

# 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



**14 Dec 2021**

**VAC Executive Commission Meeting**

**7:00 AM**

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's recent disaster proclamation, the number of COVID-19 cases in Will County and the CDC guidelines regarding COVID-19, the President of the Veterans Assistance Commission has determined that in-person meetings are not practical nor prudent. Therefore, all meetings for the Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County shall be held via video and/or audio until further notice.*

*The public is invited to comment or pose a questions by email at [vacwc@willcountyillinois.com](mailto:vacwc@willcountyillinois.com). At the For Good of the Commission/Public Comments portion of the meeting, the emails will be read into the record. Please email [vacwc@willcountyillinois.com](mailto:vacwc@willcountyillinois.com) for a link to attend the meeting via ZOOM.*

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

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

- III. Introduction of Guests and/or First Time Attendees:
 

Asst. States Atty. Chris Wise; States Atty to Exec. Bertino-Tarrant, Mary Tatro; States Atty; Ken Grey, States Atty; Janice Masokas, Guardian Angel Services Outreach/Volunteer Corrdinator; Ann Nagel, Gov. State & Peotone AL Aux President; Rep. Natalie Manley; States Atty James Glasgow; Robert Gilbert, Veteran.

  - A. State Rep. Natalie Manley; Intro to her office/position & Veteran Services- Manley states next session is 1/4/2022-thru 4/1/2022; Bill filing is 2nd week of Jan., will join again then to advise what/if any bills are presented of special interest to VAC; worked with States Atty. on details of power of States Atty to offer services to VAC; Discussion:
    - Glasgow stated resistance to legislation was optional to VACs across the state, will have a Asst. States Atty Chris Wise at all VAC meetings going forward
    - Picciolo asked McNichol to give background on why States Atty was needed; McNichol stated over the last several years there have been numerous occasions VAC has needed legal services,

should be a way to use taxpayer-funded existent legal services; states post Covid office has grown, has received \$2.2 million in grants, needs to maintain correct legal stance; Chris Wise will be primary contact

-Glasgow stated McNichol was the one WCVAC Superintendent who saw the need, example of FOIAs being difficult

B. Guardian Angel Services; Intro & Overview of Guardian Angel Services in Will County- Janice Masokas-Joliet, Plainfield, Crete, Grundy offices, programs for sexual assault and domestic violence; 24 hr hotline for victims and families of victims; provide free medical and legal advocacy, not attorneys, will accompany victims to court/navigate legal ramifications of assault; meet at ER, pay for emergency medical services, survivors do not pay for treatment; provide prevention by going to schools, teaching how to disclose, recognize, report abuse/assault, preschool thru college: Discussion:

-Blue requested contact info, flyer with contact info, thanked J. Masokas for services provided, she will provide email to VAC

-McNichol advised VAC partnered with Guardian Angel to provide services thru the pandemic, states VAC referred to Guardian Angel for veterans

IV. Minutes of Previous Meeting (16 Nov @ 7:00 AM)

A. Motion: Blue, Horne; Unanimous

V. Superintendents Report:

A. McNichol advised nearly \$90 million in awards will be received thru 2023

B. Award Log: McNichol advised per Governors Report, in 2020, VAC VSOs assisted Will county veterans in receiving over 76% of new awards of nearly \$20 million; advised VSO go into Fed. database to track new awards, states nearly \$5 million in 2021 to date; Financial Assistance is part of VAC budget, decreased 46% due to changes in policy to consecutive 6 months every 2 years, states 86% decrease 2020-2021; states w/in CoC, only 2 veterans have received Fed. financial assistance; advised per Governors Report, no transport assistance dollars spent since mid-2017 due to Will County States Atty, others, eliminated need for bus passes, occasional need now filled by Our Patriots: Discussion:

-Blue advised no busses in Monee, how do we get the info to veterans if they have a need, if busses/transport services are needed; Picciolo advised individual Posts/Legions are to share information with local veterans thru their Service Officers, states Nagel is Pres. of her Auxiliary, -Nagel stated need for more brochures at her

