

10 Dec 2020

Commission Meeting

7:00 PM

In accordance with Executive Order 2020-18 issued by Governor Pritzker, meetings will be held via videoconference/telephonically through the ZOOM Meeting platform. VAC Will County Board Members will be attending meetings remotely and the general public is strongly encouraged to do the same. If a member of the public would like to attend the meeting virtually, please send an email to vacwc@willcountyillinois.com and a link will provided.

- I. Call to Order:
 - A. Pledge of Allegiance
 - B. Opening Prayer:
- II. Roll Call of Attendees: Secretary

VAC Commission		
Attendee Name	Title	Status
Jack Picciolo	Chairman	
Nicholas Barry	Vice Chairman	
Denise Williams	Secretary	Excused
Amanda Koch	Sgt-At-Arms	
Jim Singler	Chaplain	
Tom Mlynek	Member	
Janet Blue	Member	
Steve Benicke	Member	
Vic Martinka	Past Chairman	
John York	Past Chairman	
Wayne Horne	Past Chairman	

- III. Introduction of Guests and/or First Time Attendees:
- IV. Minutes of Previous Meeting (12 Nov @ 7:00pm)
 - A. Motion:
- V. Superintendents Report:
 - A. Financial Assistance Report October 2020
 - a) Shelter (3) \$1050.00
 - b) Electric (6) \$382.95
 - c)Water (2) \$80.65
 - d) Gas (1) \$26.01
 - B. Financial Assistance Report Nov 202
 - a) Shelter
 - b) Electric
 - c)Water
 - d) Gas
 - C. Award/VSO Productivity:
- VI. New Business:
 - A. COVID-19 Financial Assistance Guidelines
 - a) Extend Beyond 31 Dec 2020
 - b) Motion:
 - B. New Reports/Mission of VAC Meeting

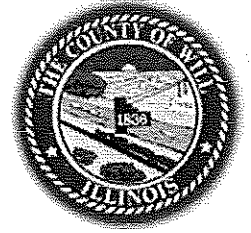
- a) Legislative Review *Attached*
 - b) CARES Request *Attached*
 - c) CARES Report
 - 1. Project 165 – V. Tawrel
 - 2. Other CARES – K. McNichol
- VII. Old Business
- A. By-Law Review
 - a) Lisa McG to discuss
 - B. Revisit list of non-traditional orgs to include
- VIII. Executive Closed Session per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) – “appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body”
- A. Roll Call
 - B. Employment
 - a) Discussion
 - C. Motion to exit Executive Closed Session
- IX. Discuss agenda date/time next meeting
- X. Motion to Adjourn

VAC Executive Committee Meeting
1/14/2020?
7PM
2400 Glenwood Ave STE 110 Joliet IL 60435



Veteran Assistance Commission of Will County

Kristina McNichol – Superintendent
 Glenwood Center 2400 Glenwood Ave. Ste 110 Joliet, IL 60432
 Ph: (815)740-8389 Fax: (815)740-4329



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- I. Call to Order:
 - A. Pledge of Allegiance
 - B. Opening Prayer:
- II. Roll Call of Attendees: Secretary

VAC Commission		
Attendee Name	Title	Status
Jack Picciolo	President	Present
Nicholas Barry	Vice President	Present
Denise Williams	Secretary	Excused
Amanda Koch	Sgt-At-Arms	Present
Jim Singler	Chaplain	Present
Tom Mlynek	Member	Present
Janet Blue	Member	Present
Steve Benicke	Member	Present
Vic Martinka	Past Chairman	Present
John York	Past Chairman	Absent
Wayne Horne	Past Chairman	Present

- III. Introduction of Guests and/or First Time Attendees: Lisa McGlasson, Guest.
- IV. Minutes of Previous Meeting (12 Nov @ 7:00pm)
 - A. Motion: Member Steve Benicke; Member, Tom Mlynek; All in favor; Motion passed
- V. Superintendents Report:
 - A. Financial Assistance Report October 2020
 - a) Shelter (3) \$1050.00
 - b) Electric (6) \$382.95
 - c) Water (2) \$80.65
 - d) Gas (1) \$26.01
 - B. Financial Assistance Report Nov 2020
 - a) Shelter (5) \$2331.45
 - b) Electric (3) \$137.99
 - c) Water (1) \$48.75
 - d) Gas (1) \$44.71
 - C. Award/VSO Productivity:



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- a) Superintendent and staff are working on a more comprehensive tracking system. Nothing new to report at this time.

