

# Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting

## Minutes: December 10, 2014

Veterans Affairs Committee meeting called to order by Veterans Affairs Committee Vice-Chairman Jack Hunn at 2:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance–Moment of Silence.

### Roll-call of committee members:

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



### Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office Staff:

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

### County Administration Staff:

- |   |                                |               |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------|
| • | County Administrator           | Kelli Scott   |
| • | County Assistant Administrator | Brad Wilcox   |
| • | Human Resources Employee       | Megan Sharkey |

### Guests:

- Larry and Barb Rix

**Agenda Changes:**

- Citizen's Time moved to the end of the Agenda
- Service Officer Position ideas for advertizing, later in the meeting
- Status of Committee Member Applications
- Move Relief Application

**Correspondence:**

One of the applicants for the Committee position has turned in correspondence.

**Administrative Updates:**

Chairman Seidel and Mr. Wilcox have been working on the Evaluation for the Director. The Committee members were copied on a Supervisory Evaluation. It goes over expectations for the Director and Staff. Do we evaluate Director Losey in January, or give it six months with the change in expectations? Or do we establish a baseline evaluation? Discussion ensued.

The County Website was something that Mr. Wilcox looked into and received a proposal from American Eagle. They are the website designer that the County uses. The suggestion was brought up to see Kent and Washtenaw Counties websites as examples.

Concerning training, IT bought a group of coupons that cover modules of training on Microsoft Word at different skill levels. These will be made available in half day sessions.

There will also be training in the County's financial area that will be make available after the first of the year. It will be done internally so the timing can be flexible.

Mr. Wilcox encourages the Committee to work on adding another Committee Member. The next opportunity for the Board to approve will be February. Discussion ensued as to the process of selection.

Ms. Scott shared that most of the time the Board will approve the sub-committee's suggestion as to who should fill the vacancy. The previous time the Commissioners were more involved due to complicated set of circumstances. She suggested the sub-committee narrow the field to one recommendation.

Mr. Gray commented that the last selection of committee members was awesome.

Ms. Scott stated that the Board of Commissioners approved the budget for next year. The State is fully funding the Counties for the first time in a decade. There will be two new Commissioners: Carla Reynolds from Battle Creek, Mr. Bareman from Albion. They are deciding what kind of Board orientation to have for the new members.

Megan Sharkey had an update on the hiring process for the new Service Officer position. She is the employment specialist. The position is internally posted. The normal process is for the County to post the job opening in The Shopper, The Battle Creek Enquirer. She had several other possibilities. Among them: the website Mlive, Indeed.com.. It was suggested by Director Losey that it be posted among various post and chapters.

No internal applications have been received yet by Ms. Sharkey.

**Minutes:** There needs to be some clarity in a couple of spots. Mr. Beam was wondering what else Mr. Honeck is working on. Director Losey listed several items: A large stack of DD214's, Rating Decisions that other organizations have yet to forward to us, a lot of busy work. There was also a question on when the County is available to write checks, the correct answer being twice a month. When the minutes are amended, Mr. Gray moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Beam seconded the minutes when approved. Motion passed.

**Applications for Emergency Assistance from the Calhoun County Veterans' Relief Fund:** Application number 14-05. Administrative Assistant Cape, presented the Veterans application. There were some questions and discussion. The conclusion was the committee needed more up to date information to determine a decision. It would need to include status of the eviction, how much rent he currently owes, signed by the landlord. Officially tabled.

As to the status of Application 14-03, the applicant provided December rent as he was asked, last Friday. So paperwork was submitted to the finance department for November's rent to be paid.

The applicant that was referred back to Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (14-04), they did approve her.

