



MONTHLY REPORT

JANUARY 2024

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

1-24-2024

- 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. Annual Report/Governor Letter
 - c. Renewal of Post Delegate/Alternates
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

11/22/2023

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Harold Olsen called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Kenneth Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles

Officers Present

President – Harold Olsen
Vice President – Dennis Znaniiecki
Guard – Bill Paterson
Chaplin – Andy Ruggerio

Employees Present

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

Meeting

MINUTES

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Andy Ruggerio and seconded by Kenneth Harden. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the community was fantastic support in assisting the VAC Office with supplying all of the Veterans at the LaSalle VA Home everything on their wish lists! Our Admin Asst - Kelli was able to create a system that kept everything from being mis-placed and able to get to the right Veteran. She also happened to wrap EVERY gift!

Also discussed that on December 7th the VAC and our Commission President, Harold Olson, painted windows at the VA Home. The date moved due to weather on the 5th. It was a great event and one we look forward to annually!

Christa stated that Santa is visiting on December 16th from 9-NOON. Bring the kids and support the office!

Christa is currently working on the Annual Reports and Govenor's Letter. Those will posted on our website as soon as possible.

Christa then told the Commission that we are now over \$7 million in benefits payouts and had 93 walk-ins for the month of Novermber.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Kenneth Harden and seconded by Bill Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business- NONE.

Meeting MINUTES

New Business

NONE

For the Good of the Commission

Dennis stated that Peru's Pearl Harbor Day Vigil will be at South Shore Boat Club in Peru. December 2 - starts at 11:30AM. They will be serving Chilli Bean Soup. Also stated that the VAC is doing a great job and that he is happy with our numbers, seconded by the rest of the commission.

Christa reminded the Commission that there is NO December meeting and to have a great holiday season! Next Meeting- January 24, 2024.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Bill Patterson and seconded by Bill Luther.
Motion passed unanimously at 5:13pm.

DECEMBER/JANUARY**Office Activity:**

Santa visited the VAC office on December 16th and we had a pretty good turnout. He looks forward to visiting again next year!

The annual reports are now up on our website, they are also attached as an overview of our FY 23. The letter to the governor is also attached and up on our website.

Annual renewal for Post Delegate/Alternate papers have been mailed to posts- please have those to the office no later than March 1st. Nominations/voting in for positions on VAC Board will be at the March meeting- nominations have to be Post Delegate/Alternate.

Be sure to have new members complete OMA Certificate/bring in DD214.

On January 10-12 Christa and Lissa will be in East Peoria for our State Association Winter Meeting. Lissa will again be running for the position of Secretary on that Board.

Property Tax Season is upon us- so be sure that if you are Service-Connected 30% or more, you make an appointment and come in to file for your exemptions.

Emily is now seeing clients every Monday in Marseilles. We are happy to have another outreach location!

DECEMBER Office Activity			
Office Visits	80	Intent to File	20
Phone	504	Intital Claims	24
Outstation	12	Appeals	14
Mendota	1	VA Healthcare	7
Streator	10	Pension/DIC	3
Marseilles	1	Other	137

PTSD: 17 Flutes: 11 VHA: 2

Walk ins- Appts Made: 16 Walk ins- Questions: 44 - TOTAL: 60

Our Office
EVENTS

DECEMBER Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2023 Amount	Monthly Amount
70%	10/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 41,879.96	\$ 1,716.28
70%	8/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 25,086.78	\$ 1,716.28
80%	8/16/2022	Dec-24	\$ 32,995.32	\$ 1,995.01
90%	2/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 43,592.37	\$ 2,561.65
40%	5/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 12,459.00	\$ 755.28
20%	5/30/2023	Dec-24	\$ 6,685.80	\$ 338.49
60%	8/17/2023	Dec-24	\$ 23,521.48	\$ 1,486.88
100%	12/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,221.81	\$ 1,612.75
100%	3/2/2023	Dec-24	\$ 50,831.41	\$ 4,072.12
10%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 4,503.72	\$ 171.23
burial	10/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
DIC	10/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 25,171.80	\$ 1,612.75
10%	8/15/2022	Dec-24	\$ 4,503.72	\$ 171.23
30%	8/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 6,291.72	\$ 524.31
80%	8/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 29,325.39	\$ 2,365.01
60%	6/26/2023	Dec-24	\$ 19,336.71	\$ 1,486.88
100%	10/18/2023	Dec-24	\$ 55,125.14	\$ 3,946.25
MOD	11/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,952.51	\$ -
burial	11/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
30%	5/2/2023	Dec-24	\$ 13,116.43	\$ 632.31
30%	5/2/2023	Dec-24	\$ 13,116.43	\$ 632.31
20%	9/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 5,056.35	\$ 338.49
90%	8/4/2023	Dec-24	\$ -	\$ 2,241.91
dependent	3/29/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,185.00	\$ -
HLR	8/23/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,194.64	\$ -
Compensation	8/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 55,720.05	\$ 3,737.85
Compensation	6/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 22,111.21	\$ 1,361.88
DIC	10/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 31,075.60	\$ 1,955.21
Compensation	9/13/2022	Dec-24	\$ 33,483.10	\$ 1,716.28
Compensation	8/24/2022	Dec-24	\$ 84,991.68	\$ 3,946.25
Compensation	8/17/2023	Dec-24	\$ 22,335.36	\$ 1,861.28
		Total	\$701,870.49	\$46,956.17
		Year to Date Total	\$701,870.49	\$46,956.17

The VAC is happy to report that we are starting the year off with over \$700,000 in benefits paid out to our Veterans and Families! We see our office visit numbers slowing a bit, but we remain busy with our phone calls and continued contact with our clients. We hope to continue this upward trend and bring in more events/programs for our clients this year.

Our Office
OVERVIEW

Our Office
OVERVIEW



MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

2-28-2024

- 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. Annual Report/Governor Letter
 - c. Updates on Properties
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

1-24-2024

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Harold Olsen called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Kenneth Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Thomas Shea - AmLeg - Ottawa / Chuck Stanley - AmLeg - Ottawa / Roscoe Mazur - Am Leg - Marseilles / Phil Harth - AmVets - Mendota / Gray Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Paul Seimbab - Marine CorLeg - Post 078 / Elton Murphy - VFW - LaSalle / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles /

Officers Present

President – Harold Olsen
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki- EXCUSED
Guard – Bill Paterson
Chaplin – Andy Ruggerio

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 Andy Ruggerio and seconded by Kenneth Harden. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that back in December we had our annual Santa visit and it was a hit. We enjoyed doing it once again and look forward to this year!

Also discussed that the annual report and governors letter are on the website.

Christa stated that the office needs the OMA certificates for all new Delegates/Alternates on file as well as their DD214's. Papers need to be turned in before March 1st.

Christa and Lissa would be going to East Peoria on January 10-12 for the State Winter Meetings. Lissa would be again running for Secretary of that Board.

Christa then told the Commission that Property Tax season is upon us and to spread the word to Veterans who are Service-Connected at least 30% to make an appointment for their letters.

Emily is now seeing clients in Marseilles - Every Monday at the City Hall until the new building is completed. You can make appointments to see her by calling or online.

Christa then went over the annual report and the overall numbers- so far in 2024 we have over \$700,000 in benefits paid out to our Veterans/Families!

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Andy Ruggerio and seconded by Bill Patterson. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business- NONE.

Meeting MINUTES

New Business

NONE

For the Good of the Commission

Harold stated that Dennis and the Peru Group did a great job with the Pearl Harbor event.

Elton stated that the VFW would be holding burger night tomorrow (every 4th Thurs) and brats (every 2nd Thurs).

Lance stated that there was a benefit for Mr. Matt Weaver (former commander of the American Legion) - Feb 25th at the Legion from 1-5pm.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Roscoe Mazur.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:26pm.

FEBRUARY**Office Activity:**

The annual reports are now up on our website, they are also attached as an overview of our FY 23. The letter to the governor is also attached and up on our website.

Annual renewal for Post Delegate/Alternate papers have been mailed to posts- please have those to the office no later than March 1st. Nominations/voting in for positions on VAC Board will be at the March meeting- nominations have to be Post Delegate/Alternate.

On January 10-11 Lissa and Christa were in Peoria for the Winter meetings for the state association. Weather stopped us from attending on the 12th. Lissa was again elected as the secretary for that Board.

We are getting a few more General Assistance clients coming in. We continue to look for other avenues to get these Veterans assistance. Christa is continuing to move forward on making the office a 501 so we can apply for grants that can possibly assist.

Christa and Lissa met with a realtor who is assisting our office in getting information on the properties adjacent to our current building. The maps are attached and Christa is looking into how to purchase the land and what the next steps are once we decide on what we would like to do.

There has been new legislation passed for VA Healthcare - enrollment for Gulf War, Iraq/Afgahnistan Wars and anyone involved in TERA. More information to come.

JANUARY Office Activity			
Office Visits	129	Intent to File	22
Phone	746	Intital Claims	28
Outstation	27	Appeals	23
Mendota	7	VA Healthcare	5
Streator	15	Pension/DIC	0
Marseilles	5	Other	176

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES			
PTSD GROUP	28	WALK-INS:	72
FLUTES	8	APPT MADE	42
VHA	2	QUESTIONS	30
MSHV	3		
HSTP MTG	35	TOTAL:	148

Our Office
EVENTS

JANUARY Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
DIC	7/19/2023	Dec-24	\$ 31,040.84	\$ 1,955.21
dependent	10/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 966.00	\$ 41.00
A&A	8/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 61,881.40	\$ 4,859.46
dependent	9/1/2022	Dec-24	\$ 3,096.88	\$ 152.64
60%	2/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 29,581.29	\$ 1,361.88
80%	10/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 26,109.48	\$ 1,995.01
80%	8/31/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,854.75	\$ 2,106.01
100% P&T	11/28/2022	Dec-24	\$ 92,405.33	\$ 4,392.25
60%	9/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,250.14	\$ 1,577.88
SMC	1/18/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,416.68	\$ 2,238.75
60%	4/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 26,799.97	\$ 1,361.88
80%	12/12/2022	Dec-24	\$ 35,884.88	\$ 2,283.01
10%	5/23/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,221.51	\$ 171.23
80%	8/31/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,702.12	\$ 2,365.01
Burial	1/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 893.00	\$ -
100%	11/15/2023	Dec-24	\$ 24,491.23	\$ 1,612.75
70%	4/21/2014	Dec-24	\$ 88,703.32	\$ 1,716.28
100%	9/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 44,854.20	\$ 3,737.85
30%	5/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 11,030.33	\$ 586.31
80%	7/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 35,634.82	\$ 2,161.01
70%	8/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,300.82	\$ 1,716.28
40%	8/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 31,073.58	\$ 838.28
		Total	\$680,192.57	\$39,229.98
		Year to Date Total	\$1,382,063.06	\$86,186.15

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 more than \$1.3 million by the end of January 2024. We hope to continue this upward trend and bring in more events/programs for our clients this year.