VI. New Business:

A. COVID-19 Financial Assistance Guidelines

- a) Extend Beyond 31 Dec 2020
 - 1. Discussion regarding National guidance, State IL guidance, Will County VAC needs in the community
- b) Motion: Member Steve Benicke: Extend COVID19 Financial Assistance to extend to May 1, 2021; Seconded Member Janet Blue; All in Favor. Motion passed.

B. New Reports/Mission of VAC Meeting

- a) Legislative Review *Attached*
 - 1. Discussion
 - a. How VAC board can bring awareness to pending State legislation
 - b. Superintendent McNichol offered printing service to VAC Board members to hand out to local posts
- b) CARES Request *Attached*
- c) CARES Report
 - 1. Project 165 – V. Tawrel
 - 2. Other CARES – K. McNichol
 - a. Microsoft Surfaces
 - b. RedMane Financial Assistance Program

VII. Old Business

A. By-Law Review

- a) Lisa McGlasson to discuss
 - 1. Lisa McGlasson, President Jack Picciolo, & Superintendent McNichol will set a date to discuss VAC By-Laws

B. Revisit list of non-traditional orgs to include

VIII. Executive Closed Session per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) – “appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body”

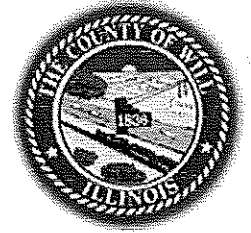
A. Roll Call

VAC Commission		
Attendee Name	Title	Status
Jack Picciolo	President	Present
Nicholas Barry	Vice President	Present
Denise Williams	Secretary	Excused



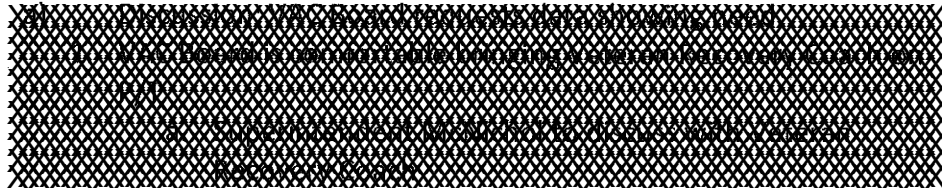
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Amanda Koch	Sgt-At-Arms	Present
Jim Singler	Chaplain	Present
Tom Mlynek	Member	Present
Janet Blue	Member	Present
Steve Benicke	Member	Present
Vic Martinka	Past Chairman	Present
John York	Past Chairman	Absent
Wayne Horne	Past Chairman	Present

B. Employment: VAC staff requests Veteran Recovery Coach, full time under VAC



C. Motion to exit Executive Closed Session: Member Tom Mlynek; Second, Chaplain James Singlar.

IX. Return to Open Meeting.

X. Discuss agenda date/time next meeting: President Jack Picciolo suggested taking the month of January off. No VAC meeting in Jan 2021, Next meeting will be Feb 2021.

A. Motion: Vice President Nicholas Barry; Second, Member Janet Blue; All in Favor; Motion Passed.

XI. Motion to Adjourn: Member Tom Mlynek; Second, Vice President Nicholas Barry; All in Favor @ 815PM.

VAC Executive Committee Meeting
2/2021
7PM
2400 Glenwood Ave STE 110 Joliet IL 60435

2020 Vetra Report

YTD
Totals

Purpose Form Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul* Aug Sep Oct Nov Totals

Prep forms

Purpose	Form	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Totals
Intent to file*	21-0966	40	80	52	58	17	20	28	46	69	43	33	39	525
Power of Attorney*	21-22	44	63	67	58	18	27	32	63	75	46	44	47	584
		84	143	119	116	35	47	60	109	144	89	77	86	1109

Claims

Fully Developed	21-526ez	45	69	61	45	20	23	28	50	35	32	38	43	489
Supplemental	21-526b	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Widow's Pension/DIC	21p534ez	7	8	3	8	8	1	9	14	12	4	8	3	85
Non Service Connected	21p527ez	1	0	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	8	4	6	30
		53	80	67	54	30	25	39	65	49	44	50	52	608

Support

Statement	21-4138	76	114	88	97	41	52	69	69	57	55	53	50	821
PTSD statement	21-0781	9	11	9	4	1	4	4	12	5	8	3	3	73
PTSD Assault Statement	21-0781a	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	9
Individual Unemployability	21-8940	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	6	0	1	2	16
Add Dependent*	21-686c	12	19	6	10	1	2	5	8	2	1	1	3	70
School Aged Dependent*	21-674	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		100	147	106	111	43	59	80	92	70	65	59	58	990

