



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

Minutes of
Regular Meeting of Kalamazoo County Veterans Affairs Committee
September 25, 2019

- I. **Call to Order by Chair**, Bob Hencken at 9:05 am.
- II. **Roll call**
Members/Liaisons Present: Bob Hencken, Bruce Binns, Arthur Harris, Maury Kaercher, Laura Misner, James Jeakle
Members/Liaisons Absent: David Brewer, Roger Tuinier
Others Present: Lauren King, Celia Banuelos, Heather Corbett, Denise Ulrich, Jim Rutherford, Lisa Henthorn, Beth White, Mike Quinn, Anthony Bradley
- III. **Approval of Agenda**
M. Kaercher moved to approve. L. Misner seconded. Agenda was unanimously approved.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes of August meeting**
L. Misner moved to approve. M. Kaercher seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.
- V. **Veterans Service Office Report**
L. King says the Stand Down was a success. It was moved to Anna Whitten Hall at KVCC this year. We knew that the move would probably affect the attendance, so next year we will be marketing more to get the word out that the location has moved.

L. King attended the MACVC conference which gave the opportunity to talk with Marie Douville, the grant manager with the state. L. King was able to get more insight on the grant for next year.

C. Banuelos attended the American Legion training at Higgins Lake.

C. Banuelos has accepted the position of Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. Her last day will be September 30, 2019.

L. King says the Veterans Service Specialist position was posted from September 13th through September 21st. L. King hopes to be conducting interviews on September 27th.

H. Corbett will be taking some HR Special Leave. The office will be receiving a temporary employee to help out with the phones and the front desk.

L. King says there was going to be a Mental Health First Aid Class here on September 28th, but there were not enough participants and it had to be canceled.

The office data is up overall for the year compared to last year in regards to the number of forms that were submitted. Soldiers and Sailors is up for August of this year compared to last year, but overall still under target.

VI. Discussion over letters to state representatives concerning state funding

J. Jeakle says a letter would be coming from the committee, so a motion has to be made to write the letter. The committee would then have to approve. J. Jeakle moved to write the state representative and state senator regarding state funding for the County Veterans Service Grant. B. Binns seconded the motion. J. Jeakle says he can write the letters.

B. Hencken asks that J. Jeakle write up a draft and have the committee look over it.

Discussion ensued regarding writing of the letters for state funding.

M. Kaercher moved to approve the motion. L. Misner seconded. Motion was unanimously carried.

VII. Financial Review

D. Ulrich says the grant is coming to an end on September 30th. The construction will be finalized this week.

D. Ulrich says that some items under the Veterans Affairs budget are on target and others are underspent.

L. King says there has not been much activity with the Soldiers and Sailors Relief. There has been some requests for some rental assistance.

B. Hencken says we need to look at how we can expand what we can do to help with utilities.

VIII. Chairman's Report

B. Hencken says he has called a special meeting for Monday, September 30th. The purpose of this meeting is to appoint a new Veterans Service Specialist. B. Hencken said applications have been narrowed down to six people to be interviewed. B. White says the Open Meetings Act requires that the full list of candidates goes before the board and they ratify a narrowing of the candidates. Discussion ensued regarding the Open Meetings Act. A list of all applicants was circulated to all committee members.

B. Hencken made the following motion, seconded by B. Binns.

“Interviews for the six finalists for the VSS position shall take place on Friday, September 27th by a committee composed of B. Hencken, B. Binns, L. King and an HR representative. That committee shall recommend a candidate to be offered the job and a backup candidate in the event that first choice is unable to qualify or refuses to accept the position.” Motion carries.

B. Hencken has called a special meeting of the KCVAC for 9:00 a.m. on Monday, September 30, 2019 to consider the recommendation for VSS.

B. Hencken says there will be a meeting at the administration building regarding funding.

B. Hencken mentions the Veterans Days Ceremony sponsored by the Kalamazoo Sunrise Rotary Club and Veterans Service Office and supported by a new group called the Kalamazoo Veterans Events Committee currently including the Rotary Club, VSO, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Stryker Veterans Organization, Marine Corp League and citizens. Locations for the Veterans Day Ceremony will be at Rose Park at 2:00 PM on November 11th with a backup location being at KVCC Museum at 2:15 pm.

B. Hencken announced the first Kalamazoo Veteran of the Year award to be presented at the Veterans Day Ceremony. People can send in nominations and those will be accepted until October 23rd. A veteran will be chosen and presented on Veterans Day.

IX. KCMHSAS' Time

J. Gonzalez was not present at this meeting.

X. New Business

None at this time.

XI. Old Business

None at this time.

XII. Committee Member's Time

B. Binns says the benefits subcommittee had a discussion about veterans who do not know about our facility here and the services being offered. Outreach and publicity are important to advertise what this office offers.

A Harris mentions South West Michigan Veterans Relief Fund that serves Calhoun and Kalamazoo Counties. A Harris says this might affect the veterans that are coming to the Kalamazoo office. Discussion ensued regarding veterans.

XIII. Commissioners' Time

M. Quinn asks about the stipend that was brought up for commissioner's who attend meetings. L. Henthorn says it was in the budget discussion last week and the proposal is to pay citizen committee members \$25 per meeting that they attend. The budget has not yet been adopted, but it will be on the agenda for discussion.

XIV. Public Comment Time

A Bradley mentions that the NAACP also has a Veteran of the Year award. Application deadline can be extended and it is on the website.

A Bradley says there is two big initiatives by the Public Housing Commission. They plan to start a homeless shelter, veteran only.

XV. Any other items

None at this time.

XVI. Adjournment

Adjourn at 10:10 am.

DRAFT