MONTHLY REPORT

MARCH 2024

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

3-27-2024

- 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
 - a. Leah Erikson (Coldwell Banker) Q & A
- VII. Superintendent's Report
 - a. Office Activity
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. Election of Officers
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

2-28-2024

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

Vice President Dennis Znaniecki 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 / Roscoe Mazur - Am Leg - Marseilles / Phil Harth - AmVets - Mendota / Gray Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Paul Seimbab - Marine CorLeg - Post 078 / Elton Murphy - VFW - LaSalle / John Duback - AmVetes - Ottawa / Mike Mallie - Marine CorLeg - Post 078

Officers Present

President – Harold Olsen - EXCUSED
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki
Guard – Bill Paterson
Chaplin – Andy Ruggerio

Employees Present

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

Meeting MINUTES

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Andy Ruggerio and seconded by Elton Murphy. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the annual reports are now up on the website- along with that is the Superintendents Eval and Letter to the Governor for FY23.

Christa also discussed that annual renewal for post delegates and alternates have been mailed out and need to be returned no later than March 1, 2024. Please make sure OMA is completed for all new del/alternates. If help is needed- please stop by our office.

Christa then told the commission that Lissa and her went to the Peoria winter meetings. Lissa was again elected as the Secretary for our State Association Board.

Christa and Lissa met with a realtor to discuss surrounding properties and get a better idea on what was out there and if it made sense to purchase land for future building. We will keep the Board up to date with findings.

Christa then told the Commission that there is a new healthcare law that passed- opening the doors for VAHC for all Veterans exposed to TERA. This is a big deal.

Christa then went over the annual report and the overall numbers- so far in 2024 we have over \$1.3Million in benefits paid out to our Veterans/Families!

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

Old Business- NONE.

Meeting MINUTES

New Business

NONE

For the Good of the Commission

Christa informed the Commission that they have sweatshirts designed if anyone would like to order. Please let us know.

Christa then stressed that all Delegate/Alternate papers MUST be turned in no later than March 1, 2024. Please get them turned in. It effects our numbers for full board status.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Bill Patterson and seconded by Roscoe Mazur.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:25pm.

MARCH**Office Activity:**

The office is still reviewing some properties at this time- we are working with a realtor and trying to make sure it all works out before presenting everything to the VAC Board.

Our office will be closed March 29 in observation of Good Friday.

On April 2, the majority of the office staff is going to be hearing from a MST survivor and author- Colonel Lisa Carrington Firmin USAF (retired). We look forward to learning more about this "not very discussed" topic and how to treat our Veterans when they come in our office who have suffered from it.

Christa has updated the website to include TERA information and the new healthcare bill. Also some more information for the Veterans/Families suffering from hardships. There are resources available that may offer more than our office can. If anyone knows of any additional resources to add- please let her know.

On April 13, the office will be again participating in the Shaw Media Home show. This will be at the Westclox Event Center from 10-3.

If you have yet to come in to do your property tax exemption paperwork- please make the appointment to do so. We are still booking a few weeks out- give yourself plenty of time to get those into your county assessors office.

Lissa is still looking for additional expo vendors. If you are interested- please get your paperwork into her.

FEBRUARY Office Activity			
Office Visits	117	Intent to File	19
Phone	655	Intital Claims	30
Outstation	16	Appeals	17
Mendota	6	VA Healthcare	2
Streator	7	Pension/DIC	5
Marseilles	3	Other	102

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- FEB			
PTSD GROUP	28	WALK-INS:	70
FLUTES	9	APPT MADE	33
VHA	4	QUESTIONS	37
SENIOR RESOURCE	10		
TOTAL:			121

Our Office
EVENTS

FEBRUARY Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
100%	7/24/2023	Dec-24	\$ 21,512.54	\$ 3,870.59
60%	1/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 16,342.56	\$ 1,361.88
80%	1/2/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,344.76	\$ 278.73
DIC	4/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 33,517.68	\$ 1,612.75
BURIAL	4/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 1,770.00	\$ -
10%	8/30/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,894.98	\$ 171.23
10%	11/30/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,397.22	\$ 171.23
100% P&T	12/4/2023	Dec-24	\$ 19,447.22	\$ 3,737.85
80%	6/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 40,094.44	\$ 1,995.01
90%	6/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 34,127.49	\$ 2,428.91
80%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 51,606.84	\$ 2,161.01
30%	7/19/2023	Dec-24	\$ 10,896.69	\$ 524.31
70%	7/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 30,680.16	\$ 1,716.28
80%	5/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 34,106.66	\$ 2,188.01
10%	6/29/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,540.90	\$ 171.23
100% P&T	12/4/2023	Dec-24	\$ 69,384.08	\$ 3,621.95
80% IU	9/23/2023	Dec-24	\$ 113,613.40	\$ 3,621.95
70%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 50,040.07	\$ 1,861.28
dependent	5/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,494.44	\$ 1,619.62
60%	8/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,452.50	\$ 1,361.88
70%	5/31/2023	Dec-24	\$ 25,264.62	\$ 1,861.28
MOD	MOD	Dec-24	\$ 3,952.51	\$ -
70%	1/6/2020	Dec-24	\$ 93,942.26	\$ 1,716.28
100% P&T	9/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 53,460.32	\$ 3,737.85
70%	5/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 23,282.84	\$ 1,663.06
10%	8/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,066.21	\$ 171.23
10%	7/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,232.13	\$ 171.23
dependent	5/18/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,324.56	\$ 1,577.88
80%	8/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,633.08	\$ 2,320.75
DIC	11/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,372.94	\$ 1,955.21
40%	12/27/2022	Dec-24	\$ 17,202.92	\$ 755.28
80%	2/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,378.50	\$ 2,161.01
100% P&T	10/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 50,791.58	\$ 3,737.85
80% IU	12/13/2023	Dec-24	\$ 46,597.04	\$ 3,737.85
		Total	\$1,006,766.14	\$60,042.46
		Year to Date Total	\$2,388,829.20	\$146,228.61

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 more than \$2.3 million by the end of February 2024. This is \$900,000 more than where we were FY23. We hope to continue this upward trend and bring in more events/programs for our clients this year.

Our Office
OVERVIEW



MONTHLY REPORT

APRIL 2024

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

4-24-2024

- 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
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

3-27-2024

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Harold Olson 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 / Roscoe Mazur - Am Leg - Marseilles / Phil Harth - AmVets - Mendota / Gray Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Paul Seimbab - Marine CorLeg - Post 078 / Elton Murphy - VFW - LaSalle / John Duback - AmVetes - Ottawa / Mike Mallie - Marine CorLeg - Post 078

Officers Present

President – Harold Olsen - EXCUSED
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki
Guard – Bill Paterson
Chaplin – Andy Ruggerio

Employees Present

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

Meeting MINUTES

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Dennis Znaniecki. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Leah Erikson from Coldwell Banker came in to discuss property at 39th & Progress. She had a hand out for the property to show utility locations and comparable sold land.

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.

Christa also discussed that the office will be closed on March 29th for Good Friday- also Vietnam Veterans Day.

Christa then told the commission that on April 2nd the staff will be hearing from a MST survivor via a Zoom conference put on by SIUE. Colonel Lisa Carrington Firmin -USAF(R)

Christa updated the website to include TERA information and the new healthcare bill. It also has a few quick links to information for Veterans/Families suffering hardships.

Christa then told the Commission that on April 13 the VAC will be participating in the SHAW Media Home Show. It will be at the Westclox Center from 10-3.

Christa then stated that if you or someone you know has not come in to do their Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption- please call and get those done. The VAC is also still looking for Expo Vendors- get with Lissa if you have any questions- or call the office.

Christa went over office numbers and let the Commission know that we are officially over \$900 thousand where we were this time last year at \$2.38 MIL so far.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Andy Ruggerio and seconded by Roscoe Mazur. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business- NONE.

Meeting

MINUTES

New Business

Lissa stated that there are still claims sharks out there that are illegally taking advantage of the Veterans and processing claims.

Lissa also mentioned that for a time the VA has stopped debt collecting on VA Pension, forgiven debts and has actually started to repay some.

Voting in new VAC Board Members:

Dennis Znaniacki nominated Andy Ruggerio for President. Harold Olson is stepping down. Phil Harth nominates Elton Murphy for Guard. Bill Patterson is stepping down.

New Board is as follows:

President- Andy Ruggerio

Vice President- Dennis Znaniacki

Guard- Elton Murphy

Chaplain- Harold Olson

Motion to approve new VAC Board as elected made by Chuck Erb, seconded by Mike Mallie. Motion approved unanimously.

For the Good of the Commission

Dennis stated that the new van at the VA Home is being used and states "Donated by Veterans and Citizens of the IL Valley". Saturday April 6 at 10:30 to take a picture for the paper.

Harold stated the VA Home is open for entertainment- get ahold of Bailey.

John Duback stated that he saw Christa in the paper for 40 under 40 and congratulated her.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Znaniacki and seconded by Phil Harth.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:39pm.

APRIL

Office Activity:

The office participated in the SHAW Media Home Show at WestClox on Sat, April 13. It was the first nice day in awhile and there wasn't a ton of traffic, but a few people stopped by and made appointments with our office.

On Tuesday April 16- Lissa and James went to Sandwich to the Fox Valley Resource Fair and were able to assist a few Veterans and Families with questions, as well as network for vendors to come to our Expo next month.

The office is still reviewing some properties at this time- we have a new property at 38th and Progress to look into. Christa and Lissa are meeting with the owner on Thursday, April 25.

On April 27th- Hines VA is having a Womens Day event from 10am-3pm at Kankakee Community College. Activites/Resources and Connection. Lunch is provided while it lasts!

It has come to the offices' attention that there are still quite a few Veterans helping Veterans with claims filing. Please know that this is considered an illegal activity and per the MVAA the person assisting MUST hold an accreditation.

May 11-17 Lissa and Emily will be in Colorado for NACVSO (National) Training.

May 16th is our Expo! Please mark it on your calendars and let us know if you need flyers.

Lissa is still looking for additional expo vendors. If you are interested- please get your paperwork into her.