ROI

NPRC Request	sf180	9	22	15	17	5	2	5	5	15	3	3	2	103
Med Records Request	10-5345	13	23	29	18	1	6	14	6	13	6	6	5	140
VA Release of information	21-4142/a	11	18	17	12	3	11	31	25	11	15	9	21	184
		33	63	61	47	9	19	50	36	39	24	18	28	427

Purpose	Form	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Appeals/AMA													
Appeal	Form 9	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Notice of Disagreement	21-0958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplemental claim	20-0995	20	19	25	18	9	10	18	17	16	12	12	13
Higher Level Review	20-0996	4	0	2	4	2	1	1	0	1	6	4	2
Board Appeal	10-182	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	3	0	1	0	1
		26	21	30	24	12	14	21	20	17	19	16	16
													236

Purpose	Form	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Death													
Burial	21p530	2	5	3	0	1	1	3	2	4	1	0	2
Pre-Needs application	40-10007	2	5	4	8	2	1	0	1	5	0	2	0
Medallion	40-1330m	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
Headstone	40-1330	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
		4	10	8	8	4	2	4	4	11	4	2	2
													63

Purpose	Form	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Healthcare Applications													
Health Care	10-10ez	10	26	5	16	4	3	5	11	10	11	9	8
Healthcare Update	10-10ezr	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	0	1
CHAMPVA	10-10d	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
		14	28	7	16	5	3	5	14	13	13	9	11
													118

Purpose	Form	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Record changes/corrections													
Discharge Correction	dd-149	6	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	0
Discharge Upgrade	dd-293	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
VA Waiver	5655	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		6	4	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	3	0
Total forms:		341	541	447	411	154	190	275	359	377	282	234	253
													3864

Purpose	Form	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Direct Submissions													
		69	221	207	207	90	118	172	225	241	161	132	152
													1995

* indicates VA forms that are commonly completed through other online resources not reported in Vetraspec

2019

April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
151	177	108	102	241	217	277	119
226	311	167	171	280	351	338	229
325	289	143	78	270	252	282	313
289	312	160	108	377	256	291	239
991	1089	578	459	1168	1076	1188	900

3w Claims COIVD19 2020

May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
45	73	110	117	85	83	91

New Claims 2019

May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
132	52	83	126	91	143	94

Good Morning CARES Committee –

I wanted to send an email to address any questions and give further detail on VAC second request of CARES funding.

1. Marketing Campaign

With the uncertainty of COVID-19 effect on the community, the VAC believes reaching as many people that need help is an integral response to mitigating any negative effects of COVID-19 on the County of Will. In March, VAC partnered with *Hey G Consulting*, who assisted the VAC with FaceBook & Instagram content. The results of our partnership doubled our social media outreach & helped maintain VAC clientele numbers throughout the shutdown. *Hey G Consulting* created custom graphics, staff videos, and shared collaborative partner agency programs. The VAC has prepared a google doc to send to partner service providers & program managers so we can effectively include ALL Will County agencies & help educate not only veterans, but spouses, children, and neighbors of veterans.

VAC marketing program includes YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, along with traditional avenues like newspaper and radio. Most of our Non-For-Profit partners do NOT have an advertising/marketing budget. VAC believes, when the tide comes in, all boats shall rise for the greater good of the community.

Furthermore, Will County is home to 30,005 veterans (2019) of which only 26.2% eligible veterans are enrolled in VA Healthcare. Currently, 11,165 veterans have utilized VAC services, resulting in \$58Million of federal dollars procured.

A strategic marketing campaign is needed to help our community become informed, help our service providers expand their reach, and help Will County veterans and community members recover from COVID-19.

2. Four Unit Building

The VAC, by state mandate, offers emergency financial assistance to Will CO veterans. The VAC Veterans Financial Assistance Program allows single veterans to qualify for 6 months of:

- \$350 towards rent
- \$185 towards utility
- \$50 towards personal needs/food

Totaling \$585 per veteran each month. Four unit/veterans = \$2,340 per month already built into 2021 VAC budget.

Maintaining the 4 unit building is not budgetary concern. Occupancy of the building would be open to the veteran public. The veterans in the units would not be charged rent, rather be empowered to save their monies and invest in their future.

The VAC Homeless Community Collaborative Program Manager, Valerie Tawrel, has shown that having the opportunity to work with veterans individually at VAC Emergency Hotel Project (funded by CARES), leads to successful transition to permanent housing. VAC currently has 14 veterans on Veteran Financial

Assistance, 8 applications pending, and 5 homeless veterans in hotel. From the administrative side, the CARES funding used to purchase VAC Four Unit Building would provide a cost savings to Will County tax payers.

