



# MONTHLY REPORT

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MAY 2024

**PREPARED BY**

Christa Hammers  
Superintendent

# MEETING AGENDA

## 5-22-2024

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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 Meeting Minutes
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
  - a. Office Activity
  - b. Properties Update
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
  - a. Vote on Property to Purchase
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

# Meeting MINUTES

**4-24-2024**

## Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio 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 - AmLeg - Marseilles / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Thomas Shea - AmLeg - Ottawa / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Paul Seimbab - Marine CorLeg - Post 078 / John Duback - AmVetes - Ottawa / Mike Mallie - Marine CorLeg - Post 078 / Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / OTHER: Bill Luther - Post 2470 / Gary Small - County Board / Don Jensen - County Board

### Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio  
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki  
Guard – Elton Murphy  
Chaplin – Harold Olsen

### Employees Present

Christa Hammers – Superintendent  
Lissa Olson - Assistant Superintendent  
James Sturtevant- VSO  
Emily Hackler- VSO  
Kelli Rietgraf - Administrative Assistant

# Meeting MINUTES

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Elton Murphy and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

## Public Comment

NONE.

## Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that we are still reviewing property at this time and will have more information as it comes in. She has a few meetings she is going to and will inform Commission on new developments. There is another offer on the table for the property to the South of our current building and she would like to get more information on that and be able to present for decision next month.

Christa also discussed that the office participated in the SHAW Media Home Show on April 13- a bit of traffic, but it was a nice day out and they had a few people stop by.

Christa then told the commission that on Tuesday April 16- Lissa and James went to the Fox Valley Resource Fair in Sandwich- they were able to network and get a few more vendors for the Expo and assist a few Veterans with questions.

Christa then stated that on April 27th- Hines will be hosting a Womens Veterans Event in Kankakee at the Community College. This will be from 10-3, lunch provided.

Christa then told the Commission that on May 11-17 Lissa and Emily will be out of office at National training in Colorado. They will miss the Expo- but will be busy learning about all things going on at the Federal level.

Christa then stated that it has come to the office's attention that there are people out there assisting with Veteran's claims that are not accredited. This is against the law and we hold accreditation for a reason. Please seek certified VSO's to assist with claims.

Christa then stated that the Expo is May 16 at the Airport- come on out and support the office!

The office numbers have reached over \$3.1 Million and we continue to get claims back daily.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Dennis Znaniacki and seconded by Lance Sires. Motion passed unanimously.

# Meeting MINUTES

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

NONE.

For the Good of the Commission

Dennis stated that Monday - May 27th there will be a Memorial Day Dedication Ceremony at Peru Washington Park- starting at 11am.

Elton stated that VFW has burger night tomorrow - April 25th. Stop on out.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Znaniacki and seconded by Mike Harden.  
Motion passed unanimously at 5:23pm.

MAY

**Office Activity:**

The office had the 4th Annual Veterans Expo out at the Peru Airport on May 16. We had a total of 47 Vendors and roughly 150 people come through. It was a fantastic day that was spent getting people in touch with resources. We had many positive remarks.

On May 11-17 Lissa and Emily went to Colorado to National Training. They are able to give a bit of insight into what they learned about.

The office has reviewed two properties - one to the North of us and one to the South. Christa put together a bit of a presentation on both along with numbers to allow us to vote on one to purchase.

The office will be closed Monday, May 27 in honor of Memorial Day.

The legislation that prevents those that are not accredited from assisting Veterans file claims has passed both houses and is on the Governor's desk for signature. It is called the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act

APRIL Office Activity			
Office Visits	124	Intent to File	28
Phone	674	Intital Claims	34
Outstation	23	Appeals	27
Mendota	9	VA Healthcare	4
Streator	9	Pension/DIC	4
Marseilles	5	Other	175

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- APRIL			
PTSD GROUP	24	WALK-INS:	89
FLUTES	9	APPT MADE	31
VHA	2	QUESTIONS	58
MidWest Shelter	2	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>126</b>