MARCH Office Activity			
Office Visits	128	Intent to File	34
Phone	649	Intital Claims	33
Outstation	34	Appeals	18
Mendota	10	VA Healthcare	10
Streator	21	Pension/DIC	4
Marseilles	3	Other	133

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- MARCH			
PTSD GROUP	22	WALK-INS:	65
FLUTES	9	APPT MADE	41
VHA	3	QUESTIONS	24
SENIOR RESOURCE	17		
MidWest Shelter	2	TOTAL:	118

Our Office
EVENTS

MARCH Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
70%	2/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 38,337.24	\$ 1,849.02
50%	2/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 19,078.64	\$ 1,311.90
MOD Check	5/31/2023	Dec-24	\$ 1,750.00	\$ -
30%	9/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 8,112.72	\$ 663.31
70%	1/3/2024	Dec-24	\$ 26,727.65	\$ 1,716.28
100% P&T	12/2/2022	Dec-24	\$ 44,854.20	\$ 3,737.85
10%	3/29/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,610.40	\$ 165.92
30%	9/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 15,611.25	\$ 586.31
40%	9/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,816.14	\$ 940.28
50%	10/25/2023	Dec-24	\$ 15,937.92	\$ 1,179.16
100% P&T	4/23/2023	Dec-24	\$ 70,474.18	\$ 3,737.85
100%	12/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 51,652.92	\$ 3,737.85
dependent	6/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 34,480.92	\$ 2,751.91
40%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 22,131.36	\$ 755.28
90%	8/30/2023	Dec-24	\$ 31,121.34	\$ 2,459.91
60%	1/17/2023	Dec-24	\$ 33,017.06	\$ 1,179.16
80%	7/24/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,293.51	\$ 1,995.01
10%	10/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,734.37	\$ 171.23
20%	7/19/2023	Dec-24	\$ 7,836.10	\$ 338.49
90%	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 62,879.46	\$ 2,241.91
60%	11/7/2022	Dec-24	\$ 29,118.84	\$ 1,577.88
Burial	2/12/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
MOD	2/12/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,078.99	\$ -
DIC	2/12/2024	Dec-24	\$ 27,372.94	\$ 1,955.21
30%	4/27/2024	Dec-24	\$ 11,421.00	\$ 524.31
90%	10/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,942.74	\$ 246.90
dependent	7/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 10,628.36	\$ 838.28
80% IU P&T	4/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 68,098.21	\$ 3,737.85
10%	10/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,734.37	\$ 171.23
90%	7/18/2023	Dec-24	\$ 42,318.21	\$ 2,241.91
10%	8/17/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,237.44	\$ 171.23
50%	2/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 1,075.16	\$ 20,294.68
Burial	3/2/2024	Dec-24	\$ 1,900.00	\$ -
70%	3/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 1,716.28	\$ 35,722.56
10%	3/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 171.23	\$ 3,729.89
10%	3/8/2024	Dec-24	\$ 171.23	\$ 3,232.13
100%	3/15/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,737.85	\$ 41,046.45
40%	3/22/2024	Dec-24	\$ 838.28	\$ 12,530.10
40%	3/26/2024	Dec-24	\$ 755.28	\$ 18,671.22
80%	3/27/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,283.01	\$ 29,570.31
		Total	\$741,056.80	\$207,780.77
		Year to Date Total	\$3,129,886.00	\$354,009.38

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 more than \$3.1 million by the end of March 2024. This is over \$1MIL more than where we were FY23. We hope to continue this upward trend and bring in more events/programs for our clients this year.

Our Office
OVERVIEW



MONTHLY REPORT

MAY 2024

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

5-22-2024

- 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	TOTAL:	126

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
		Total	\$773,946.84	\$43,745.50
		Year to Date Total	\$3,903,832.84	\$397,754.88

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





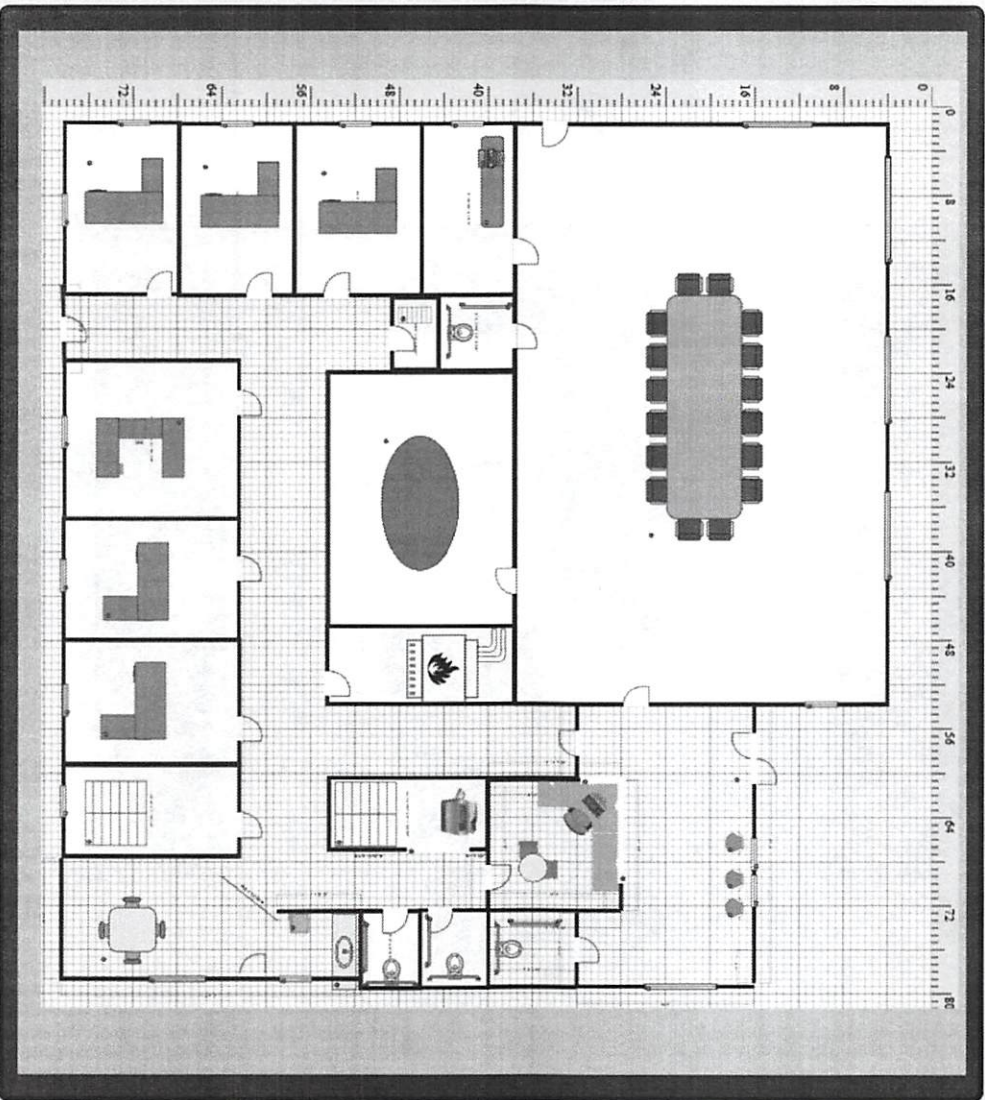
Let's compare **PRESENTATION OF TWO LOTS**

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

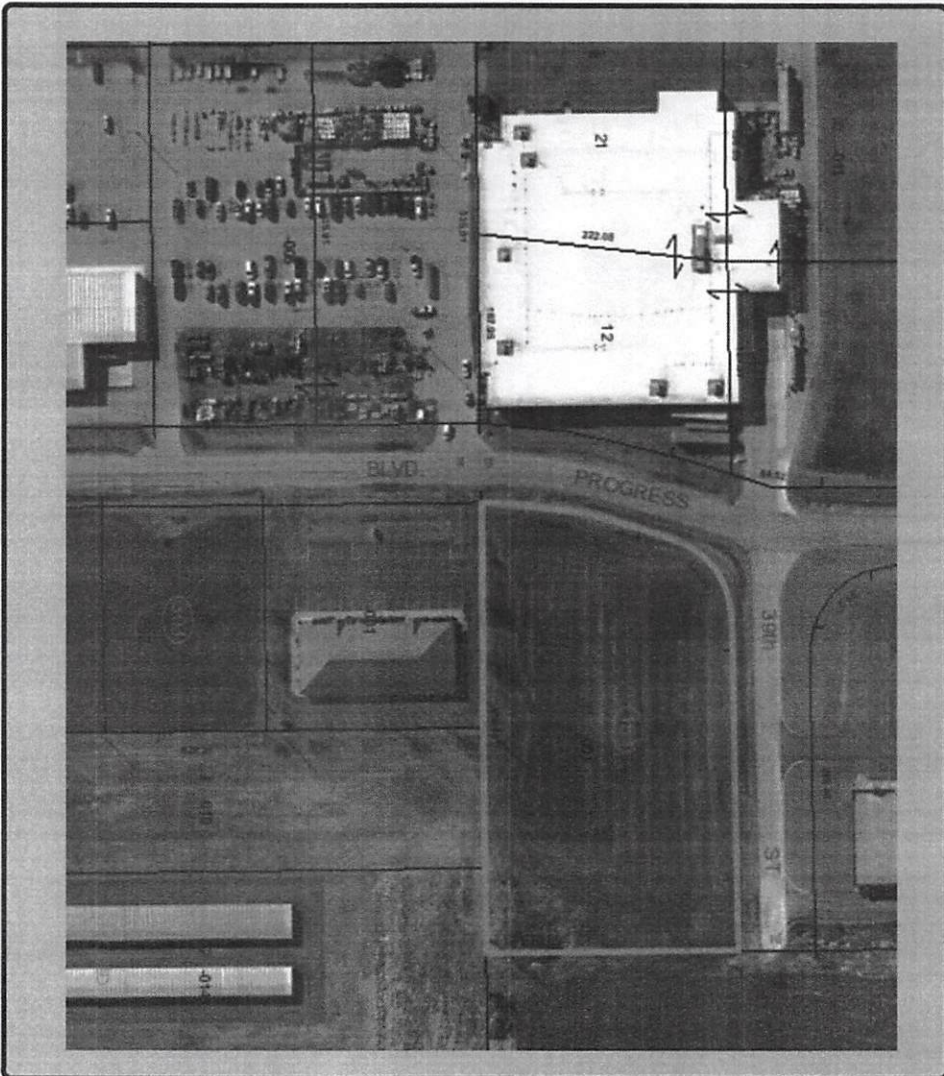
ACRES

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.

