



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

Minutes of
Regular Meeting of Kalamazoo County Veterans' Affairs Committee
June 27, 2018

I. Call to Order by Chair, Bob Hencken at 9:02am.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: Mike Quinn, Bob Hencken

Absent: Tom Burton, Ron Kendall

Others: Lauren King, Celia Bañuelos, Jim Rutherford, Beth Ridge

III. Review of previous month's minutes

Motion made by M. Quinn to approve the minutes from the meeting on March 28, 2018. Seconded by Chair B. Hencken. Motion carried.

IV. Citizen's Time. Chair B. Hencken opened the floor for citizen's time. Nothing at this time.

V. Old Business

Chair B. Hencken requested an update on the motion he previously presented to revise word "veteran" in SSR. Discussion ensued regarding SSR policies and if possible to include peacetime veterans to SSR.

J. Rutherford suggested to get it vetted with Beth White, Corporate Counsel.

Chair B. Hencken interprets policy such that the committee has the authority to change policy to include any veteran that's honorably discharged.

Discussion continued regarding wartime requirement for SSR.

L. King agreed to follow-up with Michael Smith, Judge Advocate of MI Association of CVSC (County Veterans Service Counselors), for opinion on SSR changes.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Veterans Service Office

3299 Gull Road | Kalamazoo, MI 49048
Phone: 269.373.5361 | Fax: 269.373.5334

J. Rutherford asked if the change would cause an unintended consequence by less funds going to wartime vets.

L. King stated budget would get used up faster. Chair B. Hencken stated budget should have been \$50,000 and not \$35,000. He asked if amendment could be submitted to move funds now. B. Ridge stated she would have to consult with Denise Ulrich, HCS Finance. J. Rutherford suggested to get the question as to "Who is eligible for voucher?" be vetted through the State then B. Ridge can follow-up as to when the \$15,000 was reduced from SSR. B. Ridge stated that in a normal year, without the transfer, funds are moved around. Discussion ensued regarding the budget.

Chair B. Hencken asked to add \$15,000 be added to SSR. Also requested an answer regarding peacetime versus wartime. J. Rutherford requested Chair B. Hencken send him an email that he will then forward to the Board of Commissioners.

B. Ridge stated SSR will run out of funds by mid-November. Also stated the entire operations portion of the budget will disappear after the move.

VI. For Consideration

A.) Financial Review

Financial Analyst, Beth Ridge

Financial report ending May 31, 2018 reviewed. B. Ridge stated operations, once transferred, would go to CMH. Also stated the County would retain SSR & Burial after transfer to CMH. Stated burial budget slightly above target. Stated donations received would be available upon transfer. Stated VSO's will buy \$176 worth of personal items for the Stand Down before the transfer.

Soldiers and Sailors

L. King stated SSR was down since VSO's out of office for State and National Conferences.

Burial Benefits

L. King stated burial is about the same as last quarter.

B.) Veterans Service Office Report

L. King stated VSO staff attended the National Conference and waiting for accreditation paperwork. Stated scheduling appointments two weeks out for claims. Also stated calls are being returned within 2-5 business days.

C.) County Board Task Force

Chair B. Hencken stated letter received from Attorney General resulted in a County Board meeting. Stated filling VA Committee vacancies was announced at that meeting but states none of the applicants have been interviewed. He asked if there were any updates. J. Rutherford stated M. Quinn and other commissioners had strong comments at the meeting. M. Quinn stated he doesn't see things moving forward. Stated chairman and co-chairman are not taking care of business.

Chair B. Hencken stated the committee should have 5 members and the questions stands whether he and M. Quinn represent a quorum. He stated appointment of a permanent VSO Coordinator would be inappropriate for the current commission to appoint. Stated posting should have been posted externally for transparency. Also stated he is not opposed to the transfer but requests the authority of the VA Committee to stand. He demanded statutory authorities to stand.

J. Rutherford validated points stated by Chair B. Hencken. Stated Tracey Moored, County Administrator, will reach out to Chair B. Hencken.

J. Rutherford stated his last meeting with CMH was on June 20th. HR will be reaching out to VSO Staff. Transfer date is tentatively on September 17th. CMH has hired two employees. VSO will move to new building on Alcott. MOU underway to cover Admin staffing and cross training. IT will ensure all files are handled appropriately and legally. Legal counsel for both CMH and HCS are also involved. There will be a media release regarding the transfer. CMH has acquired grants including a SAMSA grant and an Adapt grant.

J. Rutherford suggested Chair B. Hencken reach out to Tracey Moored regarding VA Committee vacancies.

Chair B. Hencken is concerned that no one has yet seen the contract. J. Rutherford stated he has not seen it, it's in the hands of the lawyers. Chair B. Hencken stated he wants to see the details.

Chair B. Hencken stated he would like to see a diverse committee of up to 7 members. M. Quinn stated he doesn't think Tracey is holding up the process to fill the vacancies. The issue is within the BOC.

VII. Any other items

Chair B. Hencken requested new committee members go through an orientation process and be provided the County Policies, Statutes and Bylaws.

Chair B. Hencken announced the next meeting be held on July 25th at 9am at HCS. He requested the attendance of Jeff Patton and Tracey Moored. J. Rutherford suggested an invite be sent to Mark Fletcher and Juan Gonzalez.

VIII. Commissioner's Time

Nothing at this time

IX. Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting, motion carried. Chair B. Hencken adjourned the meeting at 10:13am.