Our Office  
**EVENTS**

APRIL Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
50%	6/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 25,754.82	\$ 1,179.16
90%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 35,471.85	\$ 2,241.91
90%	11/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,595.37	\$ 2,241.91
90%	1/4/2024	Dec-24	\$ 33,628.65	\$ 2,241.91
50%	5/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 19,086.08	\$ 1,311.90
10%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 5,188.64	\$ 171.23
10%	1/8/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,072.35	\$ 171.23
90%	8/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 31,264.14	\$ 2,428.91
10%	4/18/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,403.36	\$ 171.23
back pay	3/20/2022	Dec-24	\$ 6,210.55	\$ -
100% P&T	6/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 61,222.43	\$ 3,980.77
40%	10/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 11,318.74	\$ 667.05
40%	11/21/2022	Dec-24	\$ 26,915.08	\$ 940.28
10%	12/15/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,739.68	\$ 171.23
60%	12/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,436.96	\$ 1,486.88
40%	3/19/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,771.64	\$ 230.97
20%	9/15/2022	Dec-24	\$ 9,955.20	\$ 338.49
100% P&T	3/30/2023	Dec-24	\$ 66,495.26	\$ 3,946.07
90%	1/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 31,280.98	\$ 2,428.91
50%	5/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,306.48	\$ 1,075.16
20%	11/20/2023	Dec-24	\$ 5,415.84	\$ 338.49
90%	5/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 33,366.84	\$ 2,561.65
50%	3/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 101,409.14	\$ -
Burial	5/15/2024	Dec-24	\$ -	\$ 1,896.00
30%	11/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 8,388.96	\$ 524.31
100%	2/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 53,570.94	\$ 3,946.25
50%	12/28/2023	Dec-24	\$ 17,202.56	\$ 1,075.16
Burial	3/13/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
100%	12/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 51,652.92	\$ 3,737.85
30%	12/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 7,350.96	\$ 524.31
60%	12/12/2023	Dec-24	\$ 47,470.42	\$ 1,716.28
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$773,946.84</b>	<b>\$43,745.50</b>
		<b>Year to Date Total</b>	<b>\$3,903,832.84</b>	<b>\$397,754.88</b>

The VAC is happy to report that we are keeping on trend with an increase to benefits paid out to our Veterans and Families! Totalling just under \$4 Million by the end of April 2024. This is over \$1.2 MIL more than where we were FY23. We hope to continue this upward trend and bring in more events/programs for our clients this year.



# *Year Build* PROPOSALS

CHRISTA HAMMERS - SUPERINTENDENT

[www.lasallecountyvac.com](http://www.lasallecountyvac.com)







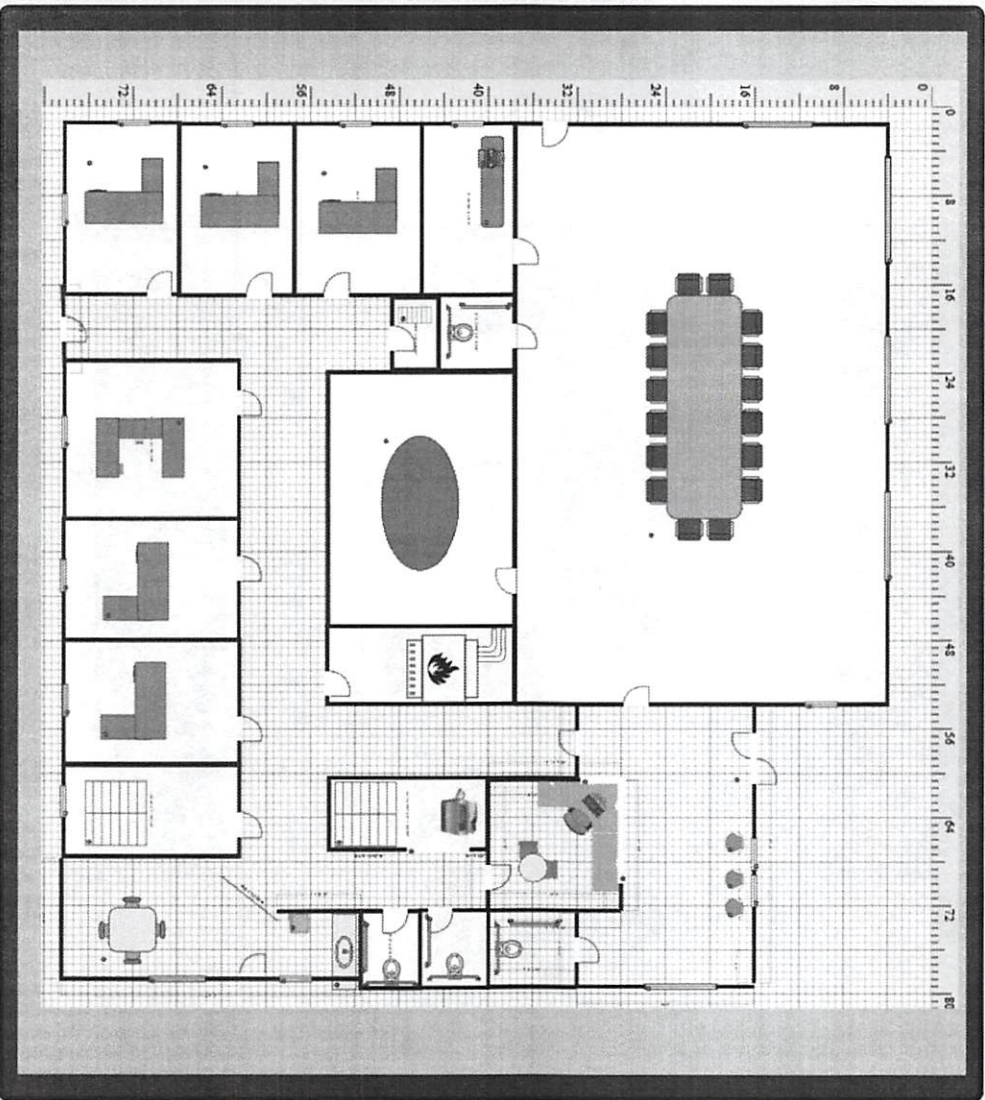
# *Let's compare* **PRESENTATION OF TWO LOTS**