The VAC knows there is a hotel in the works for the general homeless/housing insecure population. The VAC wants to offer an environment that is more than just a room in the general population and continue to focus our housing interventions strategies with our veterans.

3. Mental Healthcare

There is no doubt that COVID19 fatigue is real. Will County's current mental health provider to client ration is 82,902:1. Their system is overwhelmed by need.

"When COVID shut all that (services) down, it really created kind of a perfect storm that threatened the mental health of all the warriors we serve. Financial stress has also added to that storm, if you will. Job loss for veterans and for caregivers, family members, and caregivers have exacerbated an already tough time for veterans in isolation", Wounded Warrior Project CEO Mike Linnington said.

Wounded Warrior project conducted a COVID-19 Mental Health Survey where 30,000 veterans responded:

- 52% said their mental health was worse during the pandemic
- 49% said their physical health was worse
- 61% said they felt disconnected from friends, family, and the community

In that same survey, 51% of vets said that they had their appointments for Mental Health had been cancelled or postponed.

1. Brandon Meyers (6/2013) 25 yrs old, Plainfield.
2. Paul Derdzinski (4/2018) 33 yrs old, Romeoville.
3. Donald Garrity (6/2018) 44 yrs old, Plainfield.
4. Christopher Rauen (11/2019) 30 yrs old, Joliet/HINES VA.

Don, Paul, & Chris were all clients of the VAC and were successful in suicide. Brandon, was not a client of the VAC, his parent's utilized VAC office seeking death benefits for their only son. VAC assisted Paul & Don's wives & children, with resources. Christopher did not have a spouse or kids, but his mother and aunt now volunteer with veteran groups in his memory.

Each of these men NEEDED additional mental health resources before COVID-19, and no doubt there are more veterans out there just like Brandon, Paul, Don, & Chris. They needed someone to pick up the phone, answer a text, and a community program outside of 9-5PM hours. VAC did not have the resources to help them at the time. The VAC is inherently dependent on outside programs, to include the VA, for mental healthcare resources offered to our veterans.

Dr. Leo Sher, From James J. Peters Veterans' Administration Hospital in NY, published an article titled "The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on suicide rates" on 10 Oct 2020. Dr. Sher's article provides a lot of great data and statistics, but the line that stands above the rest is:

“Social isolation, anxiety, fear of contagion, uncertainty, chronic stress and economic difficulties may lead to the development or exacerbation of depressive, anxiety, substance use and other psychiatric disorder in vulnerable populations including individuals with pre-existing psychiatric disorder and people who reside in high COVID-19 prevalence areas.”

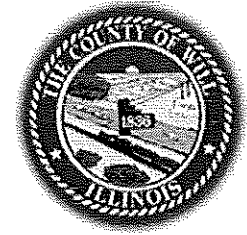
That is after all, how and why Will County received \$120M. The VAC would like to ensure the veteran public health response to COVID-19 increases intervention and preventions efforts to address mental health conditions.

I would like to close with reminding the committee that the VAC is the most successful VAC in Illinois because of the staffs’ ability to think ahead, and think outside of the box. We were the agency that set up the homeless hotel project in March. We were the agency that requested \$60K from WCB in April that allowed for our community partners to extend their traditional funding and house 126 homeless during a global pandemic. I realize that our requests are different than other departments, but we can and will continue to advocate for our veterans, the community, and prove we are worth the investment.



Veteran Assistance Commission of Will County

Kristina McNichol – Superintendent
Glenwood Center 2400 Glenwood Ave. Ste 110 Joliet, IL 60432
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10 Dec 2020

Proposed State Legislation

SB 110 – Surviving spouse amendment to the disabled veterans homestead exemption

Provides that the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year. Provides that the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to:

- (i) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption in the current taxable year if he or she had survived and
- (ii) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

Provides that, in the case of a surviving spouse who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, the property is exempt.

SB 1255 – Transfer of state veterans education benefits

Amends the higher education act with regard to the Illinois Veterans Grant Program that, effective in 2019, a veteran may transfer his or her benefits to a qualified dependent if certain conditions are met.

SB 2293 – Admission to veterans home for a retired guard and reserve

Provides that a veteran is entitled to admission to an Illinois veterans home if he or she served in National Guard or reserve forces and completed 20 years of satisfactory service, is otherwise healthy, receives reserve or active duty retirement benefits and has been an Illinois resident for at least one year.

SB3761 – Recruiter access to high school and ASVAB testing

Amends the school code beginning in 2021 school year to require school districts to provide students enrolled in grades 10 through 12 the opportunity to take the Armed Services vocational aptitude battery test and consult with a military recruiter during school hours.

