

Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

Minutes: July 10, 2013

Veterans Affairs Committee meeting called to order by Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Arnold Arquette at 2:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance–Moment of Silence.

Roll-call of committee members:

Chair,	Arnold Arquette,	Present
Co-Chair,	Dave Martin,	Present
	Philip Savage,	Excused
	Rodger Seidel,	Present
	Samuel Gray,	Present



Administration in attendance:

Assistant County Administrator, Brad Wilcox
Calhoun County Counsel, Richard Lindsey
Calhoun County Commissioner, Steve Frisbie
Calhoun County Commissioner, Jim Haadsma

Citizens' Time:

Mr. Dave Morgan, Desert Storm Veteran and Chairman of the Calhoun County Democrat Party, Mr. Dan Boone and Mr. M.D. Begley were all present to observe the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee meeting in an effort to familiarize themselves with the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office and the recently passed Veteran's Special Millage funding.

Reading of the June 2013 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

Minutes:

Following review, Mr. Dave Martin made a motion to accept the June 12, 2013 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, Mr. Rodger Seidel seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 4-0, the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

Applications for Emergency Assistance from the Calhoun County Veterans' Relief Fund:

None

Reading of Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Burial Reports:

None

Old Business:

Calhoun County Assistant Administrator, Mr. Brad Wilcox, presented information relative to five (5) outstanding issues that the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Members had previously requested clarification on at the June 12, 2013 meeting. The areas of interest as Mr. Wilcox recalled were a performance review of Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Director, Scott C. Losey, and how the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee may participate with Calhoun County Administration in the performance of the evaluation. The Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee's roles and responsibilities as they relate to the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners. The Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Special Millage language and what the intent of that language meant from a legal perspective, Mr. Wilcox pointed out that Calhoun County Corporation Counsel, Richard Lindsey, was in attendance to help with the legal interpretation. Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Special Millage versus General Funding, and essentially a department budget directive for 2014 and what it all means. Mr. Wilcox delineated that \$160,000 reflected historically a directive that Administration has applied through the budget process versus the new Special Millage funding that is anticipated and estimated to be \$354,000 that will be raised through the Special Millage. The estimate of \$354,000 was provided by the Calhoun County Equalization department. Mr. Wilcox stated that the questions raised and what needed to be discussed at the meeting, did not necessarily need to be agreed on by the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee and Calhoun County leadership, however, Mr. Wilcox reminded everyone that through the budget process, numbers would be established and he had hoped to have a little dialog on the how the numbers are established so that there could maybe be a consensus of what it all means. The final area of interest according to Mr. Wilcox's understanding involved what the members of Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee termed as rent. Mr. Wilcox stated that to put this issue into context, County leadership calls it Indirect Cost Allocation Plan. Mr. Wilcox explained what that essentially meant is that the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs department was a General Funded department and now that will change when it becomes what the County calls a Special Revenue Funded

department. Again, Mr. Wilcox stated that these were the issues that the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee had requested clarification on as he understood it. Mr. Wilcox asked Colonel Rodger Seidel, whom was nominated by the other Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee members to take a leadership role in these discussions, if there were any other issues that the Committee sought clarification on. Mr. Dave Martin and Colonel Seidel both mentioned the file system. Director Scott C. Losey stated that the file system was in route and that Service Officer Kristina Higgins had been in discussions with the representative from Custer Workplace Interior. Director Losey reminded the Committee that he had contacted members to inform them that Administration had approved the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office part-time administrative assistant/clerk for the remainder of the year with the possibility of seeking out an individual who would be temporary to full time employment once the Special Millage became available. The funding for the part time employee would come from the Veteran's Relief Surplus Fund. Mr. Martin asked how much was in the Veteran's Relief Surplus Fund to which Mr. Wilcox replied about \$60,000. Mr. Wilcox explained that one transfer has been made from the Veteran's Relief Surplus Fund to the Calhoun County Burial Fund, however, he believed that the amount was still close to \$60,000. Mr. Wilcox reminded everyone that the money from the Veteran's Relief Surplus Fund would be absorbed and rolled over into the Special Millage Fund that is created. Mr. Wilcox also explained that there used to be a millage for Soldier's and Sailor's Relief and emergent needs, however, that millage will no longer exist due to the special millage being passed. Mr. Arquette asked if the Special Fund goes into the general fund, Mr. Wilcox replied that the Special Fund does not go into the General Fund. Mr. Wilcox further elaborated that Special Funds such as the Senior Millage and the Veteran's Millage are outside the General Fund and do not co-mingle and monies that are not spent through the Special Millage do not go over to the General Fund. Special Funds are restricted and reserved only for the purposes that are described, what the millage language states is the only thing it can be spent for. Mr. Wilcox stated that on the issue of Veterans Affairs Committee membership roles and responsibilities, it is Mr. Wilcox's opinion, that the role is to review and recommend. Mr. Wilcox stated that while it is ultimately the Board of Commissioners authority and responsibility to approve budgets, he believed that any budget that he (Mr. Wilcox) and Director Scott Losey prepared, should not only be presented without full disclosure and feedback of the Committee. Mr. Wilcox reminded everyone in attendance that in his opinion, the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office had a huge opportunity in front of them with the new funding source that he believed would liberate a lot of things. Mr. Wilcox said that the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs department had been a little in jeopardy with every budget that comes around and that with directives for the County to meet, cuts had been levied for what he believed was the last three (3) years. As Mr. Wilcox explained, the County per directive has been at about a four (4) Percent reduction in the past three (3) years. Mr. Wilcox said that due to directives, certain outreach programs were cut, that neither he nor Director Scott were pleased with in the past. According to Mr. Wilcox, the passage of the Special Millage has "taken that off the table" and opened up opportunities