THIS PRESENTATION WILL COVER THE PROS AND CONS OF BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH LOTS  
TO WHERE OUR BUILDING STANDS CURRENTLY.

# ABOUT THE BUILD

~5,000 SQFT TO 5,200 SQFT

- 6 OFFICE SPACES
- 3 BATHROOMS
- GROUP MEETING ROOM
- CONFERENCE ROOM
- LOBBY
- KITCHEN
- STORAGE
- COMPUTER LAB



LOT ONE - NORTH LOT

**\$100**

THOUSAND / ACRE

**1.98**

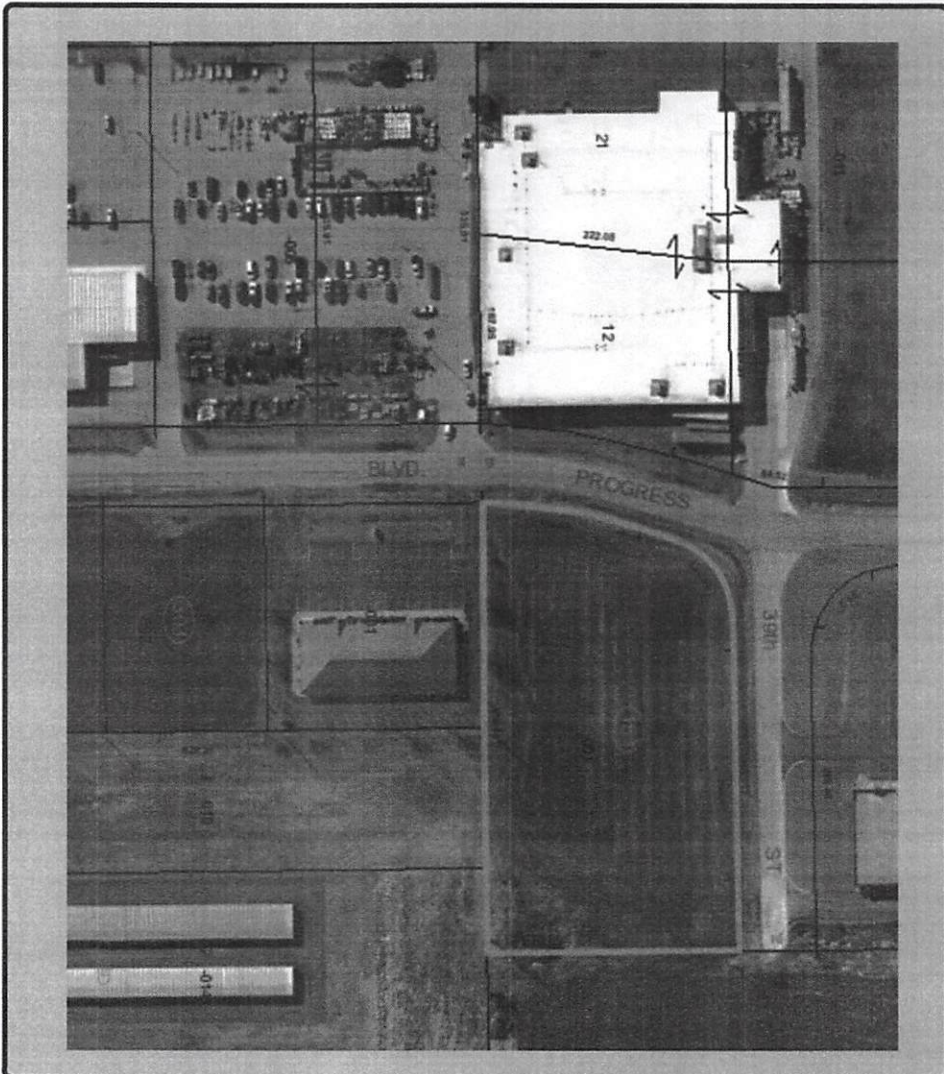
ACRES

**2**

MAIN ROADS

**86,250**

SQFT LOT SIZE



# PROS

- More land for less cost.
- Timeline is ours to set.
- Decisions are ours alone - no third party.
- Larger Property.
- Sell excess or use in future.
