

MINUTES

Quarterly Meeting of the
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION
Held, pursuant to notice
Monday, February 2, 2009 — 10:00 AM
301 West High Street, Room 400, Harry S Truman Building,
Jefferson City, MO

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call
In attendance: **Chair Joseph Frank; Vice Chair Bernadette Miller; Member John Comerford; Member Carson Ross; Ex-Officio Member Dalton Wright**
- C. Introductions
Guests and staff present.
Guest: **Richard Heigert, MAVO; James Whitfield, Western Area Supervisor, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; Arvid West Former Commissioner; Sallie Houser-Hanfelder, Director VAMC Columbia; Stephen Gaither, VAMC-Columbia; George Newell, MAVO; Jack Matthews, President MVC Foundation, Inc.; James Ernie Lee, MAVO; Lynn Dorrell, Adjutant American Legion; Frank Prosser, MAVO; Raphael Wahwassuck, DAV; Paul Connors, VFW; Jessie Jones, VFW; Dave Morgan, VFW; Tom Hartman, VFW; Bob Wonnell, VFW; Charles Dickinson, VFW; Bill Rupp, Marine Corps League; Harry McLane, AFSA; Curtis Gist, AFSA; Robert Osborn, KWVA; John Collins, DAV; Robert Wright, DAV; Danny Brown, DAV; Carolyn Brown, DAVA; Frank Rick, VFW; James Mueller, VFW; Harrison Ochs, American Legion; Michael Bruns, VFW; Mervin Adamson, VFW; Phyllis Adamson, DAVA; Lowell Brashears, DAV; Sarah Brashears, DAVA; Bernard Rath, DAV; Shirleen Rath, DAVA; Dick Ford, American Legion; Joe Phillips, MOAA; Carolyn Sanford, American Legion Auxiliary; Jack Jackson, Former State Representative; Victor Stragliati, American Legion; Doug Goodwin, American Legion; Dewey Riehn, VFW; Larry Daniels, DAV; Jerry Bay, DAV; Michael Elmore, DAV; Robert Findley, DAV; N. H. "Rocky" Racherbaumer, American Legion; James Harker, DAV; Adam Gresham, State Senator Shields Office**
Staff: **Timothy Norton, Acting Executive Director; Bryan Hunt, Deputy Director; Jill Talken, Executive Secretary; Susan McNary, General Counsel; Anne Payne, Superintendent of Homes; Stan Baughn, Director Veterans Service Program; Julie Miller, Fiscal & Admin. Manager; Daniel Bell, Public Information Officer; Jess Rasmussen, Director**

Higginsville Veterans Cemetery; **Ken Swearengin**, Director Bloomfield Veterans Cemetery; **Jerry Quigley**, Director Jacksonville Veterans Cemetery; **Steve Maples**, Director Springfield Veterans Cemetery; **Leah Piland**, Director Ft. Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Approval of November 5th Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the November 5th meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
- B. Approval of November 5th Closed Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the November 5th Closed meeting. Commissioner Comerford seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

III. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

1. Acting Executive Director Comments: Timothy O. Norton

- Introduction Leah Piland, Director State Veterans Cemetery – Ft. Leonard Wood
- Budget Update:
 - A. FY2009 Withholdings – currently \$106,582 in PS
 - B. Supplemental Budget – Governor recommended \$491,716 for food inflation for the Homes
 - C. FY2010 Governor's recommendations –
 - 1. \$312,486 reduction in PS
 - 2. \$53,530 reduction on E&E
 - 3. In addition to our core recommended - \$1,152,556 for pharmacy & medical inflation for the Homes
 - 4. 7.75 new FTE's for opening Ft. Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery
 - 5. recommended \$1,274,400 for refunds to certain veterans for cost care in our Homes.
 - 6. recommended \$556,490 for food inflation for the Homes

- Legislative Initiatives:
 - A. HB 427 – Clean up HB 1678 from last session
Also adds language to include only those veterans who have been members of any such organization for a period of at least two consecutive years prior to their recommendation

Rulemaking Authority for Cemeteries and Veterans Services Program
 - B. Gaming Initiative: Meeting with Representative Parsons
- Representative Barney Fisher Letter – Tim Norton and Bryan Hunt will tour the DMH facility at Nevada, Mo on February 20th .
- DESE Meeting Room Utilization – The Commission has approval to conduct Quarterly Commission Meetings at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education State Board Room, 1st Floor, Jefferson Building.
- Introduction Bryan Hunt, Deputy Director Missouri Veterans Commission

2. Financial Report: Julie Miller, Fiscal & Administrative Manager

- Financial Reports distributed: Home Fund, Veterans Commission Capital Improvement Trust Fund, Veterans Trust Fund, Federal Fund and General Revenue Fund.

3. Homes Program: Anne Payne, Superintendent

- The Homes Program operates 1350 skilled nursing care beds in seven locations
- All Homes operate in compliance with 158 Federal Department of Veterans Affairs regulations.
- Since July 2007 with the increase in additional direct care employees this has enabled the Homes to meet federal staffing regulations and increase census from 91% in to 99%.

- During FY2008 an additional 104 veterans per day are receiving skilled nursing care in a Missouri Veterans Home.
- Current number of veterans on waiting list is 970.
- FY2008 cared for a total of 1,927 veterans up from 1,658 veterans served in FY2007.
- Overall satisfaction rate in family and resident care is at 93% compared to benchmark to the industry at 85%.

4. Construction Update: Timothy O. Norton, Acting Executive Director

- Fort Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery – Clearing has been completed and the pad for the administration building has been compacted. Still on target to complete construction in December 2009.
- Cameron Veterans Home Roof – Project is complete with the exception of change order to re-work soffits and insulation in attic.
- Cape Girardeau CBOC – VA CBOC moving to new location around June 2009.
- St. Louis Veterans Home, emergency generator – Generator should be in place by 1st part of February and project should be completed by July 1, 2009.
- Cape Girardeau Veterans Home, generator and fire lane – Currently reviewing design development drawings and specifications and should be ready to go out for bid by late spring 2009.
- Mexico Veterans Home, roof replacement – Currently have a CI budget request in for funds to cover construction. If approved, construction funds would be available on July 1, 2009.
- Governor's recommendations for CI budget not available at this time.

5. Veterans Services Program & Special Programs: Stan Baughn, Director

- FY2008 over \$760,000,000 in Compensation and Pension benefits were paid to Missouri Veterans.
- Held Annual VSP Training Conference November 17-21st in St. Louis, Missouri
- 10/01/2008 – 12/31/2008

Client contacts	7,274
Claims filed	5,170
Forms completed	5,925

- Rebecca Bradley continues with “Library Series – Veterans Benefits Workshops.” Commissioner Comerford requested Tim Norton work on getting funding for an additional Minority Veteran Coordinator for St. Louis area. Commissioner Ross suggested Tim Norton meet with members of the Legislative Black Caucus. A status report will be presented at the next Commission meeting.
- Karen Etzler is planning the 3rd Annual Woman Veteran Conference for May 2, 2009 in Springfield, Missouri.
- Gerry Hodge continues to provide direct services to Missouri’s Incarcerated Veterans.

6. Veteran Service Grant Program: Stan Baughn, Director

- VSO Grant funding awards have been allocated to the service organizations.

7. Cemetery Program & State Veterans Ombudsman Program: Bryan Hunt, Deputy Director

- Bloomfield Cemetery has conducted 854 burials and have 4,684 pre-certifications
- Higginsville Cemetery has conducted 1,393 burials and have 3,634 pre-certifications
- Jacksonville Cemetery has conducted 416 burials and have 2,054 pre-certifications