CONS

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

LOT TWO - SOUTH LOT

Page 06 of 10

\$125

THOUSAND

.68

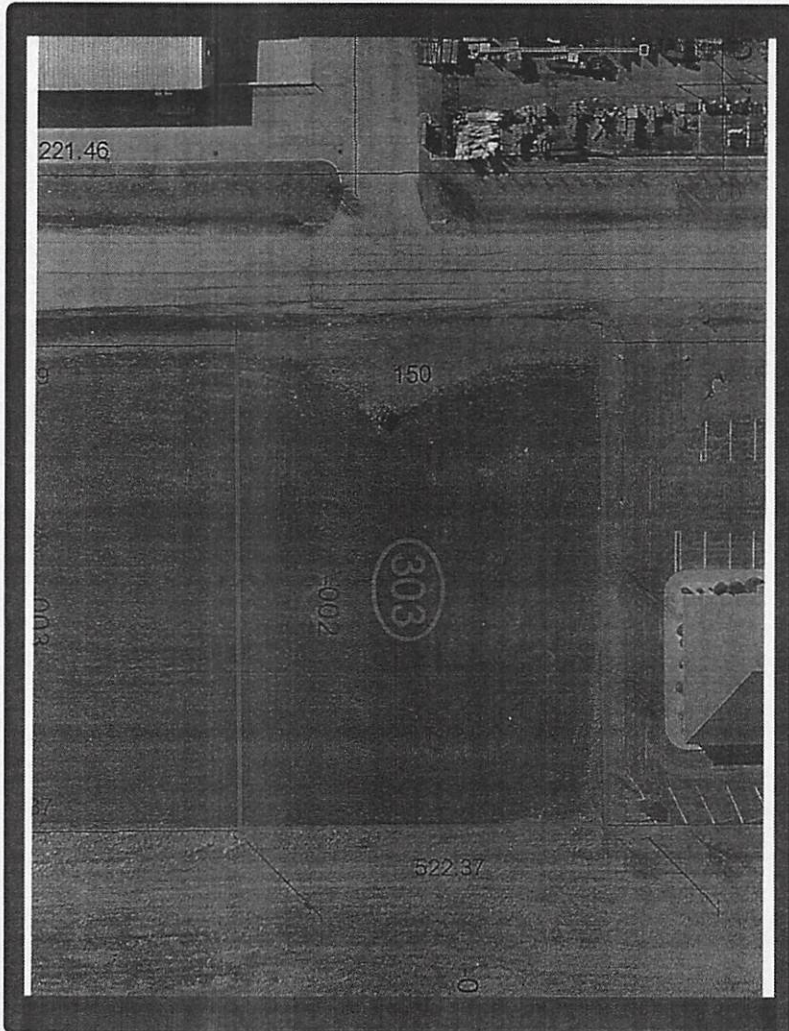
ACRES

150

FEET OF MAIN ROAD

30,000

SQFT LOT SIZE



PROS

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

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

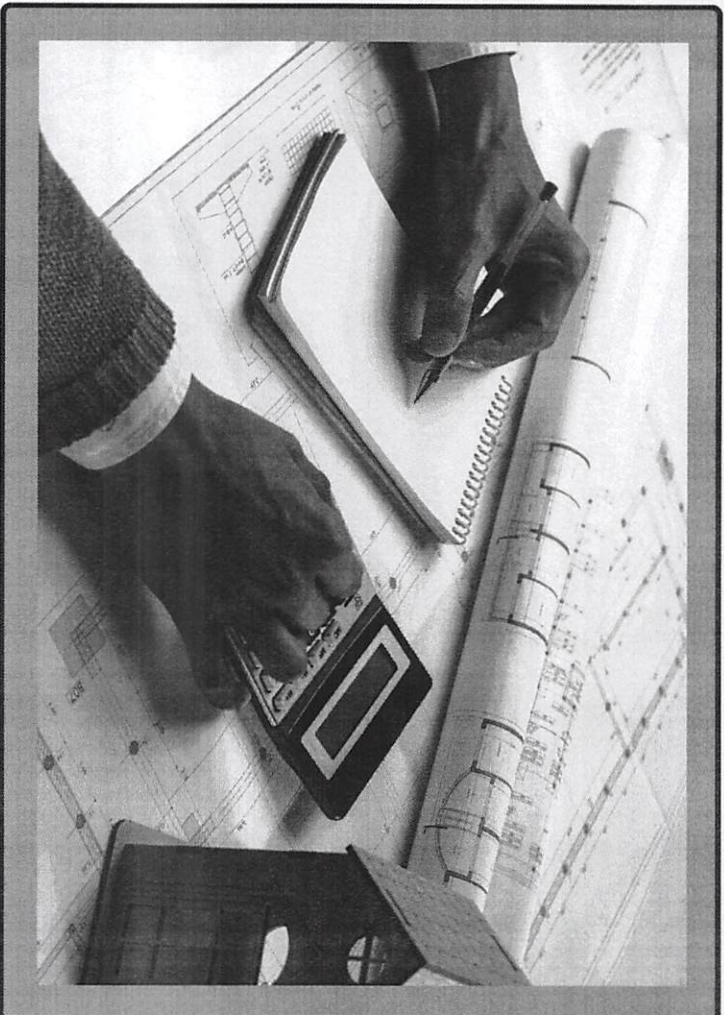
\$180,000 Year/10 Years

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

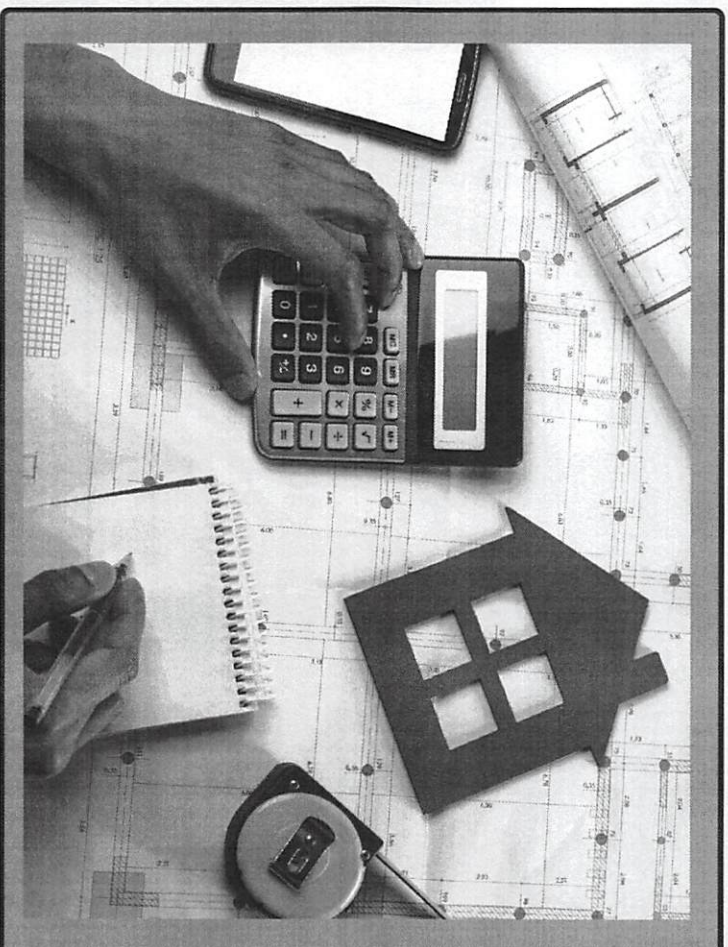
6.5% Interest

\$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?

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



MONTHLY REPORT

JUNE 2024

Includes Meeting Minutes from
Special Meeting Held 6/7/24

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

6-26-2024

- 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
 - b. Property Update
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

5-22-24

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 5:01pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVetes - Ottawa / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Phil Harth - AmLeg - Mendota / OTHER: Leah Erikson, Realtor

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniacki
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 Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the office held the 4th annual Veterans Expo on May 16th and had a total of 47 Vendors and roughly 150 people came through.

Christa also discussed that Lissa and Emily were able to go to Colorado to National Training from May 11-17. Lissa discussed that they were able to witness an actual 3 judge panel board hearing. They also witnessed the first ever one-stop service connection event. The Veteran went from filing the claim to going into exams, to getting either approved or denied all in one event.

Christa then told the commission that the office will be closed on May 27th in honor of Memorial Day. The office staff is encouraged to participate or support area events.

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

Christa then stated that the office has brought in over \$3.9 Million to Veterans and their Families so far this year. This is over \$1.2 Million from where we were last year at this time.

Christa stated to the Board that she had a presentation regarding the two properties and when that portion of the meeting came up, she would ask that all members be able to view the TV.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Dennis Znaniecki and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting MINUTES

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

Christa went over the properties via presentation.

A vote then took place on which property the VAC Board would like to make an offer on.

President Andy Ruggerio informed the VAC Board that it was the concensus after discussion that the North property was the better option and made the most sense for the VAC's future.

The VAC Board unanimously voted to make an offer on the property to the North of our current location at no more than asking price.

The Board asked that Christa work with Leah Erikson in order for that to happen.

For the Good of the Commission

Elton stated that the VFW has their burger night tomorrow- 5/23 Memorial Day they have a car show and you can still enter to be in it.

Phil stated that Dependent ID Cards (DOD Cards) are now different and make sure you have the correct one. Plan to be completely phased out of "old" cards by 2026. Discussed where to go for an appointment, Rock Island, Peoria, Darien and others.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Phil Harth.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:23pm.

Special Meeting MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING - JUNE 7, 2024

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 12 pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Thomas Shea - AmLeg - Ottawa / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / John Koehler - AmLeg - Oglesby / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Ron Sisco - AmLeg- Mendota / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniiecki- EXCUSED
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

Special Meeting MINUTES

Due to the nature of a special meeting- no old minutes were presented for accepting.

Opening Prayer/Pledge and Roll Call was taken.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the Board has convened to go over an approve or deny two resolutions between the VAC and County Boards.

Resolution 24-001:

To add an additional line number to our current budget and for future budgets that any and all "excess" monies will go into for use on the property purchase and building of the VAC building.

Resolution 24-002:

That the VAC is to purchase land in the amount of \$185 thousand and that the property purchased and eventual building will be that of the VAC's.

The Resolutions were viewed and discussed by the commission and President Andy Ruggerio called for a vote to accept as-is Resolution 24-001.

Seconded by Harold Olsen.

A roll call vote was called:

Thomas Shea - "yay"
Greg Stock - "yay"
John Koehler- "yay"
Andy Ruggerio - "yay"
Louis Sekula- "yay"
Ron Sisco- "yay"
Gary Graffis- "yay"
Elton Murphy- "yay"
Harold Olsen- "yay"
Charles Erb- "yay"

Motion to accept and enact Resolution 24-001 is unanimous.