- Two frontage roads.
- Closer to clinic and easily seen. (Walkable)
- Bond interest rates are low. 3.25 - 3.75%  
estimated at 3.5%
- Future build is possible.

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# CONS

- More up front in land purchase.
- More decisions on our end.
- Bonding means raising levy ~10Years

LOT TWO - SOUTH LOT

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**\$125**

THOUSAND

**.68**

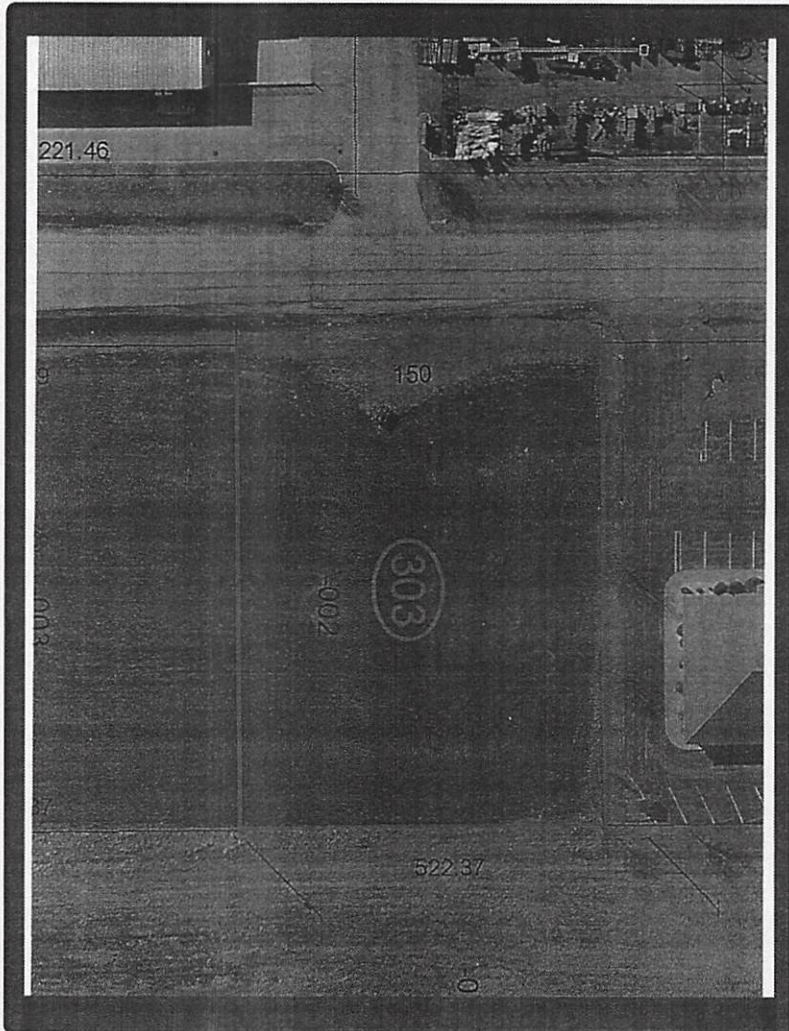
ACRES

**150**

FEET OF MAIN ROAD

**30,000**

SQFT LOT SIZE



# PROS

- Smaller footprint.
- Third Party paying for build.
- \$1 million preapproved – unsure on remainder.

