MINUTES

Quarterly Meeting of the
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION
Held, pursuant to notice
Wednesday, November 5, 2008 — 10:00 AM
205 Jefferson Street, 12th Floor, 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 Philip Prewitt; Member Carson Ross; Ex-Officio Member Dalton Wright**

C. Introductions

Guests and staff present.

Guest: **Representative David Day**; **Richard Heigert,** MAVO; **James Whitfield**, Western Area Supervisor, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **John Eckhoff**, St. Louis County Veterans, **Arvid West and wife Barbara**, Former Commissioner; **Sallie Houser-Hanfelder**, Director VAMC Columbia; **Stephen Gaither**, VAMC-Columbia; **George Newell**, MAVO; **Robert Osborn**, KWVA; **Jack Matthews**, President MVC Foundation, Inc.; **James Ernie Lee**, MAVO; **Lynn Dorrell**, Adjutant American Legion; **Frank Prosser**, MAVO; **Raphael Wahwassuck**, DAV; **Carl Niewoehner**, Former Commissioner; **Bob Findley**, DAV; **Paul Connors**, VFW; **Jessie Jones**, VFW; **Dave Morgan**, VFW; **Tom Hartman**, VFW

Staff: **Timothy Norton**, Acting Executive Director; **Jill Talken**, Executive Secretary; **Susan McNary**, General Counsel; **Anne Payne**, Superintendent of Homes; **Pat Rowe Kerr**, State Veteran Ombudsman; **Stan Baughn**, Director Veterans Service Program; **Julie Miller**, Fiscal & Admin. Manager; **Daniel Bell**, Public Information Officer; **Bonnie McNeill-Boyt,** Director Workforce Development; **Gerry Hodge**, Veteran Service Officer;

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of August 12th Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the August 12th meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

B. Approval of August 12th Closed Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the August 12th

Closed meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

C. Approval of August 19th Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the August 19th meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

D. Approval of August 19th Closed Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the August 19th Closed meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

E. Approval of October 1st Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the October 1st meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

F. Approval of October 1st Closed Commission Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Ross made a motion to adopt minutes of the October 1st Closed meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The minutes o f the previous meeting were approved.

Representative David Day thanked the Commissioners and Veterans Organizations for everything they do for Veterans.

III. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

1. Acting Executive Director Comments: Timothy O. Norton

- Distributed Missouri Veterans Commission Interim Administration Organizational Chart and Administration Organizational Chart

- Distributed MAVO Legislative Agenda 2009:

  Continue to commit full and adequate support to full operation of all 1,350 beds at Missouri's veterans homes;

  Support legislation to fund the operation and/or maintenance of state veterans cemeteries and state veterans homes, veterans capital improvement projects, increase the Veterans Service Organizations Service Officer Grant Program and other needs of Missouri's veterans;

  Provide state tax credits on retired military pay for retirees under age 62 to retain retirees in the state;

  Provide state tax relief and benefits for service personnel deployed to combat zones;

Provide assistance for small business owners who are veterans;

Support the funding and establishment of "Veterans Resource Centers" as one-stop assistive center for all veterans;

Support the MVC Budget to add FTE and operating funds in the areas of Outreach, Training, Women and Minority, Re-entry and other needed positions;

Establish a viable and enforceable Veterans Employment Program;

Revise MO Statute 42 to clarify the qualifications of Commissioners of the Missouri Veterans Commission;

Advocate raising the Missouri Veterans Commission to Department-level status;

Support pay parity for all employees who are deployed;

Support the Missouri Veterans Commission in obtaining regulatory authority.

- Distributed MAVO proposed language for revising RSMo – Chapter 42 Veterans Affairs Section 42.007 – The Governor shall make all appointments to the Commission from lists of nominees who have been members in good standing in their sponsoring veterans organization for a period of not less than two (2) years and have been recommended by the state leadership of that statewide veterans' organizations incorporated in this state, chartered by Congress, or authorized under Title 38, United States Code. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment made in the same manner as the original appointments. A member of the Commission shall be a resident of the state of Missouri but shall not be an employee of the state. Members of the Commission shall not be compensated for their services, but shall be reimbursed from funds appropriated therefore for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.
  Member Ross made a motion to approve endorsement of proposal. Vice Chair Miller seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

- Distributed CI Budget. Projects are being requested from the VCCITF, General Revenue and FMRF due to lack of funding. Mr. Norton explained the CI Budget process.
- Distributed Missouri Veterans Commission Long Range Goals

- Distributed Executive Director position description. Vice Chair Miller made a motion to approve Executive Director position description as distributed. Member Ross seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

- Distributed Missouri Veterans Commission Authorization Procedures. Vice Chair Miller made a motion to approve the Missouri Veterans Commission Authorization Procedures as distributed. Member Ross seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

- Fort Leonard Wood Cemetery Director position hiring process has begun. Applicants must be on the State Merit System register.

