

**POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY
COMMISSION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

Monday September 9, 2024 @ 3:00 pm

MPR Room Pottawattamie County Veteran Service Office

TEAMS MEETING Connect ID 282 399 095 949 Passcode: FURkTU

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting>

MINUTES

- Pledge of Allegiance: Meeting called to order at 3:00pm by Chairwoman Holly Collins. All in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Roll Call: Holly Collins, Chairwoman; David Hazlewood, Secretary; James Murray, Member; Dr. Dan Kinney, Member; Andrew Dewey, Ex-Officio Member; Lynn Grobe, Ex-Officio Member; Peggy Becker, Administrator; Sam Pettit, Caseworker II; Kara Behrens, Administrative Assistant; Rebekah Adair, Administrative Assistant. Absent is Mick Guttau, Member.
- Additions/Corrections: none
- BOS Updates: Jeff Jorgenson reported that our current county assessor is retiring and the board will meet on September 18 to select a replacement. The preliminary budget process has started. The county needs to determine how best to move forward and may seek professional input. Disaster relief is going well. Many residents have applied and relief is beginning to flow.
- Commissioner Updates: David Hazlewood reported that two veteran home repair projects have been completed. Commissioners and office personnel are welcome to tour the finished homes. When asked about the 2024 Veterans Day Parade plans, office personnel reported that the parade application has been submitted and approved. Decorations for the float will be ordered once final approval is given by the administrator.

OLD BUSINESS

- Approval of minutes Regular Monthly Meeting August 12, 2024: (Chairwoman Holly and Board) Motion to approve made by David Hazlewood, Secretary, and seconded by Dr. Dan Kinney, Member. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries.
- **Routine Office Reports**
 - Budget 2023-2024: Should be 17% Currently @ 14% (Chairwoman Holly and Board Review) Peggy Becker, Administrator, reported that the slight increase in spending is because there were three pay periods in the month.
 - Facilities Update (Peggy)
 - ❖ MPR Room: Routine Usage by VFW, County Departments and Community Agencies
 - ❖ Vet Center Usage Begins Friday September 6, 2024: Peggy Becker, Administrator, reported they had seven enrolled, three graduating, and two showed up.
 - ❖ FEMA Usage of the Building: Ended Saturday 8/31/24. Peggy Becker, Administrator, reported that FEMA has moved on to Oakland. When they return to Council Bluffs, they will set up at the Lakin campus instead of using our building. This is related to the issues regarding building use to be discussed.
 - ❖ Office/Building/Commission/Staff 'Notification' and 'Safety' Concerns to Discuss with BOS Liaison: Peggy Becker, Administrator, reminded the commission that new chairs for the Multi Purpose Room have been purchased in accordance with the county's Risk Manager's recommendations. Also, office personnel have voiced concerns regarding building safety and emergency response. When the panic buttons are pushed on the keyboard, security will call the front desk; no one ever comes over to ascertain the situation. There has also been a recent issue with the Administrator not being informed when a county employee working in the building has been dismissed. This lack of communication could potentially cause a security issues. Supervisor Jeff Jorgenson will work with HR and Andrew Dewey, Ex-Officio Member, will work with security to get regular county employee termination and suspension reports to the office Administrator.
 - ❖ Issues regarding Building User Expectations: Peggy Becker, Administrator, shared concerns regarding the recent behavior of a member of the local VFW post. According to the FEMA supervisor, his treatment of FEMA personnel in the building is the reason FEMA will not be returning to use our building. The commissioners want to be sure that expectations for behavior are clear with every organization that signs a contract to use our facility. Commissioners and office personnel agree that a meeting should be held with VFW

representatives to clarify expectations and discuss the ramifications of the recent incident.

o Website/Social Media Update:(Rebekah) Our new website went live last week. New features include the ability to breakdown benefits and services so visitors can more easily find the information they need. We will also be able to prioritize the information visitors see. Online forms have been created for new contact, newsletter sign up, and Operation Appreciation nominations. The website has already had a sign up for the newsletter using the new form. On Facebook, we've started posting on the city pages when we'll be at the Carter Lake and Avoca locations. We are gaining followers on Instagram and X impressions continue to grow.

o Office Production Report: See Attachment (Chairwoman Holly and Board Review) Peggy Becker, Administrator reported that numbers have dipped slightly but September is already seeing a huge increase in contacts.

- Federal County Assistance report for March 2024 (Chairwoman Holly and Board Review)

	August 2024	Previous Month July
Walk Ins:	222	247
Calls:	390	424
Total:	612	672
Client Contacts:	532	599

County		State		Federal	
New Clients	10	Driver License Application		Total Fed Forms	130
Pantry/Clothing	11	License Plate Application	6	Benefit Application	38
Grave Marker	2	Hunting/Fishing License		Intent to File	24
E/Mail I/O	250	MTE/DMTE		Home Loan Certificate	
Appointments	66			SF-180	2

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Fall School of Instruction: (Peggy) Hosted by the IA Dept of Veteran Affairs: Commissioners Training Monday October 14 @ Camp Dodge. Reception the night before, Holly Collins and David Hazelwood have registered to attend. Caseworker training Tuesday October 15 through Thursday October 17, 2024, Peggy Becker, Kara Behrens and the new employee will be attending.
- Reset October & November Commission Meeting Date: (Chairwoman Holly & Board) The Commissioners and office personnel agreed to schedule upcoming Commission meetings for Monday, October 7 and Monday, November 4.
- Staffing Changes Update: (Peggy) Newly hired Caseworker, Jacob Townsend, will start on September 23. There were 38 applicants for the position and six interviews were held. Kara Behrens, Administrative Assistant, is interested in becoming a part-time caseworker. HR has been notified.
- Nursing Home Contacts: (Peggy) When the state notifies us of a new admission, we send out a pre-drafted letter to the representative. Prior to the recent batch of admissions received, we have had a 20% response rate on the letters.

NEW BUSINESS

- Budget Study Session prior to Budget Review (Peggy) This session will allow for brainstorming and planning. Peggy Becker, Administrator, and Commissioners scheduled the session for October 3, 2024 at 3:00 pm.

Public Comment (3 min limit): Brad Powell reports that this past weekend he assisted a veteran who was struggling with mental health.

ADJOURN OPEN SESSION - 3:38 PM

CLOSED SESSION AS ALLOWED PER CODE OF IOWA CHAPTER 21.5, 1(A) September ASSISTANCE REQUESTS - Motion to go into closed session made at 3:44 PM by David Hazlewood, Secretary, and seconded by Dr. Dan Kinney, Member. Aye 4 Nay 0. Motion carries.

1 Request for Assistance

ADJOURN CLOSED SESSION - Motion to go back into open session made at 3:49 PM by David Hazlewood, Secretary, and seconded by Jim Murray, Member. Aye 4 Nay 0. Motion carries.

ADJOURN MEETING: 3:49 pm

NEXT MEETING: October 7, 2024