HB5422 Guard and reserve tax credit for employers

Amends the Illinois income tax act. Revise credits awarded for wages paid to qualified veterans. The bill provides that the credit shall be \$5,000 for qualified veterans who are unemployed at the time of hire and \$1,200 for other qualified veterans. The definition of qualified veteran would

be changed to include all Illinois residents who are members of the National Guard, military reserves or regular components of the Armed Forces.

HB5532 - tax credit for a veteran caregiver

Creates an income tax credit for taxpayers who are caregivers of a veteran with a disability. Provides that the credit should be equal to 5% of the cost incurred in caring for the veteran, not to exceed \$1,000 in credits in any taxable year.

HB 2530 – Eliminate school district boundaries for military dependents on active duty

Amends the School Code. Provides that if a dependent of active United States military personnel is a nonresident of the school district because the parent or guardian is being transferred to a military installation located within the district, then the district must permit the dependent to enroll in school and must not charge the dependent nonresident tuition on the condition that the dependent provides the district with official military documentation reflecting the transfer and arrival date, and proof, within 10 days after the arrival date, that the dependent is a district resident.

HB5250 - Eliminate requirement for annual application for disabled veteran's property tax Exemption

Amends the property tax code so that a veteran who has service-connected disability of 100% is not required to reapply for the homestead exemption for veterans with disabilities.

SB 0040 Veterans preference in promotions

Amends the fire department promotion act, the counties code and Illinois municipal code to remove restrictions on the ability to receive an additional veterans preference promotion if the person has already received a previous promotion based on a veterans preference.

HB5609 Grant program for veterans service dogs

Appropriate \$200,000 from the general revenue fund for the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to be used for a \$100,000 grant to Willing Partners Canine Education, and a \$100,000 grant to Canines for Veterans, a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization, for cost associated with service dog training for veterans

COMMISSION BY-LAWS OF THE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
OF WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ARTICLE I -NAME

Section 1. The name of this Commission shall be The Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County, Illinois also known as Veterans Assistance Commission (VACWC) or Commission.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1. The purpose of this Commission is to promote the welfare of the veterans of the uniformed services of the United States of America whose final discharge is honorable to include their families as governed by 330 Illinois Compiled Statutes 45/2 thru 45/10 entitled 'Military Veterans Assistance Act' of the Illinois Revised Statutes to include revisions and future amendments thereto.

Section 2. The Commission will act as a central office for all veteran organizations included as members of this Commission.

Section 3. The Commission will have general oversight of the distribution of all relief and supplies and services that may be appropriated for the benefit of indigent veterans and their families.

Section 4. The Commission will administer and process all government claims referred to the Commission.

Section 5. The Commission will formulate such rules and regulation that will enable it to carry out the purpose set forth herein.

Article III – JURISDICTION

Section 1. The territory to be included within the jurisdiction for this Commission will be the county of Will in the state of Illinois.

Article IV – OFFICE

Section 1. The headquarters and principle office of this Commission shall be in a County building, or other suitable central location. The current location is: 2400 Glenwood Ave STE 110, Joliet IL 60435.

Section 2. This office shall be provided, furnished and equipped by the County with all necessary supplies, including telephone, computers, printers, printing, and stationary, relief orders, relief questionnaires, postage, desks, etc.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The membership of the Commission will be composed of one delegate and one alternate from each of the recognized veteran organizations in the county of Will, Illinois, to include, but not limited to:

- A. Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts (VFW)
- B. The American Legion Posts (AML)
- C. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- D. American Veterans (AMVETS)
- E. 40 & 8
- F. Veterans of World War I and World War II
- G. Marine Corps League
- H. Military Order of the Purple Heart
- I. Polish Legion of American Veterans
- J. Fleet Reserve Association
- K. Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
- L. Jewish War Veterans

Section 2. All Posts, Camps, Ships, or Chapters of recognized veterans organizations requesting membership in this Commission must have an office, headquarters, post home, or other official domicile located within the geographic limits of Will County.

Section 3. Any recognized Veterans Organization interested in the object and purpose of this Commission and can qualify under the Statutes of the State of Illinois, subject to the rules and regulations governing admission, may upon approval of the members of this Commission, become members thereof.

Section 4. A current list of the eligible and Commission approved veteran organizations will be maintained by the Commission and listed on the Commission's website.

Section 5. Each organization shall be entitled to one vote. which may be cast by the member organization's delegate or his/her alternate is present. No one delegate or alternate shall be permitted to vote for any organization other than the one he officially represents, and no proxy votes are allowed

Section 6. The delegate and alternate will be selected as determined by each member organization and will be reported in writing to the Secretary of the Commission board to include the name of the delegate and alternate. The appointment of the delegate and alternate shall be signed by the chief officer of the organization on a form provided by the Secretary. Each delegate and alternate must be an Honorably Discharged Veteran.