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# CONS

- Third Party involvement – decisions are not ours alone.
- Less Frontage road – visability (~150 ft)
- More cost per acre.
- Unknown build next to us.
- Future building is not possible.

**BONDING WITH THE COUNTY - NORTH LOT**

# 10 YEAR LOAN

\$1.5 Million

3.25 - 3.75% Interest

At 3.5% we would pay \$276,055.66 in interest

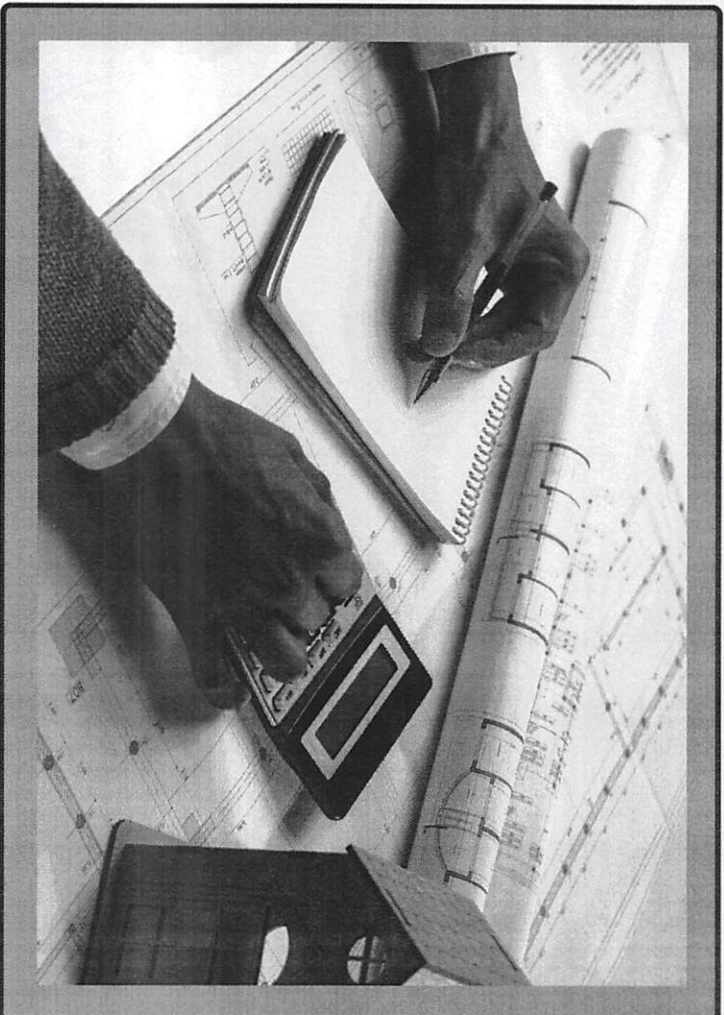
\$180,000 Year/10 Years

Currently:

