

COLUMBIA COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICE COMMISSION

Approved Meeting Minutes of

The Regular Meeting of May 5, 2016

Meeting called to order at 8:30 am.

Attendance was taken and those present were: Norm Bednarek, Chair; Keith Miller, Commissioner; John Van Wie, Commissioner; Rich Hasse, CVSO & Executive Secretary.

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 Van Wie, seconded by Bednarek. Motion carried.

The minutes from the last regular meeting on February 12, 2016 were reviewed. The minutes were approved on motion by Miller, seconded by Bednarek. Motion carried.

The Commission's expense vouchers issued since the last regular meeting and the entire year of 2015 were reviewed. Approval of the expense report was motioned by Bednarek and seconded by Van Wie. Motion carried.

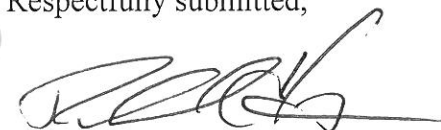
Hasse mentioned that there is an ongoing effort in the US Congress to expand the use of the Veterans Choice Program which essentially would make it function much like an outpatient health insurance program. The national veterans service organizations are up-in-arms over this expansion as they feel it will leave the existing VA healthcare system underutilized and will eventually lead to the closure of existing VA Healthcare facilities and further lead to privatization of the entire VA Healthcare system.

Hasse began a discussion with the Commissioners on the current issues with WDVA, the Veterans Trust Fund, The DMV Driver License Veteran Identifier, the Primary Mortgage Loan Program and the CVSO Grant as well and the CVSO Grant Audit. Hasse distributed several products obtained through Open Records Requests from various State agencies and legislators. These products demonstrated the extreme financial straits which the Veterans Trust Fund is currently experiencing. As well, they illustrate some questionable WDVA management decisions which led to the cancellation of the veterans' loans programs, as an example. Another report shows evidence of WDVA mismanagement of the CVSO Grant program by allowing a consortium arrangement between two counties sharing one CVSO and permitting both counties to collect full-time CVSO Grant when the CVSO was effectively part-time in two counties. Yet another report was the result of a survey of 10 Midwestern States (including Wisconsin) examining their total central office manpower strengths and the payroll expenditures for those staffing sizes; the report shows Wisconsin spending the most for the largest central office staff size. Hasse also provided the copy of an email correspondence between the WDVA and the Legislative Reference Bureau asking for revocation of CVSO authorization to certify veterans for the DMV Driver License Veteran Identifier due to errors detected by WDVA. Hasse also demonstrated to the Commissioners that when he obtained the error reports from the DMV, the data showed a total error rate of only 0.65%; with all of the errors occurring in the early period of time when CVSOs were first being allowed to certify eligibility. This error rate did not seem to be excessive to the Commissioners and they agreed that calling for CVSO revocation was not necessary. In fact, after further research by Hasse, he discovered the several of the "errors" reported by WDVA were as a result of CVSO records being more comprehensive than WDVA's showing qualifying service for which WDVA had no records (thus, the CVSO's certification was just and, it also demonstrated the CVSO's more accurate records).

On motion by Miller, the next meeting date was scheduled for Friday, June 3, 2016 at 8:30 am. Seconded by Van Wie. Motion carried.

There being no other business before the commission at this time, Van Wie motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Miller. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:31 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard E. Hasse, Columbia County Veterans' Service Officer
and Executive Secretary, Columbia County Veterans' Service Commission