

COLUMBIA COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICE COMMISSION

Approved Meeting Minutes of

The Regular Meeting of November 3, 2017

Meeting called to order at 8:30 am.

Attendance was taken and those present were: Norm Bednarek, Chair; John Van Wie, Commissioner; Keith Miller, Commissioner; Richard Hasse, CVSO & Executive Secretary. Guest(s): Tom Borgqvist.

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 Miller. Motion carried.

The minutes from the last regular meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved on motion by Van Wie, seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

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

Miller was asked if he would like to serve another consecutive 3-year term. He agreed to accept the follow-on appointment. Motion to recommend appointment to the Executive Committee by Bednarek, seconded by Van Wie. Motion carried.

Hasse advised the Commissioners that just this morning the VA has announced that the proposal to add four new presumptive Agent Orange conditions (Bladder Cancer, Hypothyroidism, Parkinson-Like Tremors, and Hypertension) has been delayed by Secretary Shulkin for an undetermined amount of time for additional study. Hasse also advised the Commissioners that the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP) has been refunded until 2021 as a permanent program. New enrollments will commence on November 15th.

Hasse mentioned that there was a new Adjutant appointed for the American Legion Department of Wisconsin here in Portage. Her name is already known to the Commissioners as the whistle-blower at the King Veterans Home, Amber Nikolai. Her first day on the job was October 23rd. Bednarek mentioned that he had already met her and attended her first staff meeting. He was very impressed with her professionalism and how she managed the first staff meeting.

Hasse asked Benarek to provide his perspective of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee meeting which he attended with Hasse at the Capitol on October 10th. This was a formal out-brief of King Veterans Home audit by the Legislative Audit Bureau. Bednarek mentioned that the WDVA Secretary was very evasive and, at times, disrespectful to members of the JLAC; while refusing to commit or promise that he would adhere to the recommendations of the LAB audit. Hasse also mentioned that at one point Rep Nygren took great issue with how the WDVA Secretary presumed that his handling of the King VH unencumbered funds was implicitly approved by the legislature when it passed the budget; Rep Nygren pointedly and emphatically mentioned that the Governor had in fact vetoed budget provisions, that were unanimously approved in a bipartisan vote by his Joint Finance Committee, which would have place greater demands for accountability on how the WDVA Secretary utilized the unencumbered funds at the King Veterans Home.

Hasse also revealed the eight new display flags, and the dedication plaque, purchased by the American Legion County Council. Hasse then led a discussion about how they will be presented by eight members of the American Legion posts of Columbia County at the opening of the next Columbia County Board meeting on November 14th at 9:45am.

The next meeting date was scheduled for Monday, December 4th, 2017 at 8:30 am. Motioned by Van Wie, seconded by Miller. 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 9:04 am.

Respectfully submitted,



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