

Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

Minutes: January 8, 2014

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:

Chairman,	Arnold Arquette,	Present
	Samuel Gray,	Present
	Jack Hunn,	Present
	George “Rob” Beam,	Present
	Rodger Seidel,	Present By Way of Teleconference



Calhoun County Administration in attendance:

Calhoun County Administrator/Controller, Kelli Scott
Calhoun County Assistant Administrator, Brad Wilcox

Citizens' Time:

None

Reading of the December 11, 2013 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes:

Following review, Mr. Rob Beam made a motion to accept the December 11, 2013 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, Mr. Samuel Gray seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 5-0, the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

Applications for Emergency Assistance from the Calhoun County Veterans' Relief

Fund:

None for January

Application for Emergency Assistance from the Calhoun County Veteran's Relief

Fund:

Due to lack of information at the December 11, 2013 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee meeting, the application for emergency assistance was rescheduled for Monday, December 16, 2013.

13-03 Calhoun County Veterans Relief Fund application to address installation of duct lines from a furnace to floor registers in the amount of \$851.00 was reviewed by the Committee.

Colonel Rodger Seidel made a motion to approve \$601.00 in materials to have the duct lines installed from the furnace to the floor registers under the presupposition that the applicant could pay the \$250.00 labor. Mr. Hunn Seconded the motion.

Approved: By a roll call vote of 5-0, the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Approved \$601.00 – the amount requested to pay for the materials to address the applicant's unforeseen emergent financial dilemma provided that the claimant is able to come up with the \$250.00 to pay for the labor. The claimant agreed to provide an invoice showing that he had paid the \$250.00 for labor before the \$601.00 payment would be issued.

Old Business:

Director Scott C. Losey informed the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee members that before the new workstation could be purchased and installed for the Administrative Assistant, the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office would have to undergo some construction/remodification in order to create an egress for those veterans that may utilize wheelchairs, scooters, etc. Assistant Administrator Brad Wilcox stated that Calhoun County Maintenance Department was currently completing several projects for the Department of Human Services and that a better time frame for the construction/remodeling of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office would be available by the next Veterans Affairs Committee meeting.

New Business:

Director Losey stated that he had been in discussions with Assistant Administrator Brad Wilcox and Colonel Rodger Seidel on 2014 Short Term Operational ideas and strategic planning on the initial phases of addressing the backlog of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office. Mr. Losey explained that he would continue discussions and running ideas with both Assistant Administrator Wilcox and Colonel Rodger Seidel in the strategic planning phases and then provide that information to the Committee as a whole. Director Losey also stated that he would be working with Human Resources Director Kim

Archambault to develop both the job description for the permanent Administrative Assistant as well as defining the hiring process procedures. Once the description and the hiring process procedures were revised and agreed upon, the position would be advertised in all appropriate media forums. Director Losey reminded the members of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee that having a third employee was unprecedented for what has historically been a two (2) person office. Again, Director Scott C. Losey delineated the importance of first addressing the significant backlog in the office claims case load; Director Losey stated that it is imperative that the backlog in case load be whittled down before additional mid term planning and long term planning begins.

Mr. Arnold Arquette requested information as to when the next budget for the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office was due. Calhoun County Assistant Administrator Brad Wilcox stated that the next budget would be due in August. Director Scott C. Losey stated the operational planning would include the budgeting and reminded the members of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee that he would be learning the monthly budget data so that he will be able to discuss and present the data to the Committee at least until everyone was familiar with the procedures and information at which time perhaps the budget information would be presented on a quarterly basis. Director Losey expressed that while the budget is not difficult it does entail learning a whole new procedure than utilized in the past. Director Losey explained that the process would involve learning how to put the numbers together and then learning how to interpret the data so that the data can be presented to the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee members and still remaining compliant with the directives that are provided by Calhoun County Leadership.