Section 7. Should any delegate or alternate be disqualified or unable to serve, the Post, Organization, Camp, or Chapter shall, upon notice of the disqualification or inability to serve, immediately notify the Executive Board and call a vote at the Post, Camp, or Chapter for a replacement to be appointed prior to the next Commission Meeting.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers of this Commission shall be PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, CHAPLAIN, and SERGEANT AT ARMS which make up the Executive Committee.

Section 2. PAST PRESIDENTS shall be given honorary membership to the Executive Committee with voting rights.

Section 3. In the absence of a duly elected SECRETARY wherein the position remains unfilled, the Senior Veterans Service Officer will act as SECRETARY until such time as a SECRETARY is appointed.

Section 4. A Judge Advocate (as needed) may be appointed by the executive committee and ratified by the board and need not be a member of the Commission.

Section 5. Any member of this Commission shall be eligible to hold office, with the best interest of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County, and it is further provided that no two (2) offices are filled by persons representing the same Post, Organization, Camp, or Chapter.

Section 6. A vacancy of any office occurring during the current term shall be replaced by appointment of the executive committee and ratified by the Commission. A vacancy shall exist when an officer is absent from regular meetings of said Commission for three (3) consecutive meetings.

Section 7. The President elected as set forth in Section 1 of this article, shall vacate his designation as delegate or alternate and the organization which he officially represents shall be entitled to replace him until such time as his term of office ends. The President will only vote on matters before the commission in the event of a tie.

ARTICLE VII – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Every two years at the regularly scheduled Annual meeting in the month of September, nominations will be opened for the election of Officers.

Section 2. All nominations shall be from the floor of the membership present at the meeting. The candidate receiving the majority of the vote for each office shall be elected. Elections shall be by written ballot unless a position is not contested.

Section 3. All officers shall be elected at the October meeting for a term of two (2) years and all officers so elected shall assume their duties at the November meeting, following their election, and shall continue in office for two years or until their successors are regularly elected.

Section 4. Officers may be elected from any Unit, Post, Camp, or Chapter and must be serving as a Delegate or Alternate from those organizations, or a current elected Officer of this Commission at the time of election and must be in good standing with the Commission. A Delegate and Alternate from the same Unit, Post, Camp, or Chapter may not hold elected offices concurrently.

Section 5. Vacancies in any office occurring during the year shall be filled by the members of the Commission. A vacancy shall exist when an officer is absent from regular meetings of the Commission for three (3) consecutive meetings. Excused absences will not count against the office.

Section 6. Newly elected officers must submit a copy of their DD214 or Honorable Discharge Certificate, or such other proof of service which qualifies the officer for membership in their respective Veteran Service Organization, to the Superintendent within thirty (30) days following their election to an elected office. If the elected officer fails to submit the required documents within the specified time frame, the office will be declared vacant and a special election will be held to fill the vacant office.

Section 7. In the absence of a nomination for an elected office, or a vacated elected office, the process of appointing an officer to fill the vacant office will begin with the President's appointment.

The Requirements as to the appointment of a candidate include:

- A. Notice of appointment must be served to the Commission members thirty (30) days prior to the vote to approve the appointment;
- B. Appointment must be approved by a majority of the Executive Board Members;
- C. At a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission, the appointment will be voted on by the Commission members;
- D. If the candidate receives a majority vote of the Commission to approve the appointment, the candidate will assume the duties of the elected office immediately; and,
- E. If the majority vote of the Commission is to deny appointment the process will start again until the President's appointment is approved by the Commission members.

ARTICLE VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall be composed of the five Elected Officers of the Commission and three (4) Members elected at large. The three (3) at large members will be elected at the annual meeting outlined in Article VI, Section III.

Section 2. The three (3) Members elected at large shall serve the following terms:

- A. One Member shall be elected to serve a term of office for four (4) years;
- B. One Member shall be elected to serve a term of office for three (3) years;
- C. One Member shall be elected to serve a term of office for two (2) years; and,

All members so elected shall be installed and assume their duties at the next regular meeting, and shall continue in office until their successors are regularly elected and installed.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall meet at the call of the President or at the request of three (3) members of the Executive Board.

Section 4. The Executive Board shall provide oversight of the Superintendent in the interim between the regular meetings of the Commission.

Section 5. The Executive Board is given the authority to act on final decisions of appeal within the Commission's authority.

