

## **COLUMBIA COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICE COMMISSION**

### **Approved Meeting Minutes of The Regular Meeting of February 14, 2020**

Meeting called to order at 8:30 am.

Attendance was taken and those present were: Norm Bednarek, Chair; Keith Miller, Commissioner; Janis Bauman, Commissioner; Rebekka Cary, CVSO & Executive Secretary; and Tammi Brueggeman Assistant CVSO.

It was certified that the agenda was properly posted and the meeting properly noticed. There were no changes to the agenda. The agenda was approved on motion by Bednarek, seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

The minutes from the last regular meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved on motion by Bednarek, seconded by Cary. Motion carried.

The Commission's expense report since the last regular meeting was reviewed. Approval of the report was motioned by Bednarek and second by Miller. Motion carried.

Pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes Section 19.85 (1) (f), motion by Miller to go to closed session to review Veterans Service Commission Fund Applications. Second by Bednarek. By roll call vote, motion carried. The Veteran's Service Commission went into closed session at 8:31 a.m. with Bednarek, Miller, Bauman, Cary, and Brueggeman attending.

Motion by Miller to return to open session. Second by Bednarek. Motion Carried. The Commission returned to open session at 8:52 a.m.

Motion by Miller and second by Bednarek to table a decision on the application for assistance pending gathering of further information.

Jan Bauman was welcomed as a new member of the commission.

A moment of silence was held for deceased commissioner John Van Wie.

The Blue Water Navy claims are now starting to be adjudicated with retroactive payment being paid back to original date of claim if the veteran had a previous claim. Cary gave a handout with list of Agent Orange presumptive disease as well as Camp Lejeune presumptive diseases. She encouraged the commission to spread the word of these lists. She also encouraged the commission to let surviving spouses know that they may be eligible for benefits based on these lists even if the veteran was not receiving benefits at the time of death. Brueggeman mentioned that she is researching to locate surviving spouses of Navy veterans who may now qualify for benefits based on the Blue Water legislation.

Members of the Legislative Committee of the CVSO Association of Wisconsin will be attending the Personnel, Finance and County Org Steering Committee of the Wisconsin Counties Association to discuss legislation both organizations could potentially benefit from. Cary shared information on Senate Bill 3020 and House Bill 5516 which would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program for CVSO / TVSO offices on a federal level. She also shared information on Wisconsin Senate Bill 598 which would increase the state grant funding. If the state bill passes, Columbia County's grant could possibly increase from \$11,500 to \$23,000 annually. Cary also shared statistics regarding the impact of VA benefits in Wisconsin.

The WDVA CVSO Grant application has been submitted.

The CVSO office now has a cell phone with a phone number of 608-617-9645.

The CVSO office is seeking approval to hire a part-time limited term receptionist.

Amber Nikolai has resigned as the American Legion Adjutant and they are currently seeking application to fill the position.

The CVSO office and Vet Center will be taking a tour of The Highground in Neillsville on May 23 and of King Veterans Home on June 4.

The VA Medical Center in Madison will be hosting the Golden Age Games in June.

The Columbia County American Legion meeting will be held on February 19<sup>th</sup> in Poynette.

Since Vet Con 2019 was very successful, the CVSOs and ADRCs will host Vet Con 2020. Dates are still to be determined.

The next meeting date was scheduled for Friday, March 1, 2020 at 8:30 am.

There being no other business before the commission at this time, Bednarek motioned to adjourn. Second by Miller. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:27 am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebekka Cary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Rebekka L Cary, Columbia County Veterans' Service Officer  
and Executive Secretary, Columbia County Veterans' Service Commission