Meeting MINUTES

Superintendent's Report Continued

President Andy Ruggerio called for a vote to accept as-is Resolution 24-002.
Seconded by Elton Murphy.

A roll call vote was called:

Thomas Shea - "yay"
Greg Stock - "yay"
John Koehler- "yay"
Andy Ruggerio - "yay"
Louis Sekula- "yay"
Ron Sisco- "yay"
Gary Graffis- "yay"
Elton Murphy- "yay"
Harold Olsen- "yay"
Charles Erb- "yay"

Motion to accept and enact Resolution 24-002 is unanimous.

President Andy Ruggerio asked for closing prayer and salute to colors.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Chuck Erb.
Motion passed unanimously. Meeting concluded at 12:15pm.

END OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES.

JUNE

Office Activity:

The office has an accepted offer on the North property. Contract has been signed by our current president and earnest money has been turned in. Next is getting the property soil checked and there is one bid right now, waiting on one more to get that completed. Christa has a couple of future meetings with the County Board to go over financing this build and then we can discuss and decide on who we are going to have in charge of the build process.

The office had a special meeting held on June 7 to go over resolutions for the VAC to the County. One was in regard to making a new line item for current budget "overages" to be put into along with any future excess money for the funding of the future building/property. The second was for the VAC to be the future holder of the property and building with the County responsibilities to be those of just what the MVAAs entails.

The budget will be worked on and presented at next board meeting. The VAC staff will also be presenting, if desired- for their bonuses.

MAY Office Activity			
Office Visits	99	Intent to File	29
Phone	746	Intital Claims	32
Outstation	14	Appeals	28
Mendota	4	VA Healthcare	5
Streator	7	Pension/DIC	5
Marseilles	3	Other	157

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- MAY			
PTSD GROUP	39	WALK-INS:	56
FLUTES	11	APPT MADE	14
VHA	0	QUESTIONS	42
MidWest Shelter	0	TOTAL:	106

MAY Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
70%	11/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 22,367.36	\$ 1,716.28
DIC	8/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 61,234.31	\$ 1,955.21
Burial	8/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
90%	11/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 38,676.60	\$ 2,374.65
10%	12/28/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,739.68	\$ 171.23
DIC	2/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 43,044.15	\$ 1,612.75
Burial	2/14/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
dependent	11/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 1,671.00	\$ 93.00
80%	1/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 40,324.77	\$ 2,447.01
100% P&T	1/13/2023	Dec-24	\$ 107,858.23	\$ 4,078.99
10%	10/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,076.83	\$ 171.23
dependent	9/1/2022	Dec-24	\$ 3,797.44	\$ 115.62
10%	1/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,570.11	\$ 171.23
30%	7/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 11,469.78	\$ 524.31
dependent	10/17/2022	Dec-24	\$ 7,050.00	\$ 288.00
100%	8/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 85,279.35	\$ 4,078.99
40%	10/4/2023	Dec-24	\$ 11,814.99	\$ 838.28
100% P&T	4/11/2023	Dec-24	\$ 66,810.11	\$ 3,946.25
80%	1/25/2024	Dec-24	\$ 27,131.04	\$ 2,161.01
dependent	4/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,397.85	\$ 135.05
dependent	8/10/2022	Dec-24	\$ 3,134.00	\$ 104.00
70%	3/20/2024	Dec-24	\$ 23,699.60	\$ 1,861.28
10%	3/8/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,397.22	\$ 171.23
dependent	12/13/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,334.40	\$ 208.40
DIC	3/13/2024	Dec-24	\$ 32,218.52	\$ 2,354.29
30%	12/19/2023	Dec-24	\$ 7,704.04	\$ 524.31
60%	1/10/2024	Dec-24	\$ 21,381.24	\$ 1,619.62
80%	6/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 23,940.12	\$ 1,995.01
100%	3/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,225.99	\$ 171.23
30%	1/17/2023	Dec-24	\$ 14,518.08	\$ 524.31
70%	2/27/2024	Dec-24	\$ 21,658.56	\$ 1,716.28
100%	1/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 63,764.46	\$ 4,859.46
70%	10/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 41,690.40	\$ 1,994.02
80%	1/25/2024	Dec-24	\$ 40,469.40	\$ 2,365.01
100%	2/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 33,896.43	\$ 4,648.42
20%	4/10/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,061.88	\$ 338.49
		Total	\$886,407.94	\$52,334.45
		Year to Date Total	\$4,790,240.78	\$450,089.33

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 \$4.7 Million by the end of May 2024. This is over \$1.5 MIL 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



MONTHLY REPORT

JULY 2024

Includes Meeting Minutes from
Special Meeting Held 7/8/24

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

7-24-2024

- 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
 - b. Property Update
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. Employee Bonus Approval
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

6-26-24

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

Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / John Duback - AmVetes - Ottawa / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Phil Harth - AmLeg - Mendota / Thomas Shea - AmLeg - Ottawa / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / OTHER: Don Jensen - LaSalle County Board

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniacki
Guard – Elton Murphy - Excused
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 Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Harold Olsen. 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 has an accepted offer on the North Property and that she is working with the realtor to finalize everything. Earnest money has been turned in and soil/property testing will be done after 3 bids are found.

Christa told the board that there are a few LaSalle County meetings she will need to attend- one being Properties and the other Finance. Will report more on those next meeting.

Christa also discussed that the office had a special meeting on June 7 to go over the resolutions for budget and the other was for the VAC to be the owner of the property and building. Went over them again for those not in attendance.

Christa then told the commission that the budget is currently being worked on and it will depend on the property/finance of it as to when it will be completed for approval.
Hoping by next meeting.

Christa then stated that the office has brought in over \$4.7 Million to Veterans and their Families so far this year. This is over \$1.5 Million from where we were last year at this time.

We continue seeing new clients daily and have had several walk-ins with questions/to schedule an appointment. Glad to serve as many Veterans and Families as possible.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by John Duback and seconded by Roscoe Mazur. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting

MINUTES

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

NONE.

For the Good of the Commission

Dennis stated that there is a Veterans night at the Pistol Shrimp game on July 3rd approx 3:45 to be there and ready. Peru Memorial Group and Peru Am Legion will be there to do honors.

Phil stated that the American Legion of IL will have a Convention July 10-14 in Springfield. AmVets National Convention is in August- believe its the 5-10th. He also stated that he was contacted by Iowa State about a study for PTSD- about Veteran Suicide. Stated it was a good study and urged people to look into it more.

Phil also stated that there is a IL Veterans Grant based off of IL lottery called Veterans Cash. Asked if we had a breakdown of Veterans benefits by disability. Christa had informed him we did and those who wish to have a copy of their individual breakdowns should see one of us.

Phil stated that he also joined ID.me a while back and wanted everyone to know it was important to get signed up.

Lissa had brought up that there was a change to Veterans organizations that were able to be a part of the commission. State Chartered organizations now are eligible as of January 2024.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Zaniecki and seconded by Lance Sires.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:25pm.

Special Meeting MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING - JULY 8, 2024

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 4 pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / John Koehler - AmLeg - Oglesby / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Ron Sisco - AmLeg- Mendota / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Phil Harth - AmLeg - Mendota / Paul Siembab - Marine Corps Leg / Kevin Swierkozz - VFW - LaSalle

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniacki- EXCUSED
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

Special Meeting MINUTES

Due to the nature of a special meeting- no old minutes were presented for accepting. President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 4pm.

Opening Prayer/Pledge and Roll Call was taken.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the Board has convened to go over an update on property and build due to County property/finance committee meetings and what she had learned there.

Christa informed the Board that the property committee meeting went well and on Tuesday, July 2nd she attended a Finance Committee meeting that was supposed to pertain to bonding with the county and so she could project the budget for FY25 with that in mind.

Christa informed the board that she was cut short due to being informed by County Board members that a question as to whether or not the VAC could purchase property in their name was presented to the Attorney Generals office. They refused to make decisions without a response. The board stated that this had taken place a couple months ago and they had no idea as to when a reply would be given.

Christa informed the VAC board that this meant that they would be out of compliance with the contract and that she would be in touch with the realtor and owner and hopefully be able to work things out- but if unable to asked how the board would like to proceed.

Christa informed the board that there was the property soil testing to vote on as well. The earnest money check may be lost in all of this, but that she would do her best to let the owner know that we were working on things and hope that he has patience with us.

The below was discussed and voted on via a individual vote by delegates present:

Meeting MINUTES

Superintendent's Report Continued

Motion to move that Christa still completes soil testing regardless of outcome of hearing back from AG office by friday (deadline for contract) made by Andy Ruggerio Seconded by Elton Murphy.

A roll call vote was called:

Lance Sires - "yay"
Roscoe Mazur- "yay"
Andy Ruggerio - "yay"
Louis Sekula- "yay"
Phil Harth- "yay"
Gary Graffis- "yay"
Paul Siembab- "yay"
Elton Murphy - "yay"
Harold Olsen- "yay"
Charles Erb- "yay"

Motion to order and complete soil testing is unanimous.

President Andy Ruggerio called for a vote that if AG office has informed that it is lawful by friday- we move forward with purchase.
Seconded by John Koehler.

A roll call vote was called:

Lance Sires - "yay"
Roscoe Mazur- "yay"
Andy Ruggerio - "yay"
Louis Sekula- "yay"
Phil Harth- "yay"
Gary Graffis- "yay"
Paul Siembab- "yay"
Elton Murphy - "yay"
Harold Olsen- "yay"
Charles Erb- "yay"

Meeting MINUTES

Superintendent's Report Continued

President Andy Ruggerio called for a vote that if AG office has not responded and we hear seller is not interested in waiting, we DO NOT move forward with purchase.

Seconded by Roscoe Mazur.

A roll call vote was called:

Lance Sires - "yay"
Roscoe Mazur- "yay"
Andy Ruggerio - "yay"
Louis Sekula- "yay"
Phil Harth- "yay"
Gary Graffis- "yay"
Paul Siembab- "yay"
Elton Murphy - "yay"
Harold Olsen- "yay"
Charles Erb- "yay"

Motion to accept terms of not moving forward unless AG office responds positively by Friday- regardless of sellers response- is unanimous.

Christa asked the Commission if they would like to reconvene Friday so she could let them know of what the decision would be. The Board stated that they would like to be told at next scheduled meeting, barring any further developments.

President Andy Ruggerio asked for closing prayer and salute to colors.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Chuck Erb. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting concluded at 4:43pm.

END OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES.

