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LASALLE COUNTY VETERANS  
ASSISTANCE COMMISSION.

# MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2022 / PREPARED BY STEVEN KREITZER

# MEETING

## 2/23/2022

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- 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. Outreach Activity
  - c. Upcoming Events
  - d. Grants
  - E. Pending legislation
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
  - a. Peru Cemetery Veteran Grave Markers
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment



AGENDA

# Meeting MINUTES

01/26/2022

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors –

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

## Delegates & Alternates Present

Tom Troutman – VFW, Mendota - Lance Sires – American Legion, Marseilles  
– Bill Paterson – American Legion, Mendota – Chuck Erb – VFW, Marseilles –  
Andy Ruggerio – Peru Memorial Group – John Duback - Ottawa - AMVETS -  
Bill Luther - Ottawa VFW- Dennis Zaniecki - Peru - Greg Stock - Marseilles  
American Legion - Elton Murphy - LaSalle, VFW.

## Officers Present

President – Chuck Erb  
Vice President – Harold Olsen - Excused  
Guard – Bill Paterson  
Chaplin – Jim Ebner - Excused

## Employees Present

Steven Kreitzer – Superintendent  
Christa Hammers - Assistant Superintendent  
Lissa Olson - Outreach Coordinator - Excused  
Beth Caldera - Receptionist

# Meeting

# MINUTES

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:  
Motion by Bill Paterson and seconded by Elton Murphy

Public Comment - None

Superintendent's Report

The office has brought in \$604,940 in backpay for a veterans this year.

H-Wave event transpired the afternoon of the meeting and was a success.

Christa went over the Outreach opportunities coming to the office as resources for veterans. There is a bowling fundraiser coming up on 4/16/2022 to help fund some of the programs the office would like to do. The PTSD Workout program flyer has been handed out and would like everyone to start sharing it around for veterans interested.

Steven Kreitzer went over the possibility of the board becoming a nonprofit so that there could be more grant opportunities. Steven was going to look into it and see if it would be feasible.

Superintendent report was motioned for approval by Andy Ruggerio and seconded by Dennis Zaniecki. Motion passed unanimously.

# Meeting MINUTES

Old Business - None

New Business - None

For the Good of the Commission -

Dennis Zaniecki stated that 3 burial plots were donated to the post if anyone knew of someone that could use them.

Andy Ruggerio talked about the rifle squads at funerals needing more help. Steven Kreitzer was looking into possible legislation to help them out for allowing relief of state workers from work to conduct the ceremonies. Dennis Zaniecki stated that high schoolers already can get leave from school to be the buglers so maybe this could be the same. Christa Hammers volunteered to do a flyer for them to advertise in the paper.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Dennis Zaniecki Motion passed unanimously at 5:45pm.

<b>Office Activity January</b>			
Office Visits	132	Initial Claims	13
Phone	476	Appeals	25
Outstation	49	Board Appeals	0
Mendota	8	VA Healthcare	0
Streator	16	VA Pension	4
Ottawa	21	Other	562
Sandwich	4	Property Taxes	53

As the programs continue to grow we will track where we can the number of veterans that come into the office for the programs and events. This does not account for all of our partners clients but does represent the majority of the groups attending.

PTSD Groups - 24

Opioid Grant writing and programing - 5

H-Wave - 7

Flutes for Vets 6

Each of these programs besides the Opioid one are facilitated by individuals outside our office and we just provided the space for them. Some of the programs that we didn't track attendance for are as follows.

Hines Homeless

Hines Community Outreach Team

Humana Insurance



Our Office  
**OVERVIEW**



There are many active bills in the Illinois General Assembly that are cause for concern for many Veterans Assistance Commissions across the state.

HB 2378 Prop TX-Surviving Spouse - This bill aims to right a wrong where widows of veterans that never applied for the property tax exemption or reduction before they passed are currently barred from receiving any benefits. This bill is working to allow widows of veterans to apply for the property tax relief even if the veteran hasn't before their passing.

It is estimated that this will affect about 700-1000 surviving spouses that live in Illinois.

HB5184 - Veterans Assistance Commission - This bill aims to put into law what has been litigated in court. Some of the more contentious parts of the bill are as follows:

1) The Current bill as presented mandates a minimum funding of .02% levy for a Veterans Assistance Commission. There is a house amendment getting drafted for this so that the VAC Board would set the levy up to .02% and the county could only weigh in if between .02% and .03%. For our office budget to be able to get up to .02% levy would mean our office would get an additional sum of about \$138,000 to put this into perspective.

2) The second contention many are having is that only Federally Chartered Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) can be members of the board and removes State Chartered VSO from the law. Contentions have been brought up by numerous VSO that do amazing things in the community that want to have a say. The state has not chartered a VSO in years and has no criteria to do so. In relation to this the house amendment is going to still contain State Chartered VSO and another bill is going to be introduced that would create the criteria for Chartering them.

3) The over 3,000,000 population doesn't have to have a Veterans Assistance Commission. This part is contentious because the 147 American legions not counting VFW's and other organizations have proved to be troublesome. They all cant agree on anything and as such the Cook County VAC has struggled to leadership turnover and success over the years. Currently, Cook County has 2 VAC's with one run by the veterans service organizations and one by the county. This is much like what happened in Grundy County that there is now case law on stating that a majority of the organizations have the legit VAC but event this has been troublesome.



IL General Assembly  
PENDING  
LEGISLATION