

LaSalle County Veterans Assistance Commission

MONTHLY REPORT

MARCH 2023



Prepared By:
Christa Hammers
Superintendent

AGENDA

MEETING 4/26/2023

- 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
 - b. Office Events
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. Nomination Recap/Election of New Officers
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

3/22/2022

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

Greg Stock - Am Legion- Marseilles / Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa / Paul Siembab - Am Legion - Ottawa / Lance Sires - Am Legion - Marseilles / Mike Harden - Am Legion - Ottawa / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Roscoe Mazur - Am Legion - Oglesby / Dennis Znaniecki - Am Legion - Peru / Andy Ruggerio- Am Legion - Peru / Tom Shea - Am Legion - Ottawa / Louie Sekula - Am Legion - LaSalle / Kevin Swierkosz - VFW - LaSalle / Mike Mallie - MC League - Oglesby /
Other: Kiersten Vincent - Unassigned

Officers Present

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

Employees Present

Christa Hammers – Superintendent
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 Bill Luther and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment - None

Superintendent's Report

Christa discussed Events that the office has coming up. The Veterans Expo 2023- held on May 18th from 11-3 out at the IL Valley Regional Airport. Lissa went over that we had approximately 20+ Vendors confirmed so far, but more that have given verbal and waiting on paperwork.

Christa also discussed training coming up. James has received his PIV and is taking clients now and will start solo come May. Emily is to take basic benefits in April and Kelli will take the intro course in March, just to touch base on what the acronyms mean and know more about what Veterans are referring to.

Christa then discussed the IACVAC winter conference in Peoria and that there are people out there looking to get money from our Veterans/Families for simple tasks like getting their DD214- be sure to check with our office to see if we can help before paying for anything.

Christa then went over on work for the office- getting the half wall removed (some quotes have been acquired- waiting on one more). Possibly getting glass in our office doors so Veterans don't feel "enclosed" but still offer privacy.

Christa then discussed the swag we purchased, koozies, notepads, pens, magnets- all of which have come in handy for our outreach events and we received many compliments so far. Then went over the Home, Lawn and Lifestyle event we had coming up on March 25th at the Peru Mall.

Christa then went over the T-Mobile "phone" for Veterans meeting she and Lissa had where phones were offered to those who may need services but don't have the ability to pay for them. Discussed that we didn't have it in the budget this year, and didn't see a immediate need with the Veterans we have, but will continue to assess and maybe bring it on next year.

Christa discussed the February claims summary. We have already hit close to \$1.5 million in benefits for our Veterans and Families. We continue to see new Veterans daily and hoping to get James & Emily up to speed so we can lessen wait times for appointments.

Meeting

MINUTES

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

Old Business- None.

New Business- Nominations

Nominations were given for the President, Vice- President, Guard and Chaplin.

Current President, Chuck Erb asked for Nominations:

Called Presidential Nominations, Harold Olsen was nominated - unopposed.

Called Vice- President Nominations, Dennis Znaniiecki was nominated - unopposed.

Called Guard Nominations, if Bill Patterson does not seek another term- Bill Luther would like to be considered.

Called Chaplin Nominations, Andy Ruggerio was nominated - unopposed.

Motion to accept nominations and make elections at next meeting was given by Chuck Erb-

Motioned for approval by Lance Sires, seconded by Mike Harden. Motion passed unanimously.

For the Good of the Commission

Harold Olsen brought up that the Veterans Advisory Committee for the LaSalle VA Home is still Zoom, but he attends regularly and they have some good things planned for the upcoming year. If anyone would like to join- get in touch with the home.

Mike Malley stated he thought he heard that Susan Sculley- Volunteer Coordinator for the VA Home- was retiring. Everyone wished her the best if it was accurate.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Harold Olsen and seconded by Lance Sires.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:22pm.

MARCH:

Veterans Expo 2023:

Update on Vendors/Sponsors from Lissa.

Training:

James is currently taking clients for Hunting/Fishing Licenses and PTAX exemptions. We have sat in with him for a few clients regarding claims and he has done a few by himself. We will still have him solo starting May 1st. Christa and Lissa will be out of office May 9-12 for IACO Spring Conference in Springfield.