JULY**Office Activity:**

The office was able to assist the Peru Police Dept with their first Warriors & Guardsmen 5K. The office assisted the PD with checking in runners/walkers and diverting traffic.

The office has a meeting with the new Veterans Advisor for Congressman Darin LaHood on Friday, August 2nd. The advisor requested to stop in and meet the staff and introduce himself so we can begin a working relationship.

Friday, August 9- our office will host an IVAC Business Breakfast "before hours" and allow area people/businesses to view our office and talk about what we do here.

On September 10th our office is putting together a Veterans Q&A Event at LP Highschool. This event is 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 will be from 5-8PM in the auditorium.

The office will have their state training/CEU's the week of September 16th and this year the state association has invited 3 of each counties board members to join them on the morning of Friday, September 20. That morning is to go over a few topics, with the MVAA being key.

The budget is still being worked on due to no answer from AG office as of yet.

Update on property is that we spoke with the seller and he was ok with pushing back the timeline for a few weeks (bringing it to mid-August). The company for the property Phase 1 inspection was out taking pictures/completing their tasks- hoping to have that by end of July.

There were a few issues with billing and the County not paying some of ours that Christa brought up to the attorney. Policies were sent to him for a response to their refusal to be sent back to the county.

JUNE Office Activity			
Office Visits	104	Intent to File	21
Phone	893	Intital Claims	42
Outstation	21	Appeals	16
Mendota	6	VA Healthcare	11
Streator	11	Pension/DIC	4
Marseilles	4	Other	193

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- JUNE			
PTSD GROUP	17	WALK-INS:	80
FLUTES	0	APPT MADE	21
VHA	2	QUESTIONS	59
MidWest Shelter	0	TOTAL:	99

Our Office
EVENTS

JUNE Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
Dependency	1/10/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,268.00	\$ 252.00
10%	2/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,910.91	\$ 171.23
90%	1/22/2024	Dec-24	\$ 33,010.32	\$ 2,561.65
80%	10/25/2023	Dec-24	\$ 30,630.40	\$ 2,161.01
100% P&T	11/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 8,975.64	\$ 1,495.94
80%	5/30/2023	Dec-24	\$ 39,246.24	\$ 1,995.01
20%	5/21/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,061.88	\$ 338.49
100% P&T	8/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 49,677.12	\$ 2,376.20
50%	5/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 17,363.16	\$ 1,075.16
DIC	8/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 38,405.94	\$ 1,612.75
100%	5/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 47,355.00	\$ 3,946.25
70%	4/10/2024	Dec-24	\$ 24,110.24	\$ 1,849.02
DIC	12/26/2023	Dec-24	\$ 37,317.56	\$ 1,955.21
Burial	12/26/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	Burial
100%	6/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 52,707.00	\$ 4,392.25
40%	11/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 13,595.04	\$ 755.28
30%	6/13/2023	Dec-24	\$ 11,977.83	\$ 524.31
80%	9/12/2023	Dec-24	\$ 40,399.56	\$ 2,161.01
10%	5/10/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,077.66	\$ 171.23
100%	5/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 98,557.27	\$ 2,354.29
70%	2/24/2024	Dec-24	\$ 27,460.48	\$ 1,716.28
Burial	9/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	Burial
DIC	9/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 35,330.47	\$ 1,612.75
80%	8/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 43,704.64	\$ 1,995.01
90%	1/25/2024	Dec-24	\$ 30,218.52	\$ 2,428.91
60%	2/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 24,249.32	\$ 1,486.88
30%	2/16/2024	Dec-24	\$ 7,360.96	\$ 524.31
90% TDIU SMC	5/23/2024	Dec-24	\$ 49,213.36	\$ 4,078.99
70%	5/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 24,302.64	\$ 1,994.02
50%	2/15/2024	Dec-24	\$ 18,792.65	\$ 1,179.16
70%	3/28/2024	Dec-24	\$ 32,609.32	\$ 1,716.28
80%	3/12/2024	Dec-24	\$ 25,932.12	\$ 2,161.01
80%	10/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 5,890.51	\$ 2,293.75
100% SMC	3/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 47,355.00	\$ 3,946.25
		Total	\$936,066.76	\$59,281.89
		Year to Date Total	\$5,726,307.54	\$509,371.22

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 \$5.7 Million by the end of June 2024. This is over \$2 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



MONTHLY REPORT

AUGUST 2024

Includes Meeting Minutes from
Special Meeting Held 8/13/24

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

8-28-2024

- 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
 - b. Property Update
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

7-24-24

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
Other: Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniiecki - EXCUSED
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 Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes as presented:

Motion by Lance Sires and seconded by Phil Harth. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the office participated in the first ever Warriors and Guardians 5K with the Peru Police Dept. The office was able to assist with runners checking in, maintaining safe roadways for the runners and with the awards.

Christa told the board that the office will be meeting with the Veterans Advisor for Congressman Darin Lahood on August 2nd. We look forward to maintaining great relationships with our Congressmen/women.

Christa also discussed that the office will host a IVAC "before hours" breakfast that is 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.

Christa then told the commission that the office is also putting together an event for area highschoolers that may be interested in joining the service. This will be a Q&A session with a panel of Veterans from every branch we can. This will be at LP Auditorium on September 10th from 5-8pm.

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 continue waiting on a response from the AG's office on the property purchase. At this time we have spoken through our realtor and the seller is ok with pushing back until mid-August but would like to know as soon as we do on what to expect. The company regarding the land came out to take images/history of property and hope to have that result by end of July.

Meeting

MINUTES

Continued:

Christa then explained that there were a few on-going issues with the County not wanting to pay bills for events attended. Christa informed the commission that she had spoken to our attorney regarding that matter and he would be working on a letter for them. Christa submitted all VAC policies to the attorney so he can view them and use them for his letter as well.

The VAC continues to see new clients and the amount phone calls increase monthly. The VAC as brought in over \$5.7 million to Veterans and families through the end of June.

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

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

Bonuses for Employeess:

Lissa, Kelli, Emily, James and Christa presented for Raise/Bonus.

The VAC Commission discussed and decided that the employees would each receive a bonus of \$5,000 each and it was understood that it would be a net payout or at the very most a reduction of the Federal amount of 22%. Christa would let them know if there were any issues with this happening.

Motion to approve the bonus for each employee for FY24 made by Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Mike Harden. Motion passed unanimously.

For the Good of the Commission

Elton brought up that burger night is at the LaSalle VFW tomorrow night (7/25/24).

Phil mentioned the Mendota Sweet Corn festival is Aug 8-11.

Harold stated that there has been a replacement for the Activity Aide at the LaSalle VA Home.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Harold Olsen and seconded by Elton Murphy.

Motion passed unanimously at 5:55pm.

Special Meeting MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING - August 13, 2024

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 4 pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Ron Sisco - AmLeg- Mendota / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Paul Siembab - Marine Corps Leg / Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Thomas Shea - AmLeg - Ottawa
Other: Jack Leininger - VFW - Marseilles

Officers Present

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

Employees Present

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

Special Meeting MINUTES

Due to the nature of a special meeting- no old minutes were presented for accepting.
President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 4pm.

Opening Prayer/Pledge and Roll Call was taken.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that they have convened to go over an update on the Bonus program and verbiage used in the memo.

Christa informed the Board that the County has given estimates for the Bonus payouts and they were far lower than the Board expected. Asked for guidance and offered the Bonus re-written by the Commissions Attourney as an option.

The VAC Board was in agreement that the payout should be net and that the resolution revision was to be approved.

Christa informed the VAC board that this matter should be handled but if anything more was to come up, we would discuss at next meeting.

The below was discussed and voted on via individual vote by delegates/alternates present:

Motion to move that the revision to the Bonus program is put into effect made by Louis Sekula, seconded by Elton Murphy.

A roll call vote was called:

Mike Harden - "yay"

Lance Sires - "yay"

Roscoe Mazur- "yay"

Dennis Znaniiecki - "yay"

Louis Sekula - "yay"

Ron Sisco - "yay"

Gary Graffis- "yay"

Paul Siembab- "yay"

Elton Murphy - "yay"

Harold Olsen- "yay"

Charles Erb- "yay"

Motion to revise and implement the Bonus system as a net payout is unanimous.

Special Meeting MINUTES

Public Comment

John Duback stated that there is a need for drivers at the LaSalle VA Home if anyone is available to assist.

President Andy Ruggerio asked for closing prayer and salute to colors.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Harold Olsen and seconded by Elton Murphy.
Motion passed unanimously at 4:15pm.

END OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES.

AUGUST**Office Activity:**

Christa and Lissa met with the new Veterans Advisor for Congressman Darin LaHood on Friday, August 2nd. The advisor requested to stop in and meet the staff and introduce himself so we can begin a working relationship. It was a great meeting and we look forward to working together to solve any Veteran issues that may arise.

Friday, August 9- our office hosted an IVAC Buisness Breakfast “before hours” and allowed area people/businesses to view our office and talk about what we do here. We had about 30 people come through and see our spaces and learn about our services.

On August 21st the office took a “field trip” to the Dupage VAC Veterans Expo to see what services they may have that we can bring into our area.

Unfortunately we had a instance of bedbugs being in the office and Orkin had to come in and fumigate. Thankfully, that coincided with the Dupage trip and we were able to be out of the office and not have to turn away clients. We have a secondary spray coming up on Sept 6th and the office will be closed.

On September 10th our office is putting together a Veterans Q&A Event at LP Highschool. This event is 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 will be from 5-8PM in the auditorium.

The office will have their state training/CEU’s the week of September 16th and this year the state association has invited 3 of each counties board members to join them on the morning of Friday, September 20. We have three VAC Board members signed up, so thank you.

The budget is still being worked on due to no answer from AG office as of yet. But the attorney advised that we proceed as if the response will be in our favor so we are not short for next year. We will proceed with budget approval at September meeting regardless of if we have had an AG response.

JULY Office Activity			
Office Visits	118	Intent to File	35
Phone	721	Intital Claims	34
Outstation	22	Appeals	16
Mendota	5	VA Healthcare	12
Streator	7	Pension/DIC	4
Marseilles	10	Other	176

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES- JULY			
PTSD GROUP	22	WALK-INS:	64
FLUTES	4	APPT MADE	21
VHA	1	QUESTIONS	43
MidWest Shelter	0	TOTAL:	91

Our Office
EVENTS

JULY Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
70%	10/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,630.44	\$ 1,804.06
100 P&T	9/15/2023	Dec-24	\$ 58,224.90	\$ 3,737.85
back pay		Dec-24	\$ 22,609.13	\$ -
50%	11/20/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,428.04	\$ 1,075.16
60%	12/2/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,401.84	\$ 1,577.88
dependent	2/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 1,768.00	\$ 104.00
70%	10/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 32,907.85	\$ 1,716.28
60%	10/5/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,195.37	\$ 1,361.88
10%	3/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,580.73	\$ 171.23
70%	4/22/2024	Dec-24	\$ 23,699.60	\$ 1,861.28
100%	3/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 56,325.99	\$ 4,078.99
100% P&T	8/9/2023	Dec-24	\$ 68,009.28	\$ 3,946.25
survivors pension	5/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 6,501.00	\$ 366.00
100% P&T	3/19/2024	Dec-24	\$ 72,585.29	\$ 4,884.71
90%	5/22/2024	Dec-24	\$ 39,750.21	\$ 2,844.91
90%	2/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,506.40	\$ 371.90
100% P&T	5/30/2024	Dec-24	\$ 47,836.77	\$ 3,737.85
10%	10/12/2023	Dec-24	\$ 3,419.29	\$ 171.23
90%	4/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 30,470.91	\$ 2,374.65
100% P&T	2/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 82,213.23	\$ 3,946.25
70%	4/4/2024	Dec-24	\$ 25,744.20	\$ 1,716.28
50%	3/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 15,742.80	\$ 1,311.90
20%	2/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,065.44	\$ 338.49
30%	2/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 7,778.64	\$ 524.31
90%	2/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 40,256.43	\$ 2,428.91
70%	7/6/2023	Dec-24	\$ 22,735.69	\$ 682.12
60%	8/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 33,012.67	\$ 1,506.88
80%	8/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,577.12	\$ 2,161.01
50%	5/24/2023	Dec-24	\$ 23,667.34	\$ 1,255.16
60%	2/8/2024	Dec-24	\$ 17,489.44	\$ 1,361.88
60%	8/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 28,138.30	\$ 1,361.88
CRDP	8/16/2023	Dec-24	\$ 19,764.52	\$ -
70%	6/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 44,046.46	\$ 1,861.28
10%	3/18/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,739.68	\$ 171.23
100% P&T	5/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 90,290.94	\$ 3,946.25
60%	4/21/2023	Dec-24	\$ 20,581.13	\$ 1,361.88
	Total		\$1,085,695.07	\$62,121.82
	Year to Date Total		\$6,812,002.61	\$571,493.04

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 \$6.8 Million by the end of July 2024. This is over \$2.5 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.



MONTHLY REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2024

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

9-25-2024

- 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 contiunue 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 Znaniacki. 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 Znaniacki 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
TOTAL:			134

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
		Total	\$1,112,351.09	\$31,193.70
		Year to Date Total	\$7,924,353.70	\$602,686.74

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



MONTHLY REPORT

OCTOBER 2024

Includes Meeting Minutes from
Special Meeting Held 10/1/24

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

10-23-2024

- 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
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

9/25/24

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 / Paul Siembab - MarCorpLeg - Post 078 / Mike Mallie - MarCorpLeg - Post 078 / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Other: Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniacki
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 Elton Murphy and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the office held a Q&A session at LP Highschool for anyone interested in joining the military. The event was from 5-8pm and although the turnout could have been better, we were able to answer multiple questions from a student interested. We are working on making the event more successful in the future.

Christa also discussed that the office had their CEU training held by the state association in East Peoria. They heard from multiple impactful offices/people and the training, as always, was fantastic. Friday, Sept 20 - Roscoe was able to join us for MVAA training from the Attorney General's office and hear from our attorney.

Christa informed the Commission that we have had continuous fax issues and that she looked into E-FAX as a solution. She is working with IT to get that installed for the office and training on it.

Christa then told the commission that we will have a booth at Naplate Safety Day. It is at Vittone Park on Sunday, October 6th from 10am-2pm. The office would be closed for Columbus Day - Monday, Oct 14th and we would be attending Streators Senior Fair on Wed, Oct 16th from 10am - Noon at the Streator YMCA.

Christa then stated that we are looking at guaging interest for a caregiver program for our Veterans caretakers. If anyone is interested in group sessions/events - please let our office know.

We are working on numbers for the LaSalle Veterans Home Giving Tree and will have those available in November. Window painting and Santa are being worked on as well.

Meeting

MINUTES

Continued:

The VAC continues to see new clients and the amount phone calls average 700+ monthly. The VAC as brought in over \$7.9 million to Veterans and families through the end of August- over \$2.8 million from where we were this time last year.

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

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

VAC Budget was presented and discussed. The VAC Commission discussed adding additional income to all employee salaries in the sum of \$2,000 each.

Motion to approve additional salary to all VAC employees made by Elton Murphy. Seconded by Lance Sires. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve VAC Budget as written made by Elton Murphy. Seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

For the Good of the Commission

Elton discussed burger night at the LaSalle VFW.

Andy discussed that the Ladd Am Legion was having a Queen of Hearts as well (Thursday)

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Dennis Znaniecki. Motion passed unanimously at 5:40pm.

Special Meeting MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING - October 1, 2024

Delegates & Alternates Present

Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Mike Mallie - Marine CorpsLeg - Post 078

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki- Excused
Guard – Elton Murphy
Chaplain – Harold Olsen - Excused

Employees Present

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

Special Meeting MINUTES

Due to the nature of a special meeting- no old minutes were presented for accepting. President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

Opening Prayer/Pledge and Roll Call was taken.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that they have convened to go over resolutions for Budget and Employee Salaries for FY25.

Christa informed the Board that this was merely a way to show that everything was voted on and approved by the Commission as discussed in September Meeting.

The below was discussed and voted on via individual vote by delegates/alternates present:

Motion to move that Resolution 24-001 (Budget for VAC FY25) be approved made by Roscoe Mazur. Seconded by Elton Murpy. Roll Call Vote is as follows:

A roll call vote was called:

Mike Harden - "yay"
Greg Stock - "yay"
Roscoe Mazur- "yay"
Andrew Ruggerio - "yay"
Gary Graffis- "yay"
Mike Mallie- "yay"
Elton Murphy - "yay"
Charles Erb- "nay"

Motion to approve Resolution/Budget for FY25 is approved 7:1.

Special Meeting MINUTES

Motion to move that Resolution 24-002 (Salaries for VAC Employees FY25) be approved made by Mike Mallie. Seconded by Elton Murpy.

A roll call vote was called:

Mike Harden - "yay"

Greg Stock - "yay"

Roscoe Mazur- "yay"

Andrew Ruggerio - "yay"

Gary Graffis- "yay"

Mike Mallie- "yay"

Elton Murphy - "yay"

Charles Erb- "yay"

Motion to approve Resolution/Employee Salaries for FY25 is unanimous.

Public Comment

Roscoe stated that MVAA training for the Board would be nice to have.

Christa stated that she will look into AG's office coming in to speak and let them know when she knows more.

President Andy Ruggerio asked for closing prayer and salute to colors.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Elton Murphy.

Motion passed unanimously at 4:45pm.

END OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES.

OCTOBER**Office Activity:**

The office now has E-Fax ability and the system has been working smoothly, allowing Veterans and Doctors Offices to get information to us without hassle.

The office had a booth at the Naplate Safety Day Event. The Fire Dept combined their 75th year in service with their annual safety day - even though there were competing events - many came to see us at Vittone Park on Sunday, October 6th from 10am to 2pm. It was a great day.

On October 11, Kelli, Lissa and Christa attended Abraham Lincoln Cemeteries Ceremony for unaccompanied Veterans. It was a first for all three of them and it was an honor to go and see the ceremony take place.

The office also attended the Streator Senior Fair on Wednesday, October 16 from 10-Noon at the Streator YMCA- there were lots of Seniors out and quite a few Veterans have made appointments from that event. We look forward to next year.

The office will be attending the Veterans Day Parade in Utica on November 3 from 11-4pm. We will have a table with information available during that time.

Our office will also be attending a flag raising ceremony at IVCC on Friday, November 8th at 8:30am. This is in honor of Veterans Day.

Get your green light and let everyone know to stop in for theirs!
Veterans week November 4-11.

The office is working on tags for the Veterans for the Giving Tree. Tags will be available November 1st with gifts due December 2nd. Window Painting will be December 4th at 1pm and Santa will visit the office December 7th from 10am-1pm.

SEPTEMBER Office Activity

Office Visits	80	Intent to File	26
Phone	688	Intital Claims	35
Outstation	18	Appeals	22
Mendota	3	VA Healthcare	13
Streator	8	Pension/DIC	6
Marseilles	7	Other	176

OFFICE OTHER ACTIVITIES-SEPTEMBER

PTSD GROUP	19	WALK-INS:	75
FLUTES	3	APPT MADE	28
VHA	2	QUESTIONS	47
		TOTAL:	99

Our Office
EVENTS

SEPTEMBER Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
40%	8/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 14,026.08	\$ 755.28
50%	6/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 13,541.68	\$ 1,075.16
70%	8/3/2023	Dec-24	\$ 35,980.09	\$ 1,716.28
90%	8/8/2023	Dec-24	\$ 32,603.64	\$ 2,428.91
90% IU	2/19/2020	Dec-24	\$ 59,493.72	\$ 3,946.25
30%	6/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 7,864.65	\$ 524.31
90%	7/31/2020	Dec-24	\$ 66,464.76	\$ 2,428.91
CRDP	3/12/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,968.19	\$ -
Burial	10/22/2021	Dec-24	\$ 5,727.00	\$ -
20%	5/17/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,077.35	\$ 338.49
10%	5/6/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,568.45	\$ 171.23
DIC	9/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 23,536.85	\$ 1,612.75
Burial	9/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,570.00	\$ -
100%	7/17/2024	Dec-24	\$ 52,677.70	\$ 3,870.59
100% P&T	11/30/2023	Dec-24	\$ 52,940.79	\$ 2,520.99
90%	4/18/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,286.40	\$ 267.90
100%	8/28/2024	Dec-24	\$ 19,447.22	\$ 1,495.94
70%	8/14/2024	Dec-24	\$ 27,169.59	\$ 1,861.28
70%	10/23/2023	Dec-24	\$ 25,266.20	\$ 1,100.00
50%	7/3/2024	Dec-24	\$ 13,977.08	\$ 1,075.16
10%	2/28/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,082.14	\$ 171.23
60%	5/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 17,202.72	\$ 1,361.88
30%	4/25/2024	Dec-24	\$ 9,380.96	\$ 586.31
80%	3/27/2024	Dec-24	\$ 29,023.65	\$ 2,293.75
70%	11/1/2023	Dec-24	\$ 35,555.88	\$ 1,716.28
100%	8/26/2024	Dec-24	\$ 47,355.00	\$ 3,946.25
80%	10/1/2022	Dec-24	\$ 3,093.09	\$ -
80%	7/12/2023	Dec-24	\$ 47,153.80	\$ 1,995.01
100%	8/20/2024	Dec-24	\$ 54,299.88	\$ 4,524.99
40%	3/15/2023	Dec-24	\$ 22,471.04	\$ 755.28
Total			\$737,805.60	\$44,540.41
Year to Date Total			\$8,662,159.30	\$647,227.15

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 \$8.6 Million by the end of September 2024. This is over \$3 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

Meeting MINUTES

Superintendent Report Continued

Christa would also like the Commission to know that Lissa was nominated for and recieved the IVAC Community Cornerstone Award. Please congratulate her next time you see her!