Section 6. The Executive Board shall have the power to act in case of emergency between meetings of the Commission.

Section 7. The Executive Board shall review the budget prepared by the Superintendent before being submitted to the Finance Committee of the County Board each May.

Section 8. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of at least three members.

Section 9. Notice of an Executive Board meeting shall be made at least 48 hours before the meeting by the Secretary. The President or three (3) members of the Board may call for a meeting and the Secretary shall call the meeting as directed.

Section 10. The Executive Board during a bonified emergency has the authority to take action ordinarily requiring Commission approval, without prior approval of the Commission. The Board will notify the Commission of the emergency action taken at the next regular meeting of the Commission.

ARTICLE IX – STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. The President shall, with the consent of the Executive Board, appoint such other Committees as shall be deemed advisable to carry out the purpose of this Commission.

ARTICLE X – THE BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF WILL COUNTY

Section 1. The Board of Appeals of the Veterans Assistance Commission consists of seven (7) voting members, and the Veterans Assistance Commission Judge Advocate and Secretary. The Veterans Assistance Commission Judge Advocate and the Secretary are non-voting members of the Board of Appeals. The Judge Advocate and the Secretary are to ensure procedural protocol and keep record of the appeal process. All members of the Board of Appeals must be Honorably Discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces and provide the Superintendent with a copy of their DD214 or Honorable Discharge Certificate.

Section 2. The President of the Commission shall be the President of the Board of Appeals.

Section 3. The remaining members shall be elected, from the Post, Organization, Camp, or Chapter to the Commission, by the Commission. One member from World War II, one member from the Korean Campaign, One member from the Vietnam Campaign, one member from the Gulf War Era, one member from the Iraq Campaign, one member from the Afghanistan Campaign. If a member is unavailable from the above, the vacancy will be filled from an at large Post, Organization, Camp, or Chapter.

Section 4. The term of office is for four (4) years, except:

- A. The President of the Commission shall serve on the Board of Appeals while holding the Office of President.
- B. The elected committee members will serve for four (4) years with the terms staggered. The current term expirations are maintained on file in the Commission Office.

Section 5. The duties of the Board of Appeals are to provide assistance to the Superintendent; to see that the policies and procedures of the appeal process of the Commission are adhered to; and, to hear any appeals of the Superintendent's rulings.

ARTICLE XI – MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meeting of the Commission shall be held on the second Tuesday once every quarter, with meetings typically falling in the months of February, May, July, Sep and November, at the VACWC Office or other suitable location, and shall transact such business as may be properly brought before it.

~~Section 2. Special Meeting will commence every other year, in October, to elect Executive Board Members.~~

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the President, Superintendent, or by three (3) members of the Executive Committee. The Secretary shall inform all members of the Commission at least three (3) days prior to the date of said meeting. The call for meeting shall state the purpose of the special meeting, and no other business than that for which it is called shall be transacted.

Section 4. Five members of this Commission, of which three (3) are elected officers, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business at any annual, regular, or special meeting, but a less number may adjourn any meeting from day to day.

Section 5. Proceedings for all business meetings shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, except as herein otherwise provided.

Section 6. The November meeting shall be the Annual Meeting and the fiscal or Commission year shall be from the date of the Annual Meeting to the day proceeding the Annual Meeting the following year.

Section 7. The Commission shall conduct all meetings in accordance with 5 ILCS 120 "Open Meetings Act", including all amendments to the Act.

- A. The "Open Meetings Act", as amended, requires that all State and Local government bodies file with the Illinois Attorney General's Office all Open Meetings Act Designees.
- B. Designees will be required to complete on-line training provided by the Illinois Attorney General's Office annually.
- C. Each elected member of the Executive Board of the Commission shall be the registered Open Meeting Act Designees and shall comply with all requirements as directed by the Illinois Attorney General's Office

ARTICLE XII – SUPERINTENDENT

Section 1. The Executive powers of this Commission shall be vested in the Superintendent, who shall be selected by the Executive Committee, duly elected by at least a simple majority of the full Commission, and shall take office on the date designated by the Committee.

Section 2. The Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission may appoint assistants as needed.

Section 3. Neither the Superintendent nor any staff member shall be allowed to hold any elected office in a VACWC member veteran's organization or in Will County government.

Section 4. This office shall be under the direction of the Superintendent, further designated as Superintendent of Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County, who shall investigate and report to the Veterans Assistance Commission all claims for relief under the law.

Section 5. The Superintendent shall, under the direction of the Commission, maintain an office in the County Administration Building or other central location. Said office is to be used solely by the Commission for carrying out of its purposes. Said office shall be provided, furnished, and equipped by the County of Will with all necessary equipment and supplies, as needed.