to start to “strategize” and develop a plan to promote using outreach to inform Veteran’s of what is available, to make more things available and add more depth to the services that are already provided. Discussion was raised in regard to whether the ballot language for the Special Millage had made clear that the \$354,000 would replace the previously General Funded \$160,000 or be in addition to the \$160,000. Corporation Counsel Richard Lindsey handed out minutes from the previous Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee meeting where the Special Millage was approved to be placed onto the November Ballot. Counsel Lindsey recalled that Commissioner Steve Frisbie, Commission Chair Art Kale and Calhoun County Controller Kelly Scott were all in attendance of that Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Meeting, and that once he received the telephone call from Controller Scott stating that a decision had been made to try and place the Special Millage onto the November ballot, it literally had to be done by the following week. A special meeting of the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners had to be called, prior to the special meeting, Mr. Lindsey had gone back and looked at the authorized County millages and what had been authorized in the past. There is statutory language that does allow a tenth of a mill to be authorized, according to Mr. Lindsey he could not find were this had ever been authorized by either the Board of Commissioners or by the voter’s of Calhoun County. Mr. Lindsey delineated that he contacted Macomb County which had just passed a renewal of their Veterans Millage, Mr. Lindsey then prepared the language, actually drafted it, at this time Mr. Lindsey referred to page 2 of the handout that he had previously disseminated, which was what actually what appeared on the ballot. Mr. Lindsey stated that the last meeting of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee that he was in attendance, Colonel Rodger Seidel had ask if the approximately 170 or \$160,000 were going to remain from the General Fund and be in addition to the Special Millage monies of \$354,000. Mr. Lindsey stated that he had been surprised by the question as he did not realize there was an issue and that he was in attendance to address that question. Mr. Lindsey played audio of Controller Kelly Scott speaking at the special Board of Commissioner meeting, in the audio, Controller Scott stated that the millage if approved would provide “a dedicated source of funding”, and in Mr. Lindsey’s legal opinion, the intent was that the Special Millage would completely take the place of the General Funding of 170 or 160,000 and would not be in addition to. There is discuss of the State Statutes and whether or not the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office is a mandated or non mandated department. Mr. Lindsey stated that in his interpretation of Statutes, the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Department is a non mandated department and both Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Wilcox explain the difference of a mandated department and a non mandated department and how each are affecting in the budgeting process. There had been recent discussion in a public forum where information regarding the intent of the recently passed Special Veterans Millage was called into question, Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Lindsey agreed that was the purpose of Administration, Corporation Counsel and Commissioner Frisbie and Commissioner Haadsma attending the meeting was to provide clarification and answer questions along with the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee members.

New Business:

None

Good Of The Committee:

None

Adjournment:

Mr. Martin made a motion to adjourn the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee meeting at or about 4:15PM. Mr. Arnold Arquette seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 4-0, the July 10, 2013 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee meeting was adjourned.

Arnold Arquette

Chairman, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs Committee

Scott C. Losey

Director, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs