



# MONTHLY REPORT

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SEPTEMBER 2024

**PREPARED BY**

Christa Hammers  
Superintendent

# MEETING AGENDA

9-25-2024

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- I. Call to Order & Salute to the Colors
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Chaplain's Prayer
- IV. Roll Call of Officers
- V. Reading & Approval of Meeting Minutes/Special Meeting Minutes
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
  - a. Office Activity
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
  - a. VAC Budget Review/Approval
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

# Meeting MINUTES

**8-28-24**

## 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

Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Phil Harth - AmLeg - Mendota / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Paul Siembab - MarCorpLeg - Post 078 / Mike Mallie - MarCorpLeg - Post 078 / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa

### Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio  
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki  
Guard – Elton Murphy  
Chaplain – 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 Harold Olsen and seconded by Roscoe Mazur. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes as presented:

Motion by Harold Olsen and seconded by Dennis Znaniecki. Motion passed unanimously.

## Public Comment

NONE.

## Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the office met with the new Veterans Advisor for Congressman Darin LaHood on Friday, August 2nd. The VAC is happy to work with their office and see what we can do to assist our Veterans/Families together.

Christa also discussed that the office will hosted a IVAC "before hours" breakfast that was open to the public. This will allow fellow business members to come in and ask questions about what we do and get more people aware of our office. We had about 30 people come through and ask about our services.

Christa informed the Commission that on August 21st the office took a "field trip" to Dupage County to see their Veterans Fair. We touched base with services that we are going to try and bring to our area and our Veterans Expo. This coincided with our unfortunate bedbug issue and we were out of the office for fumigation. Bedbug problem has been remetiaded.

Christa then told the commission that the office put together an event for area highschoolers that may be interested in joining the service. It would be a Q&A session with at least one Veteran from Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. It will be September 10th from 5-8PM at LP Auditorium.

Christa then stated that there will be some employees attending state training for CEU's. Christa, Lissa and James will be in attendance the week of Sept 16-20. The state association has invited VAC Boardmembers to attend friday morning for a session with the AG's office on the MVAA. Three VAC Board members are permitted to attend and if interested- please let us know.

We contiuue waiting on a response from the AG's office on the property purchase. At this time Christa has discussed this issue with the VAC Attourney and he would like us to proceed with budget as if we are purchasing with VAC funding. We will discuss more with budget at September meeting.

# Meeting

# MINUTES

## Continued:

The VAC continues to see new clients and the amount phone calls average 700+ monthly. The VAC as brought in over \$6.8 million to Veterans and families through the end of July- over \$2.5 million from where we were this time last year.

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

## Old Business

NONE.

## New Business

None.

## For the Good of the Commission

Elton brought up that Levee Park in East Peoria will be hosting the Vietnam Travelling Wall Sept 25-29 - it will be the 3/5th scale version.

Harold stated that there has been COVID again in the LaSalle VA Home, no outside visitors at this time.

John Duback asked if the Oglesby Am Legion had their steak fry and if couples could attend. He was answered yes they do - 4th Thursday of the month - and yes they can.

## Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Znaniiecki and seconded by Elton Murphy. Motion passed unanimously at 5:20pm.

SEPTEMBER**Office Activity:**

On September 10th our office put together a Veterans Q&A Event at LP Highschool. This event was for those who are interested in joining one of the branches to come and talk to Veterans who have been there and can answer them. The event was from 5-8PM.

The office had their state training/CEU's the week of September 16th where we learned about PTSD/TDIU claims filing, secondaries, heard from former BVA Chair - Honorable Cheryl Mason, the VA on the system we use (VBMS), did some mock BVA Hearings with Veterans Law Judge Theresa Raymond and more. This year the state association invited 3 of each counties VAC board members to join them on the morning of Friday, September 20. We had Roscoe Mazur join us for most of Friday morning and learn a bit about the MVAA and what to do when counties are not understanding it. Our attorney presented as well on counties and the issues some were having with MVAA and misunderstandings.

We are having issues with our fax line and the office will be getting E-fax capabilities and will have a brief intro on how to use the system on Friday.

We will have a booth at the Naplate Safety Day Event. The Fire Dept is combining their 75th year in service with their annual safety day - come see us at Vittone Park on Sunday, October 6th from 10am to 2pm.

The office will be closed Monday, October 14th for Columbus Day.

The office will also be attending the Streator Senior Fair on Wednesday, October 16 from 10-Noon at the Streator YMCA.

The VAC is also gauging interest on having a caregiver support program in place. We would ask any spouses that are interested to reach out to the office and get on our email list.

The office is working with the LaSalle Veterans Home on numbers for the annual giving tree and will have those available in November. We also are getting together a date for window painting and for Santa to come to the office. Stay tuned.

AUGUST Office Activity			
Office Visits	101	Intent to File	25
Phone	727	Intital Claims	41
Outstation	20	Appeals	14
Mendota	6	VA Healthcare	11
Streator	7	Pension/DIC	5
Marseilles	7	Other	182

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- AUGUST			
PTSD GROUP	19	WALK-INS:	70
FLUTES	7	APPT MADE	25
VHA	2	QUESTIONS	45
Senior Resource	8	IVAC Event	28
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>134</b>

Our Office  
**EVENTS**

AUGUST Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
Dependency	2/26/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,464.00	\$ 145.00
90%	8/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 6,135.72	\$ 267.90
40%	7/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 15,606.04	\$ 888.02
30%	3/17/2021	Dec-24	\$ 14,725.27	\$ 524.31
60%	4/30/2024	Dec-24	\$ 28,528.05	\$ 1,361.88
Dependency	11/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,872.12	\$ 139.37
70%	1/10/2024	Dec-24	\$ 7,027.20	\$ 390.40
DIC	7/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 40,068.70	\$ 1,612.75
Burial	7/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
100% P&T	6/18/2024	Dec-24	\$ 54,390.05	\$ 4,183.85
90%	4/17/2024	Dec-24	\$ 30,849.81	\$ 2,428.91
dependent	9/1/2022	Dec-24	\$ 7,748.00	\$ 226.00
30%	6/20/2023	Dec-24	\$ 11,119.48	\$ 694.31
100% P&T	3/19/2024	Dec-24	\$ 92,644.16	\$ 3,737.85
100% P&T	4/4/2024	Dec-24	\$ 57,624.90	\$ 4,316.59
70%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 41,856.73	\$ 2,095.28
dependent	11/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,376.40	\$ 208.40
40%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 14,745.33	\$ 971.02
DIC	10/22/2021	Dec-24	\$ 19,353.00	\$ 1,612.75
90%	4/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 34,139.76	\$ 2,507.39
Burial	6/25/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
MOD	5/17/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,946.25	\$ -
Transportation	6/25/2024	Dec-24	\$ 330.00	\$ -
Burial Benefits	7/18/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
DIC	7/18/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,946.25	\$ 1,955.21
Increase	5/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 10,410.00	\$ 755.28
Burial Benefits	6/6/2024	Dec-24	\$ 1,896.00	\$ -
Month of Death	8/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,544.87	\$ -
Compensation	10/4/2023	Dec-24	\$ 593,003.00	\$ 171.23
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,112,351.09</b>	<b>\$31,193.70</b>
		<b>Year to Date Total</b>	<b>\$7,924,353.70</b>	<b>\$602,686.74</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 OVER \$7.9 Million by the end of August 2024. This is over \$2.8 MILLION more than where we were FY23. We continue to see new clients daily and thank all our Veterans and Families for trusting us with their claims process.

Our Office  
**OVERVIEW**