Emily is in her Accreditation training this week and we plan to have a fully- accredited office by the end of the week!

Office Updates:

The half wall was removed, carpet patched and we are thankful for more space. Christa is working on getting the doors to have glass still as the contractor who gave us the quote is a bit tough to get ahold of. Spoke with Dr. Garg about it and we will reach out to Builders Choice- where he got the original ones from as well.

Office attended the Studstill Home, Lawn and Lifestyle Event at the Peru Mall, Saturday- March 25th from 11-4. Seemed to be a great event, lots of people stopped out and made a few appointments from it.

Emily and Lissa attended a Community Health and Wellness Fair in Sandwich on April 18th and touched base with many Veterans/Families out in that area.

Lissa went to the Illinois Joining Forces Conference on April 19th in Northbrook and heard from many of the IL legislative leaders.

On April 28 we plan on meeting with our Veterans from Group Therapy for a roundtable about what benefits are offered and how to go about getting what they need from the VA. If anyone's post/group would like us to do one - please reach out to our office.



Our Office
EVENTS

March Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2023 Amount	Monthly Amount
10%	11/4/2022	Dec-23	\$ 2,946.72	\$ 165.92
80%	11/17/2022	Dec-23	\$ 28,099.80	\$ 2,292.15
60%	10/19/2022	Dec-23	\$ 22,934.78	\$ 1,440.65
60%	11/15/2022	Dec-23	\$ 18,205.80	\$ 1,440.65
80%	11/18/2022	Dec-23	\$ 27,485.80	\$ 2,242.15
80%	3/4/2023	Dec-23	\$ 27,505.80	\$ 2,292.15
50%	11/23/2022	Dec-23	\$ 15,453.84	\$ 1,141.82
10%	7/8/2022	Dec-23	\$ 3,099.36	\$ 165.92
60%	12/19/2022	Dec-23	\$ 22,867.35	\$ 1,662.73
90%	12/2/2022	Dec-23	\$ 26,068.68	\$ 2,172.39
80%	12/29/2022	Dec-23	\$25,144.80	\$1,993.15
10%	6/1/2022	Dec-23	\$3,252.00	\$165.92
dependent	7/12/2022	Dec-23	\$3,758.11	\$152.64
30%	4/28/2022	Dec-23	\$10,892.48	\$508.05
70%	4/9/2009	Dec-23	\$24,462.30	\$1,804.06
DIC	7/15/2022	Dec-23	\$43,650.24	\$1,894.58
MOD	7/15/2022	Dec-23	\$3,915.42	\$3,915.42
100%	11/29/2022	Dec-23	\$54,922.77	\$3,823.89
100%	10/20/2022	Dec-23	\$57,661.31	\$3,621.95
30%	11/21/2022	Dec-23	\$9,630.75	\$642.05
100% + 60%	1/1/2021	Dec-23	\$65,956.17	\$4,054.12
IU	9/27/2022	Dec-23	\$52,944.29	\$3,621.95
dependent	7/1/2022	Dec-23	\$3,770.44	\$201.94
MOD	2/17/2023	Dec-23	\$4,182.74	\$4,182.74
90%	8/10/2022	Dec-23	\$5,909.88	\$315.09
Burial	3/23/2023	Dec-23	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
70%	12/7/2023	Dec-23	\$29,161.69	\$1,663.06
60%	10/24/2022	Dec-23	\$24,982.41	\$1,569.27
10%	3/8/2023	Dec-23	\$1,991.04	\$165.92
		Total	\$622,856.77	\$51,312.33
		Year to Date Total	\$2,057,558.66	\$168,428.25

Group Numbers:

PTSD: 31 Flutes for Vets: 14 VHA: 7 MidWest Shelter: 3

March Office Activity			
Office Visits	139	Initial Claims	24
Phone	921	Appeals	9
Outstation	31	Board Appeals	1
Mendota	16	VA Healthcare	14
Streator	15	Pension/DIC	9
Intent to File	28	Other	97

OFFICE OVERALL TOTALS:

We have continued getting grants for submitted claims, bringing our total for FY23 to just over \$2 million so far. We have had many phone calls regarding PACT Act and Agent Orange Changes.

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

Our Office

OVERVIEW