

# **Department of Veterans Affairs**

## **Commission Meeting**

Date: January 21, 2020

Subject: Regular Monthly Meeting

Meeting called to order by the President of the Board, Vaughn Begick.

Commissioners present were Mike Pergande, Troy Stewart, Marilyn Lazarz, and Jonathan VanTol

### **Motion 2020-4**

Motion to accept the December 2019 minutes made by VanTol and seconded by Lazarz, MOTION PASSED

### **CITIZENS INPUT**

Mark Smith informed the board that his food pantry is going well and assisting numerous families in a very timely manner. They can call him at 989-450-9712 and he will get food to them.

### **DIRECTOR GOULET**

Informed the Board that he filed the Letter of Intent to request the \$50,000 base amount was turned into the State. There could also be extra money based on the county veteran population.

### **Motion 2020-5**

VanTol made a motion to incorporate the Organizational meeting with the regular January meeting. President Begick asked if it would be better to include it with the bylaw changes Commissioner Pergande is working on. After discussion VanTol withdrew his motion and it will be incorporated in the revised Bylaws and Administrative Procedures.

President Begick started discussion on Public Act 235 which set up the previous Soldiers and Sailors relief Fund. He has had conversations with State representatives to update the Act.

Discussion held about qualifying for the Veteran and Spouse \$300 burial reimbursement. Current law stipulates the Veteran assets need to be LESS than \$40,000 not including their homestead. VanTol working on a Qualifying worksheet for the area funeral directors to work with the Veterans to determine if they qualify. Pergande had the form Roscommon county uses which is more inclusive than the current Bay county form. Will be brought before the Commission at future meeting.

President Begick is trying to find information on Service member Yuill whose name will be added to the veteran monument in front of the county building. Still researching company to add name to the monument.

Pergande asked the status of the Veteran office workers becoming county employees, currently they are working under contract. Director Goulet explained process some of which is determining the pay structure and union representation and bidding procedures. He is working on addressing those issues.

### **Citizens Input**

Mark Smith requested the flag on Center Ave be replaced as it is starting to fray.

Fred Zipler asked board if there was any thought of adding prescription drugs cost to Be considered for Veterans. Some drugs are costly and the V A does not cover them. Lazarz stated it could become very costly if they were covered. Can be looked at in the future.

Pergande brought up that the V A has other programs to assist Veterans.

### **Announcements**

President Begick is doing physicals for the V A to determine eligibility for disability.

Mark Kaczmarek (County Service Officer) commented that compensation claims are taking 4 to 6 months and claims for a V A pension are taking 250 to 300 days. Previously denied claims for Agent Orange/herbicide exposure can now be requested for review. The V A is trying to have those reviews done 125 days.

Director Goulet announced that the Veterans office is to receive a donated painting.

Motion to adjourn by Pergande, seconded by VanTol and it was voted to adjourn.