~\$30,000 until .02%

~\$300,000 until .03%

~\$50,000 Year until July 2026 in Rent



FUNDING LOT TWO - SOUTH LOT

# ? YEAR LOAN

\$1.5 Million - paid upfront by builder

Currently approved for \$1 Million

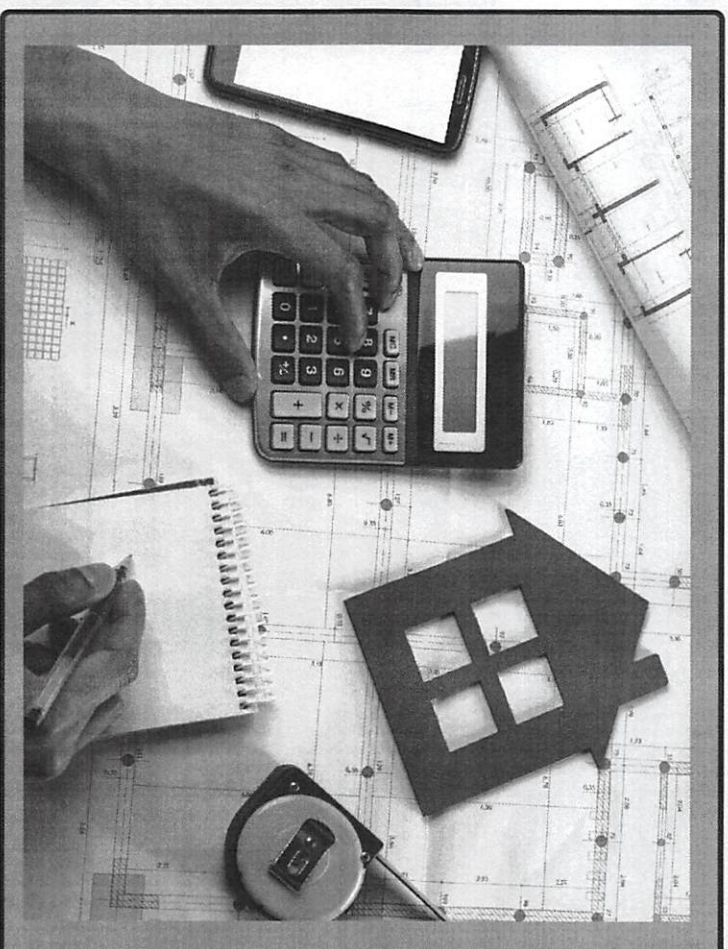
6.5% Interest

\$4,200 month until paid (stated in agreement)

Not able to "best guess" on length of loan - due to interest rate being more than payment.

Meaning the payment would have to be at least \$9,000/mo and interest paid would be more than double borrowed.

At 180,000/yr it would take 12 years and we would pay over \$666,294.87 in interest.







*Passive Breakdown*  
**BUILDING VAC**

Land Purchase = \$125,000 to \$198,000

Building Design ~\$200-\$250 SQFT = \$1 Million to \$1.5 Million

Architect to Draw Plans = \$25,000 - \$40,000

Survey = \$1,500 - \$2,000

Sewer and Water = ?waivable?

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Total UP FRONT Cost ~ \$26,000 - \$42,000

ALL IN COST ~ \$1,151,500 - \$1,740,000

\*NOT INCLUDING INTEREST\*

**Via first class mail**

LaSalle County  
Property Committee  
707 E Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350

**Re: Veterans Assistance Commission Authority to Purchase and Develop Property**

LaSalle County Property Committee:

This firm has the pleasure of representing the LaSalle County Veterans Assistance Commission ("VAC"). Recently the VAC voted to purchase an unimproved parcel of land, upon which it intends to construct and maintain a VAC office. The VAC has requested this firm supply your committee with this letter, which opines that it is within the authority of the VAC to take such action.

The Military Veterans Assistance Act, 330 ILCS 45/1 et seq. ("MVAA"), is largely silent on the issue of the VAC's authority to purchase property. In fact, the only express provisions regarding VAC property fall within Section 45/10(d) and (e). Section 45/10(d) of the MVAA provides that "[t]he designated superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission of the county shall, under the direction of the Commission, have charge of and maintain an office in the county building or a central location within the county, to be used solely by the Commission for providing the just, necessary and needed services mandated by law." That Section goes on to provide that "[t]he county shall provide for the funding of the office and provide all necessary furnishings, supplies, and services as passed by the county board in its annual appropriation. . ." Section 45/10(e).

Under those provisions, there is no limitation for the VAC to purchase its own property, other than the requirement that its office must be in a central location within the county, if not in the county building, and that it is the county's duty to provide the funding for the office. Here, the VAC understands that purchasing a parcel of unimproved property and building a VAC office thereon goes beyond the reasonable duties of the County. In order to quell any concern that the County may be challenged because of its lack of involvement or nonpayment of funds for this office, the VAC would be amenable to entering into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the County to establish that the VAC will purchase and build its office with its own funding because it finds it just and necessary and waives any obligation of the county to provide for the funding for such office.

In regard to the VAC's authority to act, the VAC functionally has the power to take any action which provides "just and necessary assistance and services to military veterans . . ." Section 45/9(a) of the MVAA provides "[w]hen so organized a Commission shall be clothed with all the powers and may be charged with all the duties theretofore devolving upon the different veteran services organizations within the county as provided in Section 2." Section 2 provides that "[t]he purpose of this Act is, in part, to provide in accordance with this Section, just and necessary assistance and services to military veterans who served in the Armed Forces of the United States and whose last discharge from the service was honorable or general under honorable conditions, to their families, and to the

families of deceased veterans with service who need such assistance and services.” Section 45/2. Thus, upon a finding by the VAC Commissioners that the purchase, construction, and maintenance of a dedicated facility is just and necessary to provide assistance and services to veterans in accordance with the MVAA, it is within the VAC’s authority to do so.

For the foregoing reasons, it is my opinion that the proposed action is lawful and within the VAC’s authority to undertake. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joshua D. Herman