

# Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

## Minutes: August 13, 2014

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

Pledge of Allegiance–Moment of Silence.

### Roll-call of committee members:

- |              |                    |         |
|--------------|--------------------|---------|
| • Chairman   | Rodger Seidel,     | Present |
| • Vice-Chair | Jack Hunn          | Present |
| • Secretary  | Samuel Gray,       | Present |
| • Member     | George “Rob” Beam, | Excused |



### Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office Staff:

- |                            |                     |         |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| • Director                 | Scott C. Losey      | Present |
| • Service Officer          | Kristina S. Higgins | Present |
| • Administrative Assistant | M. Luann Cape       | Present |

### Calhoun County Administrator’s Office Representative:

- |                           |             |         |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|
| • Assistant Administrator | Brad Wilcox | Present |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|

### Citizens’ Time:

None

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

None

### Correspondence:

Director Losey informed the Committee that he was favorably recognized by the Disabled American Veterans National Headquarters for the time and effort extended on behalf of a Calhoun County Veteran soliciting his advocacy relative to the research, development,

authoring, and submission a Service-Connected Compensation claims package (Increased Compensation Based On Unemployability).

**Old Business:**

Calhoun County Assistant Administrator, Brad Wilcox, delineated a fundamental overview of the county wide budgeting methodology and inherent directives incorporated into the previous year's departmental budgets. In essence, Mr. Wilcox simply wished to remind the Committee members and office staff that the 2015 budgetary challenges and associated departmental directives to reduce their 2015 budgets by 2 percent do not apply to the Calhoun County Veterans Affairs office given the passage of the 2014 Veterans Millage. Mr. Wilcox informed the Committee that he and Director Losey will schedule a date and time to meet for the purpose of developing and devising the 2015 office budget. Following the initial draft of the 2015 office budget, Mr. Wilcox requested that the Committee provide timely feedback to insure that the proposed budget be completed by the September 6, 2014 deadline – all departmental budgets must be received by the Calhoun County Finance office by September 6, 2014. Mr. Wilcox suggested that as the Committee members, each, peruse the 2015 office budget, perhaps, it would be prudent to view the budget in terms of “building the budget from the bottom up . . . . plan the programs and, then, decide or figure out how to best fund each program.” Mr. Wilcox recommended that the Committee consider reserving monetary flexibility for future consulting line-item adjustments if deemed necessary.

Vice-Chairman Hunn posed a question relative to the burial budget. Mr. Wilcox stated that while \$45,000 was budgeted, approximately \$5,000 has been paid out. Director Losey disseminated his procedural protocol pertaining to the “inexact science” of projecting the number of Calhoun County Veterans who will not only pass away in the year 2014, but, also, satisfy the eligibility requirements as stipulated within the Michigan Compiled Laws. Director Losey added that given the average life expectancy when factored into the indisputable fact that many veterans who are passing away served on active duty during the period between the federally defined end of the Korean War Era and beginning of the Vietnam War Era, active duty military service during this time period does not satisfy the primary eligibility criterion necessary for the Calhoun County Burial Benefit (must have served during a recognized period of war). Director Losey informed the Committee that the office staff is actively soliciting applications for the Calhoun County Burial Benefit as exemplified by the fact that approximately 30 to 40 informational letters are sent out to the “informants” identified on each veteran's death certificate providing a litany of information relative to both the Calhoun County Burial Benefit as well as potential eligibility for federal death benefits facilitated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Director Losey stated that many county veterans affairs offices have initiated the policy of paying the entire cost of interring an eligible veteran into a private cemetery—i.e. placing the

vault, closing the grave, and placing the marker. The Committee had no comment regarding this issue.

Mr. Wilcox informed that the Calhoun County Veterans Relief Fund surplus that was rolled over from previous years currently amounts to approximately \$58,000 (Director Losey is not sure about this figure). Mr. Wilcox further added that if the trends of prudent consideration of county tax dollars continue, \$50,000 will be added; hence, resulting in a fund balance of approximately \$108,000. He emphasized the importance of responsible spending with tax payers in mind. Discussion ensued concerning moving monies around within the budget and the amount of burials we have facilitated.

Director Losey responded to Vice-Chairman Hunn's inquiry concerning amount spent for emergent needs. So far, this year, we have spent \$1800

Mr. Wilcox shared that we need a forecast for spending for the burials and the emergent needs. Following that we need a plan for programs/spending.

**New Business:**

Service-Officer, Kristina Higgins, facilitated a POWERPOINT overview of the following:

- Metrics
- Summary of her meeting with Calhoun County Veterans Resource Team.
- Colonel Seidel then summarized his thoughts on items from the Strategic Plan.

Please see attached Power Point Presentation.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Hill made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Hunn seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned 4:30pm.

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Rodger Seidel  
Chairman, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs Committee

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Scott C. Losey  
Director, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs

