



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



13 Mar 2021 Commission Meeting 7:00 PM

~~9 Mar 2021 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	President	P
Nicholas Barry	Vice President	A
Denise Williams	Secretary	P
Amanda Koch	Sgt-At-Arms	P
Jim Singler	Chaplain	A
Tom Mlynek	Member	P
Janet Blue	Member	E
Steve Benicke	Member	A
Vic Martinka	Past Chairman	P
John York	Past Chairman	A
Wayne Horne	Past Chairman	P
John Kestel	Past Chairman	P

- III. Introduction of Guests and/or First Time Attendees:
- IV. Minutes of Previous Meeting (9 Feb @ 7:00pm)
 - A. Motion: Horne, Mlynek; Unanimous
- V. Superintendents Report:
 - Discussion of accessing SSA databases to report veteran deaths, changes to VAC reporting software
 - Motion to accept Superintendents report: Mlynek, Martinka; unanimous
 - A. Financial Assistance First Qtr 2021: 13 Veterans
 - a) Shelter: \$3850
 - b) Electric: \$561.22
 - c) Gas: \$422.13
 - d) Water: \$216.78
 - e) Personal Needs: \$575
 - f) Food: \$0
 - B. Award/VSO Productivity: \$1,546,175.38

C. Project165 Report Valerie Tawrel

Tawrel reported VAC well above national average, success in current model vs. congregate housing; discussed micro/macro of veteran experience in homelessness/housing; currently housing 8 veterans in hotel;

D. Motion: Mlynek, Martinka; unanimous

VI. New Business

A. VAC hours of operation

McNichol reported office is open/staffed full time; advised each VSO is doing one day per week remote, will continue to do so for foreseeable future

B. NorthPoint Discussion

McNichol advised Tom George of NorthPoint has requested another informational session, reported success from first session; Williams asked if it is appropriate for the VAC to continue to engage in this conversation, act as an ongoing information conduit; discussion re: limit attendance to veterans, remain neutral, VAC has no opinion; Picciolo asked how first session was received, McNichol advised she was contacted by other counties a positive response, also heard from Stone City VFW some could not hear/participate; discussion re: purpose of VAC role is to ensure veteran community has access to information; McNichol will investigate possibility of possibility of hosting a second information session for leaders of veteran community;

Koch suggested opening informational session to the general public or not doing anything; Horne reminded the VAC has made and will make no commitment or opinion; Mlynek suggested inviting local mayors, others as well; Picciolo reminded the VAC has been pushed into this issue despite this community issue not being direct veteran issue, three member posts are directly impacted; Williams suggested no further action by VAC, including no further information sessions; Koch suggested NorthPoint set up/find/pay for space to hold informational session; McNichol will further investigate with impacted posts, if NorthPoint can/will arrange appropriate space to hold/pay for informational session;

VII. Old Business

A. By-Law Discussion/Review: Atty. Lisa McGlasson

McNichol suggested By-Law discussion to be tabled

Motion: Martinka, Horne; unanimous

B. CARES Funding Update

McNichol advised funds remain, exploring options re: VAC purchasing space to house veterans, will ask for more time to determine path forward; will discuss further after upcoming in-service sessions with Will County, exploring other grant fundings

VIII. For Good of the Commission/Public Comment

Discussed moving next/future meetings to 7am; discussion re: returning to in-person; Koch suggested keeping virtual component, await County/State movement to in-person; McGlasson advised VAC cannot ask if Board members have been vaccinated but Board members can volunteer that information; Next meeting will be 7am on 4/12/2021

IX. Executive Closed Session per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) – The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired.

Motion: Horne, Mlynek; unanimous

X.

A. Roll Call

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John York	Past Chairman	A
Wayne Horne	Past Chairman	P
John Kestel	Past Chairman	E

McNichol advised prior to moving into closed session entirety of 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) is to be read into the minutes

B. Discussion VAC *The Landing Pad* program

McNichol advised several individual properties had been identified, downtown Joliet, Monee, Bolingbrook, eastern Will County; advised CARES funding requires discussion of purchase of specific properties/addresses must be done in closed session; advised two options – purchase ‘turn key’ properties or use or find additional funding to build something to address current and long-term needs; advised \$1.5 million can purchase, insufficient to build; advised emergency/congregate housing space has been dramatically been reduced due to Covid restrictions, advised hotel housing has been successful but at a cost of \$2500.00 per month, per room; Picciolo asked if VAC will be ‘landlords’, McNichol advised intent is to use the property similarly to how hotels are currently being used, “The Landing Pad”, a place to house short-term while moving veterans into permanent housing; VAC has initiated MOU w/Habitat for Humanity who will do handyman-type services, assist w/securing skilled trades needs; VAC already has budget for utilities; McNichol has requested information/numbers from suburban Cook County homeless programs re: numbers of eastern Will County residents/veterans crossing border for services; Picciolo asked difference from Friends and Family, length of stay; McNichol advised Friends and Family uses GDP, VA guidelines; McNichol advised this model will not use VA funding, no per diem, using as housing for homeless veterans in a VAC owned property instead of hotels; advised similar programs i.e., Dixon Center are funded/restricted to specific program guidelines tied to various funding sources; Williams requested links/information to be emailed, advised must leave the meeting, (minutes to be continued from recording)

McNichol advised CARES funding is ‘de-Federalized’, now under county control, there is time to use, advised other monies/funding being sought does have expiration; Picciolo advised VAC budget does have existing line item funding; McNichol advised unused funds rolled into next budget; Mlynek, Koch in favor of new construction, Koch suggested existing building purchase of a 4-unit building to prove the efficacy of the initiative, while seeking new construction; McNichol advised some funding do not allow for land acquisition; Koch advised purchase could be used for equity, intent to offer immediate assistance, proof of project; questions of availability of future funding, Koch advised probable future de-Federalized monies will be available, advised CARES funding is more restricted, advised Rescue Act is more flexible; McNichol will continue to investigate both tracks, immediate purchase of existing building/turn-key and future build

- XI. Return to Open Meeting
Motion: Mlynek, Horne; unanimous
- XII. Discussion/Comment
Mlynek asked re: fitness center, McNichol advised new VAC office will share parking lot with CBOC, advised access will begin through/with AllenForce, will be phased into any veteran enrolled at VAC will be eligible, will use AllenForce-trained to staff/volunteer
- XIII. Motion to Adjourn: Horne, Mlynek; unanimous

VAC Executive Committee Meeting
4/13/2021
7AM
2400 Glenwood Ave STE 110 Joliet IL 60435
VIA Zoom