Discussion relative to the elections of the 2014 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee positions and the roles and responsibilities inherent to each elected position. Mr. Samuel Gray made a motion to elect Colonel Rodger Seidel as the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Chairman. Mr. Arnold Arquette seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 4-0, Colonel Rodger Seidel was elected the Chairman of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee. Director Scott C. Losey stated that previously the responsibilities of the Committee officer positions have historically been bestowed to him—i.e. all Committee member whims and directives in concert with all County Leadership directives. Director Losey went on to state that traditionally the roles of Vice Chairman and Secretary had fallen to the staff of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office and in particular the Director and were primarily positions in name only, Director Losey reminded the Committee that it is the Committee's purview on whether the responsibilities continue to be handled by the staff or are to be assumed by the individual Committee positions. Director Losey also stated that the Committee would need to vote on the dates and times to hold the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs meetings so that the staff could provide the information on the Calhoun County website and in the appropriate media outlets in order to stay compliant with the Open

Meetings Act. Mr. Samuel Gray made a motion to elect Mr. Jack Hunn as the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Vice-Chairman, Mr. Rob Beam seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 3-0, Mr. Jack Hunn was elected the Vice-Chairman of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee. Mr. Arnold Arquette made a motion to elect Mr. Samuel Gray as the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Secretary. Mr. Rob Beam seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 3-0, Mr. Samuel Gray was elected the Secretary of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee. Mr. Arnold Arquette made a motion to close the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs elections. Mr. Samuel Gray seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 4-0, the elections were closed.

Discussion relative to County Department of Veterans Affairs Public Act 192 of 1953, 35.623 “Administrative Committee of County Department; Selection of Officers, Expenses; Veterans Service Officer; Appointment; Offices.” “The committee shall select a chairman and a secretary. The Committee is authorized to incur such expense as shall be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this act within the budget set up by the Board of Supervisors (Commissioners). The members of the Committee shall be entitled to receive the same per diem and milage in attending meetings as members of the board of supervisors (Commissioners). Director Scott C. Losey stated that historically the Committee has been all volunteers, however, it is the newly elected Committee members prerogative to establish the procedure for 2014 and beyond. Mr. Arnold Arquette opens up the floor for discussion. Mr. Arnold Arquette made a motion to decline milage per diem. Mr. Jack Hunn seconded the motion. By a roll call of 5-0, the motion to decline milage per diem was passed. Director Scott C. Losey quotes Michigan Compiled Law County Department of Veterans Affairs Public Act 192 of 1953 35.624 “County Department; Powers, and Duties”, “The county department of veterans affairs shall be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this act and any and all other benefits to which veterans may be entitled as prescribed by the County Department of Veterans Affairs.” Director Losey stated that it is in his opinion that this particular statute is important not only because it delineates and substantiates the need for the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office along with the impact of money to the County infrastructure as well as the amount of redistribution of federal tax dollars brought into our community by way of claims work that the staff at Calhoun County Veterans Affairs provided. Director Losey expressed that given the membership of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee was comprised of a majority of new members, Director Losey wanted to make sure that everyone was aware of the impact of the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office and the quality of advocacy that veteran’s in Calhoun County receive.

Mr. Rob Beam requests information relative to the differences in the Veterans Relief Fund and the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund. Director Scott C. Losey explained that the premise encompassing both programs is the same, the funds are to help a veteran or eligible dependent when an unforeseen emergent need manifests. Director Losey stated that the

difference in the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Committee and the Veterans Relief Committee is one, based on the fact that in order to be eligible for the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund the veteran must have served 180 days during a recognized period of wartime service or received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. In the case of the County's Veterans Relief Fund a veteran had to have served ninety (90) days, one (1) day of which was during a recognized period of wartime service or received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. Director Losey stated that Calhoun County is lucky enough to have a very knowledgeable and dedicated Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Agent, who has a firm grip on not only what transpires with the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund but also assists the staff at Calhoun County Veterans Affairs when needed. Director Losey stated that primarily the State of Michigan had a larger amount of money allocated to the Veterans Trust Fund than the County Relief Fund and if the veteran satisfied the eligibility for the Trust Fund they were referred to the Trust Fund Agent for application.

Good Of The Committee:

None

Adjournment:

Mr. Jack Hunn made a motion to adjourn the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee meeting at or about 4:10PM. Mr. Samuel Gray seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 5-0, the January 8, 2014 Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee meeting was adjourned.

Arnold Arquette
Chairman, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs Committee

Scott C. Losey
Director, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs