

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 honorably discharged military members and their families.

Section 2. The Commission will act as a central office for all veterans’ 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 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 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.

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 principal 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 veterans' organizations which provide responsible aid, assistance, or services to the veteran community 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. Gold Star Mothers
- J. Gold Star Wives
- K. National Association of Black Veterans, Inc.
- L. Women's Army Corps Veteran's Association
- M. Polish Legion of American Veterans
- N. Fleet Reserve Association
- O. Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
- P. Jewish War Veterans
- Q. Other organizations recognized by the State of Illinois or chartered by the U.S. Congress representing the interest of military veterans of the United States.

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 chartered by Congress or the State of Illinois with a paid membership of at least 15, may upon approval of the members of this Commission, become members thereof.

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

Section 5. Each organization shall be entitled to one vote at meetings, which may be cast by the member organization's delegate or alternate, present. Delegates or alternates shall be permitted to officially represent only one organization at any meeting, and proxy votes are not allowed,

Section 6. A 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. 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 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 Veteran 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 their designation as delegate or alternate and the organization which they officially represent shall be entitled to replace them until such time as their 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, 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 a 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, or relationship to the eligible veteran, which qualifies the officer for membership in their respective Veterans' 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 Officers.
- 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.
- E. If the majority vote of the Commission is to deny appointment, the process will begin 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 (3) 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,
- D. 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. The list of Executive Board members and terms of office shall be maintained by the Executive Board, and changes provided to the Superintendent, as necessary.

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

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) Officers 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 act ordinarily requiring Commission approval, without prior approval of the Commission. The Board will notify the Commission of the emergency action taken as soon as practicable.

Section 11. The members of the Executive Board will complete training required by law within specified timeframes and submit necessary proof of completion to maintain eligibility, including but not limited to the Open Meetings Act Requirements training under Freedom of Information Act. The Secretary of the Commission will provide training requirements to members, and track compliance.

Section 12. 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 IX – STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. The President shall, with the consent of the Executive Board, appoint members to serve on an Executive Committee, in addition to other such other Committees as shall be deemed advisable to carry out the purpose of this Commission.

Section 2. All committees, including ad hoc committees, shall include a VAC staff member to provide administrative support and ensure statutory compliance of the committee.

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 each U.S. Period of Service Era. Where a member from each service era is not available, at least one member must represent the U.S. Period of Service Era of the appellant. 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 assist the Superintendent; see that the policies and procedures of the appeal process of the Commission are adhered to; and, hear any appeals of the Superintendent's rulings.

ARTICLE XI – MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meeting of the Commission shall be held once every quarter, 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 convene 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) Officers 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.

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

Section 6. 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 and be scheduled in accordance with Will County fiscal calendar requirements.

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

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. Assistants will be employees of the VAC, and not Will County employees for the purposes of employment decisions, including hiring and termination. Superintendent has the right to hire and fire employees of the Commission.

Section 3. The Superintendent must be an Honorably Discharged Veteran as evidenced by a certified DD-214 submitted prior to appointment. The Superintendent shall select, as far as possible, secretaries and other employees from among Honorably Discharged Military Veterans as defined in Section 2 of 330 ILCS 45, or their surviving spouses.

Section 4. Neither the Superintendent nor any staff member shall be allowed to hold any elected office in a VACWC member veterans' organization or in Will County government.

Section 5. 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 6. 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 7. The mission of the office shall be to provide service and assistance to military veterans, their families, and families of deceased veterans, and for rendering of such other services as may be considered reasonable for carrying out the purposes of the Commission.

Section 8. 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 executed 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. An 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 9. 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, where possible.

Section 10. 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. Neither the Superintendent nor any staff member shall engage in employment or outside activities that could influence their professional conduct, including allocation of time and energy, in considerations of personal gain (financial or otherwise). Section 12. The Superintendent and all members of the Executive Committee shall be bonded in an amount prescribed by The Military Veterans Assistance Act.

Section 13. The Superintendent shall not be authorized to hold elected office of this Commission for five (5) years following voluntary separation or retirement as Superintendent of the Commission.

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 Executive 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 Veteran 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 VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER

Section I. The Senior Veteran 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 employees of the VAC, and are not employees of Will County for the purposes of employment decisions, including hiring and termination.

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 veteran engagement, and partnerships with outside agencies and organizations.

ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS

Section I. These By-Laws may be reviewed annually and amended as needed at any regular meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the authorized membership attending such regular meeting. Proposed amendment must be submitted in writing and read at the regular meeting preceding the meeting in which a vote will take place; and written notice will be 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

Jack Picciolo, President

Kristina McNichol, Superintendent

Approved _____, 2021