- Proposition "A" the Schools First Initiative was passed by Missouri voters. The Commissioners instructed Tim Norton to set up a meeting with the Chairman of Missouri Veterans Commission, Missouri Gaming Commission and Jorgen Schlemeier, of Gamble & Schlemeier to discuss seeking additional funding from the Gaming Commission Funds.

- Mr. Norton recommended to the Commissioners no resident rate increase for 2009. Current rate is $1,800 maximum per month per resident (based on Veterans ability to pay).

2. **Homes Program: Anne Payne, Superintendent**

- Homes Program received 109 additional direct care employees enabling the Homes to meet federal staffing regulations and increase census from 91% in July 2007 to 99% for the past ten months. An additional 104 veterans per day are receiving skilled nursing care in a Missouri Veterans Home. Current number of veterans on waiting list is 934.

- During FY2008 Missouri Veterans Commission provided skilled nursing care to a total of 1,927 veterans up from 1,658 veterans served in FY2007 (net increase of 269). All Homes operated in compliance with 158 Federal Department of Veterans Affairs regulations.

- Homes Program implemented two initiatives during the past year to promote the Homes as an employer:

- Certified nursing assistant career ladder was expanded to a third step that includes a lead worker position.

- Domestic aide program, 198 individuals were recruited from the local communities and trained as certified nursing assistants.

- 142 MVHP employees were recognized for their outstanding service with awards from National Association of Health Care Assistants, as State of Missouri Employees of the Month, Department of Public Safety Employees of the Month, Missouri Veterans Commission Employee of the Month and the Programs annual parade of Stars events.
  September 2008, the Missouri Veterans Home – Warrensburg received a premier national award from NAHCA and was selected from over 850 Long Term Care facilities across the nation as the National Facility of the Year for 2008.

3. **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.

4. **Veterans Services Program: Stan Baughn, Director**

- FY2008 over $700,000,000 in Compensation and Pension benefits were paid to Missouri Veterans.

- 2008 the Veteran Service Officers had over 107,000 client contacts and completed over 26,000 forms that resulted in over 12,000 claims.

- Annual VSP Training Conference scheduled for November 17 – November 21, 2008 at the Sheraton Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri

- Initial VSO Grant funding awards for FY2009 are based on last years awards. Additional $250,000 approved by the legislature last session have been allocated to the service organizations based on percentage of claims activity for the prior fiscal year.

- VSO Grant Program Site Visits have been completed: seven VSO locations, five VA Medical Centers, St. Louis regional office and Vietnam Veterans Offices in Kansas City. Results distributed.

5. **Construction Update: Timothy O. Norton, Acting Executive Director**

- Fort Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery – Project has been awarded to Bales Construction out of Waynesville, MO. Groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for November 7, 2008. Construction has began and is schedule d for completion by December 2009.

- Cameron Veterans Home roof– Project is under construction and is scheduled for completion by mid December 2008.

- Cape Girardeau Veterans Home, emergency generator – Horner & Shifrin Engineers has been hired to design a new fire lane and emergency generator. Conducted initial design meeting and anticipate the project being ready for bid in the spring of 2009. City of Cape Girardeau is adding an access road along I-55 on the NW side of property.

- Lease Property for VSO Offices – Survey completed on MVC leased properties. Currently relocating Trenton and Maryville offices. Request to move four additional offices in HB13. Priority to ensure all offices are ADA compliant.

6. **Cemetery Program: Timothy O. Norton, Acting Executive Director**

- Bloomfield Cemetery has conducted 812 burials and have 4,496 pre-certifications

- Higginsville Cemetery has conducted 1,343 burials and have 3,612 pre-certifications

- Jacksonville Cemetery has conducted 398 burials and have 1,698 pre-certifications

- Springfield Cemetery has conducted 3,639 burials and have 7,640 pre-certifications. There is an increase of 10 percentage points in cremation this year over the entire cemetery average. The new wall around the rear of the facility is finished. The concrete pad in the rear of the facility is finished.

7. **Special Programs: Stan Baughn, Director Veterans Services**

- Minority Veterans Benefits Program – conducting a series of Veterans benefits briefings at a number of area libraries.

- Women Veterans Program – Activities include several Women Veteran tributes around the state.

8. State Veterans Ombudsman Program: Pat Rowe Kerr, State Veterans Ombudsman

- Triad of Patriots: Annually the state of Missouri receives $1.6 billion through VA federal expenditures via compensation & pension, education, vocational rehabilitation, all medical related expenses, health care, general revenue expenditures and construction of which $700 million annually are direct payments to Missouri Veterans.

  25% of Missouri's 540,000 prior service Veterans still need to receive federal VA benefits.

  It is estimated that upwards of 80% of Veterans serving since 9/11 need to receive VA benefits.

- Help for the Homefront: Dept. of Mental Health - Special help for families of members of the National Guard, Reserve components and discharged active duty Veterans

9. Incarcerated Veterans Program: Gerry Hodge, Veterans Service Officer

- 2007 Missouri Veterans Commission and the Department of Corrections singed an MOU to provide direct services to Missouri's Incarcerated Veterans. To date have received 349 intake forms on incarcerated veterans (minimized 9 service connected compensation claims, stopped 5-NSC pension claims, and have suspended 4 newly-filed pension claims). It is estimated that this has saved approximately $20,000 to $25,000 in state and federal tax dollars.

- There are approximately 32,000 people incarcerated in Missouri Prisons (20 prisons in Missouri)

- 3,000 + are Veterans

- 97% of this population will be going home…that is approximately 20,000 a year

- 100,000 + children in MO have a parent in prison

- 34% of this population will return to prison because they will not survive in the community

- Most offenders are leaving our prison without a plan

- Program Initial Goals:

  - Facilitate the transition of incarcerated Veterans
  - Provide direct services through referrals
  - Link incarcerated Veterans with appropriate services
  - Work together with different state and federal agencies
  - Stop/minimize Veteran benefits checks when the veteran is incarcerated to reduce the number of overpayments upon release from prison (to date have stopped $38,000)
  - Educate Department of Corrections staff about incarcerated OEF/OIF Veterans

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Adoption of Resolution 08-05 – Proposed Rulemaking Amendments
Commissioner Ross made a motion to approve of the adoption of MVC Resolution 08-05 as distributed. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

B. 2009 MVC Game Plan – Distributed

C. Veterans Memorial Project – MVC is compiling a database of Veterans and War Memorials, Monuments, and Markers in the State of Missouri. Goal of the project is to provide in one location, a record of Missouri's commitment to Veterans and the conflicts they served in.

D. Other Business:

E. Guest Remarks/Public Comment:

<u>Jim Whitfield, Western Area Supervisor, MO Military Funeral Honors Program</u>

- Funeral Honors Program has coordinated over 70,000 services to date

<u>Jack Mattews, President MVC Foundation, Inc.</u>

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

<u>Dalton Wright, Ex-Officio Member MVC and Chairman MMPEC</u>

- Missouri is the 7th state to sign the new Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Sallie Houser-Hanfelder, Director, VAMC-Columbia

- Veterans Day Ceremony to be held on November 11th at VAMC-Columbia at 11:00 a.m.
- Addressing Valle Parking issues at the center
- Reducing psychiatric beds to five (5) beds
- Installing lifts in each hospital room (4 months to complete project)
- Increase in 150 more Veterans being seen since last year
- CBOC Jefferson City opened in September 2008
- CBOC Sedalia projected to open 2010
- VA cannot provide assistance to incarcerated Veterans until they have been released from the prison system

George Newell, President MAVO

- MAVO Legislative Committee met with Joe Frank and Tim Norton to discuss legislative issues
- Concerns with grant checks getting out, believes issue resolved
- MAVO recommend language change to RSMO-Chapter 42 to require nominees for Commissioners to have been in good standing in their sponsoring veterans organization for a period a not less than two (2) years and have been recommended by the state leadership
- Attended Press Conference - MFA Oil and the Dr Pepper / Snapple Group presented a $50,000 check to benefit the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund (MMFRF)
- **Veterans Appreciation Day February 2-3, 2009**

  10:00 A.M., 2 February 2009
  Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC) Meeting, Room 400, Truman Office Building, Jefferson City, MO

  1:30 P.M., 2 February 2009
  Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations (MAVO) Meeting, Room 400, Truman Office Building, Jefferson City, MO

  6:00 P.M., 2 February 2009
  Legislative Reception – American Legion Post 5, 1423 Tanner Bridge Road, Jefferson City, MO 65101 573-636-7442 (Hosted by the Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations (MAVO) and the Missouri Veterans Commission Foundation, Inc. (MVC Foundation, Inc.))

8:00 A.M., 3 February 2009
Coffee, Juice, Donuts – Missouri State Capitol Rotunda, Jefferson City, MO

5:00 P.M., 3 February 2009
Testimony before Joint Session Senate and House Veterans Committees, Missouri Capitol, 3rd Floor, Senate Lounge

General Arvid E. West, Jr., Ex-Officio Member MMPEC

- Reported on MMPEC Meeting

F. Next Meeting: Monday, February 2, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Room 400, Truman Office Building, Jefferson City, MO

Commissioner Ross made a motion to close the meeting pursuant to Section 610.021 (1) and (3) RSMo. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion to close the meeting was passed unanimously.

The meeting was re-opened.

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

Timothy O. Norton, Acting Secretary