 23,319.01	\$ 1,562.74
50%	10/17/2022	Dec-23	\$ 8,157.99	\$ 226.58
100% IU P&T	7/15/2022	Dec-23	\$ 64,046.60	\$ 3,621.95
Pension Grant A&A	8/31/2022	Dec-23	\$ 54,816.00	\$ 2,642.00
80%	9/14/2022	Dec-23	\$ 29,600.10	\$ 2,094.15
10%	1/26/2023	Dec-23	\$ 2,488.80	\$ 165.92
70%	5/25/2022	Dec-23	\$ 32,085.74	\$ 1,804.06
50%	8/25/2022	Dec-23	\$ 13,701.84	\$ 1,141.82
80%	5/25/2022	Dec-23	\$ 6,820.05	\$ 290.09
90%	11/1/2022	Dec-23	\$ 34,584.37	\$ 2,172.39
40%	6/1/2023	Dec-23	\$ 11,849.91	\$ 811.86
70%	5/5/2023	Dec-23	\$ 21,924.72	\$ 1,827.06
80%	5/1/2023	Dec-23	\$ 25,419.89	\$ 2,094.15
Granted Dep	3/2/2023	Dec-23	\$ 50,831.41	\$ 4,072.12
40%	1/27/2023	Dec-23	\$ 9,742.32	\$ 811.86
100% P&T	11/17/2022	Dec-23	\$49,409.12	\$3,952.51
10%	9/30/2022	Dec-23	\$1,991.04	\$165.92
90%	9/22/2022	Dec-23	\$26,068.68	\$2,172.39
100% P&T	8/10/2022	Dec-23	\$51,072.72	\$4,256.06
MOD		Dec-23	\$0.00	\$3,517.84
50%	2/23/2022	Dec-23	\$12,501.84	\$1,041.82
10%	2/16/2023	Dec-23	\$1,991.04	\$165.92
100% P&T	2/14/2023	Dec-23	\$43,463.40	\$3,621.95
		Total	\$575,886.59	\$44,233.16
		Year to Date Total	\$3,260,473.26	\$421,413.74

Our Office

OVERVIEW

May Office Activity			
Office Visits	94	Initial Claims	40
Phone	892	Appeals	25
Outstation	9	Board Appeals	0
Mendota	3	VA Healthcare	8
Streator	6	Pension/DIC	2
Intent to File	36	Other	137

Group Numbers:
PTSD: 16 Flutes for Vets: 11

OFFICE OVERALL TOTALS:

We have continued getting grants for submitted claims, bringing our total for FY23 to just over \$3.2 million so far. We have had many phone calls for questions regarding PACT Act. We are currently booking into late August with the hope of shortening wait times soon- Emily is just waiting on access.

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