

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY  
 COMMISSION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS  
 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
 Monday January 8, 2024 @ 3:00 PM  
 Rescheduled to Thursday January 18 @ 3:00 PM  
 MPR Room Pottawattamie County Veteran Affairs Building

**AGENDA**

- Pledge of Allegiance – Meeting called to order at 2:58 PM by Chairwoman Holly Collins. All in attendance stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Roll Call – Holly Collins, Chairwoman; David Hazlewood, Secretary; Jim Murray, Member; Andrew Dewey, Ex-Officio Member; Office Personnel Peggy Becker, Administrator; Paul Rosenberg, Caseworker II; Sam Pettit, Caseworker II; Rebekah Adair, Administrative Assistant. Attending via Teams: Mick Gutttau, Member; Dr. Dan Kinney, Member.
- Additions – Correction: Federal County Assistance Report should say December, not November
- BOS Updates – Brian Shea – The east side of the courthouse will open Monday. Handrails had to be rebuilt. Currently processing budgeting. The southwest corner of the courthouse will be closed; emergency exit only. Steel is up for public health building and it should be completed in December.
- Commissioner Updates - none

**OLD BUSINESS**

- Approval of the minutes for Regular Monthly Meeting December 11, 2023 Motion to approve made by David Hazlewood, Secretary. Seconded by Jim Murray, Member. All in favor Aye 5, Nay 0. Motion carries.
- ~~Approval of assistance given for December 2023: No Assistance Requested~~
- Budget 2023-2024: Should be @ 50% currently @ 43%
- Federal County Assistance Report for November 2023

	December	Previous Month November
Walk Ins:	180	237
Calls:	336	467
Total:	516	704

County	State	Federal
New Clients 12	Driver License Application 1	Total Fed Forms 155 of these were
Pantry/Clothing 9	License Plate Application	Benefit Application 46
Grave Marker 1	Hunting/Fishing License	Intent to File 8
E/Mail I/O 154	MTE/DMTE	Headstone Application 2
Appointments 57		Home Loan Certificate 1
Client Contacts	37 LP Applications for 2023	SF-180 2

**FACILITIES UPDATE:**

- MPR Usage: Routine usage by VFW, other County Departments and Community Agencies  
 VFW did not use the building this month; they are still within accordance. No VFW use this month. It is unknown if weather was a contributing factor. VFW may be outgrowing the room.

**OLD BUSINESS/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Website Usage and Changes (Sam) – Sam Pettit, Paul Rosenberg, Rebekah Adair spoke with Mint Chip about the website structure. Mint Chip is in process of redoing the website and will shrink the number of click buttons. Transition to the new website takes place in March. Commissioners were concerned that the new website would impact the VSO budget and would not be as interactive. Sam Pettit reported that this will not impact the VSO budget and that the new website will allow for a more streamlined experience for users.
- Veterans Day @ the Capitol Wednesday January 17<sup>th</sup> 2024: (Peggy) - If passed, two changes will affect us the most: change of military tax exemption, ex. 10% service connection means 10% exemption. That would be less than what we offer now, and they are looking to designate a mandatory \$3,000 from the State Allocation be used for training, there is speculation of whether or not the Allocation would be increased by that \$3,000 or stay the same. The Commissioners requested clarification on the available training and its impact on VSO staff and future audits. Peggy Becker reported that VSO staff would use all of the allocated funds and expenditures would be audited.
- Budget Presentation BOS on schedule for January 23, 2024: (Peggy) All Commissioners were invited to attend.
- Building Usage Rules/Regulations Changes Approved by BOS on 12/12/2023: (Peggy)

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Additional Signage: (Peggy) Peggy Becker reported that a study will be done and then we will have a budgetary estimate. Andrew Dewey reported that no design study yet. We need better signage than just on the expressway. This will go into operational budget.

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- Group Counseling hosted by the Vet Center: (Peggy) Robert Montag has approached the VSO to offer group sessions during or after hours. He prefers twice a week but requires a minimum 5 participants per session. VSO staff has already put the word out on social media. Commissioners requested details of the sessions and how best to market them to local veterans. Holly Collins mentioned reaching out to local non-profit groups to advertise the sessions. Andrew Dewey requested that VSO staff be clear on the purpose of the sessions so veterans know exactly what they would be attending. Jim Murray would prefer that the sessions be Pottawattamie County centric with emphasis on citizens of the county before reaching out to others.
- IDVA 2023 ReCap: Peggy Becker reviewed the IDVA recap and stated that out of more than 1,200 Veteran License Plate applications across the state, 37 were from our office. Unfortunately, the VSO cannot keep track of hunting/fishing licenses and drivers license applications as those can be done outside of the office.
- CEU Training Spring School Des Moines Tuesday April 16 to Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024: National Training Denver Co Monday May 13<sup>th</sup> to Friday May 17<sup>th</sup>: (Peggy) None of the office staff will be attending Spring School at this point unless availability changes. Commissioners were urged to step forward so we can at least have County representation. Sam Pettit and Paul Rosenberg are registered for Federal Training in Denver. Peggy Becker is registered to attend the Denver Training virtually.

**Public Comment (3-minute limit) – Mick Gutttau reported that the connection on Teams is good, but the audio is only 50% understandable. Dan Kinney reported similar issues with sound. Brian Shea reported that the Courthouse has similar problems, so this issue may be endemic to the county.**

***CLOSED SESSION AS ALLOWED PER CODE OF IOWA CHAPTER 21.5, 1(A) January ASSISTANCE REQUESTS  
0 Request for Assistance***

*OPEN SESSION*

*ADJOURN*

*NEXT MEETING February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024*