Section 6. The mission of the office shall be to provide service and assistance to the military veterans and their families and families of deceased veterans who are in need of assistance, and for rendering of such other services as may be considered reasonable for carrying out the purposes of the Commission.

Section 7. The term of office of the Superintendent shall be indefinite, but shall come before the Executive Board and Commission for review every three (3) years. The Superintendent may be removed from office if, after investigations of a special elected committee, determines that he/she has not adequately fulfilled the duties and obligations of the office or if it is determined his/her demeanor is such as to hinder the ethical and professional performance of the office. The investigative committee, consisting of five (5) delegates or alternates, shall be elected after a written appeal to the Board is made by the delegates of no less than three (3) member organizations. The Commission must approve the removal of the Superintendent by a 2/3 vote of the delegates and officers.

Section 8. In the event of the resignation of the Superintendent, he/she must provide the Commission with a formal written notice ninety (90) days prior to the date of his/her resignation.

Section 9. Vacancy in the Superintendent's office due to death, retirement, or discharge, shall be temporarily filled by the Assistant Superintendent until such time as the Commission has selected a new Superintendent. During the temporary absence of the Superintendent due to illness, vacation, or business travel, the duties of the Superintendent shall be administered by the Assistant Superintendent.

Section 10. The Superintendent cannot have other employment that conflicts with the performance of his/her duties as the Superintendent. The said conflict will be determined by the Commission.

Section 11. The Superintendent and all members of the Executive Committee shall be bonded in an amount prescribed by The Military Veterans Assistance Act.

Section 12. The Superintendent shall not be authorized to hold elected office of this Commission for five (5) years after his voluntary separation or retirement as Superintendent of the Commission.

Section 13. The Superintendent must be an Honorably Discharged Veteran.

ARTICLE XIII – ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Section 1. The Assistant Superintendent shall be appointed by the Executive Board, duly elected by at least a quorum of the full Commission, and shall take office on the date designated by the Committee.

Section 2. The Assistant Superintendent shall be the primary supervisor of staff, interns, and volunteers.

Section 3. The Assistant Superintendent shall manage the office, develop and submit standard operating procedures, and train staff, interns, and volunteers.

Section 4. The term of office of the Assistant Superintendent shall be indefinite, but shall come before the Executive Board and Commission for review every three (3) years. The Assistant Superintendent may be removed from office if, after investigations of a special elected committee, determines that he/she has not adequately fulfilled the duties and obligations of the office or if it is determined his/her demeanor is such as to hinder the ethical and professional performance of the office. The investigative committee, consisting of five (5) delegates or alternates, shall be elected after a written appeal to the Board is made by the delegates of no less than three (3) member organizations. The Commission must approve the removal of the Assistant Superintendent by a 2/3 vote of the delegates and officers

Section 5. In the event of the resignation of the Assistant Superintendent, he/she must provide the Superintendent with a formal written notice ninety (90) days prior to the date of his/her resignation. Upon receipt of said resignation, the Superintendent will immediately inform the Commission.

Section 6. Vacancy in the Assistant Superintendent's office due to death, retirement, or discharge, shall be temporarily filled by the Senior Veterans Service Officer (SVSO) until such time as the Commission has selected a new Assistant Superintendent. During the temporary absence of the Assistant Superintendent due to illness, vacation, or business travel, the duties of the Assistant Superintendent shall be administered by the SVSO.

ARTICLE XIV – SENIOR VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Section I. The Senior Veterans Service Officer (SVSO) shall be duly appointed after careful examination and deliberation between the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Section II. The SVSO, and all subordinate Veteran Service Officers, shall be an at will employees.

Section II. The SVSO shall be responsible for maintaining detailed records and intakes of all veterans and family members who come to the Commission for services.

Section III. The SVSO is responsible to the Assistant Superintendent for developing training plans and procedures for staff, interns, and volunteers.

Section IV. The SVSO shall maintain the website, social media platforms, and newsletters for the Commission.

Section V. The SVSO shall be responsible to the Assistant Superintendent for developing plans for outreach, community and veterans' engagement, and partnerships with outside agencies and organizations.

ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS

Section I. These By-Laws may be amended at any regular meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the authorized membership attending such regular meeting, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing and read at the preceding regular meeting; and that written notice has been given to all members of the Commission (delegates and alternates) at least five days in advance of the date the amendment is to be acted upon.

Respectfully submitted,
The Veterans Assistance Commission
Of Will County, Illinois

Victor Martinka, President

Kristina McNichol, Superintendent

Approved _____, 2020

