

Kalamazoo County Veterans Affairs Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 9, 2015

- I. Call to order by Chair, Michael Quinn at 8:02 AM
- II. Roll Call:  
Members Present: Bill Becker, Chad Dillion, Mike Quinn, Tom Burton, Mike Jones  
Others Present: Mike Hoss, Brien Brockway, Beth Ridge, Courtney Davis, Gillian Stoltman, Commissioner Michael Seals, Mark Hazard
- III. Review of previous month's minutes  
Motion made by B. Becker to approve the November minutes as presented  
Second by C. Dillon  
Motion Carried by a unanimous voice vote
- IV. Citizen's Time. Chairman Quinn opened the floor for comment.  
No comments, questions, or issues were brought forward. Citizen's Time was closed.
- V. Financial Review  
B. Ridge reviewed the financial report for the Veteran's Service Office; there are no concerns or significant changes from the previous month. Discussion about the affects of the changes made to the Burial Benefits were briefly discussed; beginning to show a decrease in expenditures as a result of aligning policy with State requirements.
- VI. Old Business  
M. Hoss gave a brief overview of the current operations of the Soldier and Sailors Relief Fund. Moving forward, the office would like to provide greater assistance to Veterans in need. Veterans Service Officers proposed providing assistance to veterans or a veteran's spouse still on a twice a year basis at \$100 each time, but then increasing the assistance amount to \$50 for each additional dependent for Veterans with families based on federal poverty guidelines. Veterans could receive a 3<sup>rd</sup> assistance voucher with the review and approval of the Veterans Affairs Committee. A motion to accept the officer's proposal was made by T. Burton and seconded by M. Jones. Motion passed with unanimous voice vote.  
  
It was also noted that vouchers would be provided in smaller amounts to make up the larger award amount for families to allow for these families to spend them at separate times throughout the month. M. Hoss will share the finalized policy with the committee at an upcoming committee meeting.  
  
Committee members and Service Officers also discussed further partnerships with the Community Action Agency for the provision of budgeting classes for veterans. Any veterans receiving more than the 2 vouchers in a year or who are receiving vouchers on a yearly/repetitive basis will be strongly encouraged to participate in these classes.

VII. New Business

*Veterans Service Office Report*

Committee membership was discussed. Members with terms expiring at the end of December, 2015 have reapplied with the County Board Office. M. Hoss has confirmed with the Board office its receipt of these applications. Interviews should be taking place shortly and will be scheduled by the Board Office.

Office structure was reviewed. Moving forward Service Officer B. Brockway will manage all Trust Fund Applications and Service Officer M. Hoss will handle other requests. Office is still seeing a large gap in what needs Veterans have and what can be met by current office programs. Discussion ensued about continuing to plan for a Veterans' Millage. Committee Members would like the service officers to put together a plan for how the millage could be sent. Have requested it be inclusive of all programs desired/needed and then the committee will help to prioritize and pair down plan accordingly. This will be the focus during upcoming winter meetings.

VIII. Commissioner's Time

Commissioner Seals shared that a new County Administrator has been hired. He will begin on December 21<sup>st</sup>. A Welcome reception is being planned for sometime in January. He also confirmed that the courts had successfully submitted the planning grant for veteran's court.

IX. Other

Mr. Mark Hazard shared his desire to assist Veterans and their families during the holidays. Every Thanksgiving he has provided 10 meals for veterans in need. Is seeking assistance from the Service Office to connect him with Veterans in need in the community prior to the 2016 Thanksgiving. M. Hoss and M. Hazard exchanged contact information for further follow-up.

X. Adjournment.

Motion was made to adjourn by T. Burton. Seconded by C. Dillon. Motion passed. Chairman Quinn adjourned the meeting at 9:15 AM