- Springfield Cemetery has conducted 3,753 burials and have 9,405 pre-certifications.
- Working with Jerry Quigley at the Jacksonville Veterans Cemetery regarding marketing efforts.
- State Veterans Ombudsman Program/Operation Outreach has 203 new cases and has coordinated over \$71,000 in resources. They attended 31 Guard and 21 Reservists briefings in 2008. Budget request for additional funding for staff was not recommended by the Governor. Commissioner Comerford suggested making it a priority of the Commission to increase funding and staff for this program.
- KFOR 10 – over 800 Troops were briefed.
- Continues partnerships with Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, Patriot Productions, NG Family Programs, Help For The Homefront, KC Vetlink, Hero at Home Program, Department of Labor and the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Other Business:

- Commissioner Comerford expressed concerns regarding language in HB 427 to include only those veterans who have been members of any such organization for a period of at least two consecutive years prior to their recommendation. George Newell, President MAVO clarified MAVO's intent regarding qualifications of Commissioners.
- Commissioner Comerford expressed concerns regarding process of approving expenditures of the Commission. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt a rule that expenditures over \$25,000 for unusual circumstances not related to normal operations of the Commission requires majority Commission approval. Commissioner Comerford seconded the motion. After much discussion the motion was withdrawn and they requested legal counsel to seek what other Commissions current policy is for expenditures.

B. Guest Remarks/Public Comment:

Dalton Wright, Ex Officio Member Missouri Veterans Commission

- The Missouri Military Preparedness Enhancement Commission essentially is to make Missouri a more military friendly state, BRAC proof us as we go forward with re-stationing and BRAC events. To leverage existing military structure and industrial complex to help grow our economy.
- MMPEC supports HB 27 - Authorizes an income tax deduction from a taxpayer's Missouri adjusted gross income for 100% of any military retirement income, regardless of age or income
- MMPEC supports HB 107 and HB270 Special licenses plates for veterans.
- Global Strike Command charged with taking over the Air Force's nuclear mission has been unveiled. Air Force leaders have completed the Nuclear Roadmap, which includes the standup of Global Strike Command and the ensuing organizational shake-up, the largest since Strategic Air Command disbanded in the early 1990s. MMPEC is working on efforts for have new command located at Whiteman Air Force Base

Jim Whitfield, Western Area Supervisor, MO Military Funeral Honors Program

- The MO Military Funeral Honors Program has coordinated over 75,000 services to date since its beginning nine years ago.

Jack Matthews, President MVC Foundation, Inc.

- MVC Foundation, Inc. organized to support the Missouri Veterans Commission & staff.

George Newell, President MAVO

- MAVO continues to advocate for Missouri's Veterans
- Patriot Productions mobile display is located at the State Capitol grounds.

- MAVO meeting today at 1:30 p.m.

Richard Heigert, Legislative Chair MAVO

- MAVO working on several bills this year for Veterans.
Priority to provide state tax credit on retired military pay HB 27 & HB 82.

Sallie Houser-Hanfelder, Director, VAMC-Columbia

- New Secretary of Veterans Affairs General Eric Shinseki.
Key issues:
 - 1) wants smooth activation of an enhanced GI Bill and education benefits for eligible veterans in place by next fall.
 - 2) Streamlining disability claims system
 - 3) Leveraging information technology to accelerate modernized services
 - 4) Priority 8 veterans who may have been previously denied enrollment in VA's health care system because their income exceeded VA's means tests thresholds. The new provision allows veterans whose incomes do not exceed these thresholds by more than 10 percent to enroll in VA's health care system. The new provision is expected to take effect this June and will be applied retroactively to all enrollment applications received on or after January 1, 2009. These changes do not open enrollment to all Priority 8 veterans. VA will be working on aggressive marketing plan with service organizations to get veterans enrolled.
- VA is working on changes in pharmaceutical rules
- VAMC - Columbia \$28 million construction project to begin soon replacing all operating rooms.
- Nancy Arnold, Director VAMC- Poplar Bluff has retired. Judy McKee is now Acting Director. VA conducting national search for new Director.

F. Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 2009 at 10:00 a.m., 205 Jefferson Street, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, State Board Room, 1st Floor Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, MO

With no further business before the Commission the meeting was adjourned.


Timothy O. Norton, Acting Secretary