-Nick Reiher, Farmers Review states they are expanding coverage to Monee, keeping presence in Peotone, states part of the reason is to bring info to eastern Will County thru partnership with VAC, requested any information to be forwarded to him for publication on "Page 5"

-Picciolo advised need more participation from Posts/Legions at VAC meetings to disseminate information to their organizations

C. Project 150 Report:

a) McNichol advised ESG grant community partners, over 30% of housing services have come from non-veteran specific providers

b) McNichol advised VAC has spent \$267K of \$375 to date thru Covid, advised avg. rent is \$1100 going back into Will County local economy; shows how investment in affordable housing positively impacts local economy; Discussion:

-Nagel states work for GSU, referenced Kevin Smith from GSU; McNichol advised K. Smith was on a panel with her at inception of Illinois Joining Forces, invitation to participate will be sent

-Horne requested copy of Governors Report, McNichol advised will be sent to Board Members

-Wise advised point of order, legislation allowing remote meetings require roll call on all votes

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d) Past Chairman Horne called for Motion to accept Superintendents Report; Seconded by Member Blue; Roll call vote:

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

Motion Passed.

VI. New Business

A. Governor's Report;

- a) McNichol was hoping to have final edits done by this meeting
- b) Requested VAC Board host a special meeting to approve Gov. Report

VII. Old Business

A. DCEO Appropriation \$41,172.29

- a) McNichol - Application awaiting County Exec. Signature; Will have more to report at next regular scheduled meeting

VIII. For Good of the Commission/Public Comment

- A. Every Tuesday – VAC at Orland Park Vet Center – G. Wiza
- B. Every Monday – VAC at Orland Park Vet Center – A. Georgakopoulos  
-McNichol stated Orland Park has seen increase in request of home care, widows benefits services
- C. Every Thursday – Together We Stand, Peer Support Group
- D. Third Thursday – VAC at Peotone American Legion
- E. Second Monday - VAC at Manhattan American Legion Breakfast
- F. February 8, 2022 – Listen & Learn, Plainfield American Legion  
-McNichol stated it will be a “dinner” and learn  
-Williams asked if these sessions have an online component, will minutes, etc., be required;  
McGlasson advised these are informational sessions, not meetings

- Blue addressed request to stop deporting veterans, request issue be placed on agenda for update every other month
- Picciolo advised discussion to form a committee was had, will follow up
- McNichol asked Blue if update/report was being sought from Senator Duckworth's office, will be requested
- Steve Daly states Habitat for Humanity is working on project in Crest Hill, still working on a Post Home in Romeoville
- McNichol advised perf Nicole Murray, "Beer and Bourbon" event planned for May at Empress Casino for fundraiser, may be call for vendor-Castaneda asked if Wreaths Across America is still Dec. 18, Williams advised no ceremony as in years past, ceremony will be at Middle East Conflicts Wall in Marseilles; Picciolo advised all wreaths are being laid on Dec. 18 by scheduled volunteers, max of 100 cars at a time
- McNichol advised next Unaccompanied Burial at ALNC sponsored by DAR, Jan. 18, 2022

IX. Motion to Adjourn: Called by Member Blue; Seconded Past Chairman Martinka;

<b>VAC Commission</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
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Amanda Koch	Sgt-At-Arms	Y
Jim Singler	Chaplain	-
Tom Mlynek	Member	-
Janet Blue	Member	Y
Steve Benicke	Member	Y
Vic Martinka	Past Chairman	Y
John Kestle	Past Chairman	-
John York	Past Chairman	-
Wayne Horne	Past Chairman	Y

Motion Passed. Adjourn @ 815AM.

**VAC Executive Committee Meeting**  
**01/11/2022 @ 7AM**  
**VIA Zoom**

R/S

Denise Williams  
 VACWC Secretary