**Old Business:** Please refer to the action items contained in previous minutes.

- Mr. Palmeiter, along with Floyd, delivered the Thanksgiving basket to the WWII Veteran that will soon receive the handicap ramp.
- Minutes delivered by the next Wednesday, and they were.
- Contact Michigan Veterans Trust Fund, Vice-chair Hunn sent an e-mail. Director Losey talked with the Trust Fund Agent, and let him know the Veteran Affairs Office had a meeting with Lisa Grenon and some of her staff in HUDVASH at the VA hospital. They would appreciate Mr. Baker delineating the process of the Trust Fund.
- Mr. Beam drafted a proposal for the Director to have authority to make grants up to \$100. Mr. Beam asked if we could provide restaurant vouchers, bus tickets? Ms. Scott added that any way we could simplify the process would be good. She mentioned we need to be careful with personal information being available to the

public. The public includes the meeting, since the public is welcome to attend. Vice-chair Hunn added that the VSO's of the South west Michigan Trust Fund are empowered to use up to \$250 to help out Veterans. He also mentioned the criteria that it is a one-time thing, not a recurring item. It also needs to be an emergent need. Ms. Scott explained that calling Committee members on the phone does not come under the open meetings Act as a way to conduct a public vote. It does not comply with the law. Giving Director Losey the authority to give a certain amount to a veteran does seem lawfully allowable, according to their research. They also could not find anything in County policy that would prohibit giving the Director the authority. Director Losey wondered about accessing the dollar amount—is this through an open checkbook, or debit cards? Mr. Wilcox brought up the possibility of using a government P-card that would have payment go directly to the vendor. Mr. Wilcox suggested that Director Losey approve the expenditure through him (Administration), to have another level of protection and accountability. It would be more efficient than calling each Committee Member. Ms. Scott suggested adding those expenditures to the monthly agenda. Discussion ensued. Mr. Wilcox mentioned that if it was a policy, it would need to be approved by the Board. The Committee would adopt an administrative procedure to establish the authority and the limits. It would give some flexibility to be able to meet needs quickly and efficiently, with some controls. The administration would work with Director Losey. Director Losey asked if Corporate would need to be brought in on it. No one can go over the dollar amount limit, and no one will be able to go beyond the budget. Director Losey warned that once word hits the street, we will be inundated. Do we want to put a limit on how often a person can come back? Vice-Chair Hunn suggested one time a year.

- Minutes should be done seven days after the meeting.
- State of Michigan Veterans booklet: We can get all we need from Mike Nofs' office. Vice-Chair Hunn suggested that we make them available in the waiting room.
- Chairman Seidel is working on the By-laws, he would appreciate specific input, including the new emergent need procedure so they can be part of it. It will be sent to Director Losey, then Mr. Wilcox and then Mr. Lindsay, Corporate Counsel will need to check it over. He hopes to complete it by the end of the month.
- Review Committee Applications. Do we need to meet to accomplish this? Ms. Scott suggested a sub-committee of two people. Mr. Wilcox asked if he could be on that sub-committee.
- Sub-committee meet to go through applications.
- Arnold Arquette's thank you was completed and delivered, the others (Dave and Phil) have not been done yet.

#### **Strategic Planning Updates:**

- Review Strategic Plan. Director Losey went over the goals in the Strategic Plan: The

Committee needs to set 2015 goals by December 2014. Investigate software (VET/RECS). Explore accreditation through Phil Smith, Vietnam Veterans of America. Identifying possible future needs of Veterans. We just did it. Discussion ensued.

**New Business:** Mr. Beam wondered if we ever get requests from homebound Veterans that need someone to come to them? Discussion ensued. Administrative Assistant Cape added that two incidents have come up where the surviving spouses children brought them to the office so they could find some things in their files and get some questions answered. Mr. Wilcox emphasized the need to ensure the safety and security of our employees. Some Veteran Service Officers do make house calls.

The issue of transporting Veterans to private medical appointments. Senior Services through Community Action have a service that does this, for those over 65 years old.

**Citizen's Time:** Mr. Rix shared how meeting Director Losey changed his life. He refers a lot of young veterans to Director Losey.

**Good of the Committee:** Service Officer Higgins wondered if the current second Wednesday of the month at 2:30pm works for everyone still, since we need to release the meeting days and times to the Shopper. Concerning Veterans Day next year, we will have the meeting the following day, November 12th.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Beam made a motion to adjourn, Chairman Seidel seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned 4:25pm.

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Jack Hunn  
Vice-Chairman, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs Committee

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Scott C. Losey  
Director, Calhoun County Veterans' Affairs