



# MONTHLY REPORT

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**JULY 2024**

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

**PREPARED BY**

Christa Hammers  
Superintendent

# MEETING AGENDA

## 7-24-2024

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- I. Call to Order & Salute to the Colors
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Chaplain's Prayer
- IV. Roll Call of Officers
- V. Reading & Approval of Meeting Minutes/Special Meeting Minutes
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
  - a. Office Activity
  - 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  | <b>TOTAL:</b> | <b>99</b> |

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         |
|                     |                 | <b>Total</b>              | <b>\$936,066.76</b>   | <b>\$59,281.89</b>  |
|                     |                 | <b>Year to Date Total</b> | <b>\$5,726,307.54</b> | <b>\$509,371.22</b> |

The VAC is happy to report that we are keeping on trend with an increase to benefits paid out to our Veterans and Families! Totalling \$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**