On October 9th the County Board Chairman, States Attourney, Assistant States Attourney and a few VAC/Nursing Home Board members sat down with Christa, Andy, Harold and our Attourney to discuss a few items that have been in conflict between us. There were somethings that seemed to go well and others that are still up in the air until the Attourney General's office makes a ruling.

Christa is working on the End of Year Report and Lissa is working on the Superintendent Evaluation Letter for the Boards Approval. If anyone would have anything to add - please reach out to her. The report will be ready for end of year but presented at the January VAC Meeting as there is no meeting in December. The letter will be ready for approval at next meeting.



MONTHLY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2024

PREPARED BY

Christa Hammers
Superintendent

MEETING AGENDA

11-27-2024

- 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
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
 - a. Office Activity
 - b. Update on Budget
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. Approval of FY 25 Holidays
 - b. Approval of FY 25 Meeting Dates
 - c. Approval of Superintendent Evaluation FY 24
- X. For the Good of the Commission
 - a. Delegate/Alternate Updates
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

10/23/24

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 / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles / John Koehler - AmLeg - Oglesby / Ron Sisco - AmLeg - Mendota / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Tom Shea - AmLeg - Ottawa

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniiecki
Guard – Elton Murphy
Chaplain – Harold Olsen

Employees Present

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

Meeting MINUTES

Approval of Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Elton Murphy and seconded by Roscoe Mazur. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Special Meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Harold Olsen and seconded by Roscoe Mazur. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the commission that the office now has Efax capabilities. This makes sending/receiving faxes that pertain mainly to doctor offices easier and more reliable.

Christa also discussed that the office was able to attend Naplate Safety Day on October 6th. This was their 75th year in service and we were happy to be a part of it.

Christa informed the Commission that Kelli, Lissa and herself went to Abraham Lincoln Cemetery for the unaccompanied Veterans ceremony. We were humbled and honored to be allowed to do so and happy to partake in the submariner event after.

Christa then told the commission that the office also attended the Streator Senior Fair on October 16th at the Streator YMCA. There were a lot of people that visited the booth and we look forward to next year.

Christa then stated that we would be attending the Utica Veterans Day Parade on November 3rd and a flag raising ceremony at IVCC on the 8th for Veterans Day.

The office is giving away green lights for the third year in a row - light up the county green November 4-11.

The office is working on tags for the Giving Tree and those will be available November 1st and we plan on painting the LaSalle VA Home windows on December 4th 1pm-when complete. Santa will also be coming back to the VAC on December 7th 10am-1pm.

Meeting MINUTES

Continued:

The VAC continues to see new clients and the amount phone calls average 700+ monthly. The VAC as brought in over \$8.6 million to Veterans and families through the end of September - over \$3 million from where we were this time last year.

Christa also stated that Lissa was nominated for and awarded the IVAC Cornerstone award - congratulate her next time you see her.

On October 9th - the VAC Commission, our attorney and a few County Board members with the states attorney's office met and discussed a few items of conflict - we felt like we were on the same page after the meeting, we will have to continue to wait on the Attorney Generals response.

Christa stated that she will have to wait until end of November to complete the end of year report and governors letter- but they will be available online once done. Lissa will have Superintendent review ready for approval at next meeting.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by John Duback and seconded by Harold Olsen. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

NONE.

For the Good of the Commission

Dennis Znaniiecki discussed Pearl Harbor Day would be December 7th at South Shore Boat Club. Short parade followed by speakers/presentation by posts.

Meeting MINUTES

Elton Murphy discussed that LaSalle VFW would have their last burger night on Thursday (tomorrow) and the second Thursday would be pork chops. Kitchen would then be closed until after the first of the year.

John Duback stated that they were still looking for volunteers for the Ottawa Vigil for Veterans Day Honors.

Harold Olsen stated that the Veterans Advisory Counsel for the VA Home is meeting in person March and September of 2025.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Elton Murphy and seconded by Dennis Znaniecki.
Motion passed unanimously at 5:40pm.

NOVEMBER**Office Activity:**

Lissa and Christa were invited by Senator Tom Bennett to discuss Veterans issues on November 7th in Pontiac. We were able to meet not only with him, but with many of his staff members, Post members, other VAC's and IDVA to talk about what his office could do to better serve the Veteran population.

Christa was able to attend the LaSalle Veterans Home Veterans Day event and be their keynote speaker. It was an honor to get to meet with the Veterans, their families and the staff at the home and share some time before/after with them.

On October 11, Kelli, Lissa and Christa attended Abraham Lincoln Cemeteries Ceremony for unaccompanied Veterans. It was a first for all three of them and it was an honor to go and see the ceremony take place.

The office also attended the Streator Senior Fair on Wednesday, October 16 from 10-Noon at the Streator YMCA- there were lots of Seniors out and quite a few Veterans have made appointments from that event. We look forward to next year.

The office attended the Veterans Day Parade in Utica on November 3 from 11-2pm. We were cut short due to weather, but it was still a good turn out and a great day.

Our office also attended a flag raising ceremony at IVCC on Friday, November 8th at 8:30am. This is in honor of Veterans Day. We were happy to be a part of it and show support to the college.

Operation Green Light was able to hand out many bulbs for the 3rd year and raise awareness for Veterans Day. We look forward to next year.

Lissa attended the IACO Conference Nov 17-20 in Normal, IL. She was able to learn about AI in the work place, IMRF updates and different trainings that were being offered to IL government - ethics, professional conduct, principles of civility, etc.

The office has tags for the Veterans for the Giving Tree. Tags are be available and gifts due December 2nd. Window Painting will be December 4th at 1pm and Santa will visit the office December 7th from 10am-1pm.

Our Office
EVENTS

Meeting MINUTES

Superintendent Report Continued

Many county meetings have taken place and our line item for securing property/being able to save to build our own office was removed by LaSalle County Finance Committee. Next steps would be to make sure they are aware of the legislation that governs us and continue to prove just and necessary needs for the funds. Christa continues to gather information on the benefits for our office location being Peru and not Ottawa.

Christa is continuing to work on the End of Year Report and it will be available online when ready. The report will be presented at the January VAC Meeting as there is no meeting in December. The letter for the governor will be sent by end of year as required.

OCTOBER Office Activity			
Office Visits	109	Intent to File	30
Phone	648	Intital Claims	25
Outstation	18	Appeals	15
Mendota	6	VA Healthcare	22
Streator	11	Pension/DIC	3
Marseilles	1	Other	231

OCTOBER OTHER OFFICE ACTIVITY			
PTSD GROUP	32	WALK-INS:	80
FLUTES	5	APPT MADE	27
VHA	5	QUESTIONS	53
		TOTAL:	122

OCTOBER Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2024 Amount	Monthly Amount
100% P&T	6/12/2024	Dec-24	\$ 69,927.74	\$ 3,946.25
80%	7/19/2024	Dec-24	\$ 35,961.55	\$ 2,161.01
100%	9/30/2021	Dec-24	\$ 55,204.74	\$ 4,202.42
50%	1/10/2020	Dec-24	\$ 59,667.75	\$ 1,075.16
40%	9/17/2024	Dec-24	\$ 14,597.84	\$ 940.28
20%	5/28/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,415.84	\$ 338.49
10%	5/30/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,739.68	\$ 171.23
10%	3/25/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,082.14	\$ 171.23
10%	4/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,910.91	\$ 171.23
80%	1/26/2024	Dec-24	\$ 26,454.60	\$ 1,322.73
50%	8/7/2023	Dec-24	\$ 2,849.16	\$ -
80%	4/10/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,738.41	\$ 278.73
20%	8/15/2022	Dec-24	\$ 8,126.62	\$ 338.49
70%	10/24/2023	Dec-24	\$ 37,543.00	\$ 1,716.28
50%	3/7/2024	Dec-24	\$ 17,321.94	\$ 1,075.16
70% IU	6/28/2022	Dec-24	\$ 97,587.13	\$ 3,737.85
40%	7/23/2024	Dec-24	\$ 10,573.92	\$ 755.28
100% P&T	2/27/2023	Dec-24	\$ 13,701.53	\$ 446.00
100% P&T	9/26/2024	Dec-24	\$ 47,355.00	\$ 3,946.25
50%	7/23/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,478.32	\$ 319.88
MOD	10/8/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,946.25	\$ -
Burial	10/8/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
100% P&T	4/15/2024	Dec-24	\$ 74,668.25	\$ 4,392.25
40%	5/29/2024	Dec-24	\$ 13,412.48	\$ 838.28
80%	6/4/2024	Dec-24	\$ 30,566.20	\$ 1,995.01
70%	6/20/2023	Dec-24	\$ 27,772.41	\$ 1,716.28
40%	2/17/2020	Dec-24	\$ 19,236.94	\$ 838.28
80%	3/5/2024	Dec-24	\$ 27,848.87	\$ 1,465.73
dependent	1/1/2024	Dec-24	\$ 3,357.64	\$ 152.62
90%	1/27/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,688.10	\$ 260.90
10%	7/23/2023	Dec-24	\$ 4,430.74	\$ 171.23
20%	7/9/2024	Dec-24	\$ 4,738.86	\$ 338.49
20%	6/11/2024	Dec-24	\$ 5,077.35	\$ 338.49
DIC	11/9/2024	Dec-24	\$ 38,655.99	\$ 1,612.75
Burial	11/9/2024	Dec-24	\$ 2,350.00	\$ -
50%	11/22/2023	Dec-24	\$ 24,728.68	\$ 1,075.16
90%	2/16/2024	Dec-24	\$ 31,290.12	\$ 2,428.91
	Total		\$839,006.70	\$44,738.33
	Year to Date Total		\$9,501,166.00	\$691,965.48

The VAC is happy to report that we are keeping on trend with an increase to benefits paid out to our Veterans and Families! Totaling OVER \$9.5 Million by the end of October 2024. This is over \$3.4 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