



Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County

2400 Glenwood Ave. Ste 110 Joliet, IL 60435
Ph: (815)740-8389 Fax: (815)740-4329
veteransassistancewillco.org



OPEN

June 16th, 2025

Commission Meeting
American Legion Post 18
15052 South Archer Ave Lockport

6:00PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Invocation

ROLL CALL ATTENDEES:

POST	DELEGATE/ALTERNATE	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
AL 13 Plainfield	D: Rick Todd A: Raj Pillai	A		
AL 18 Lockport	D: Mike Meyers A: Frank DiGiovanni	D		
AL 43 Naperville	D: Luke Opyd A: Tom Jorstad		x	
AL 52 Romeoville	D: Steven Daley A: Virgil Oikion	D		
AL 191 Wilmington	D: Frank Mlyniec A: Thomas Stec	D		
AL 241 Joliet	D: Michael White A:		x	
VFW 367 Joliet	D: Jim Clausen A: Dennis Havranek			x
AL 392 Peotone	D: Robert Krueger A: Rick Bolanowski			
VFW 725 Mokena	D: Paul Cravens A: James Hogan	D,A		
AL 935 Manhattan	D: Robert Angone A: Lisa McGlasson	D,A		

AL 1080 Joliet	D: Tony Arellano A: Russ Pesko	D		
AL 1288 Bolingbrook	D: Larry Shaver A: Wayne Macejak	D		
AL 1291 Crete	D: Rick Onate A: Larry Black	D		
AL 1977 New Lenox	D: Mark Razny A: Patrick McLeod	D,A		
VFW 2199 Joliet	D: Lawrence Smith A: Kevin Pomykala	D		
VFW 5422 Wilmington	D: Walter Wink A: Ken Piehl		x	
VFW 5788 Lockport	D: Mark Bowman A: Dale Jacobs	D		
VFW 5819 Lemont	D: Ken Griffin A: James Andrulewicz		x	
VFW 5917 Bolingbrook	D: John Davin A: Gregory Palmer		x	
VFW 9545 New Lenox	D: Clarke Christiansen	D		

II. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND/OR FIRST TIME ATTENDEES

- A. Will Rucco Vice commander of VFW 5788

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

- A. Raj has a fellow Navy Veteran that currently is fighting cancer. The veteran's wife was in need of a hospital bed. Raj did some calling to help try and get a bed for the veteran. The veteran does not have a service-related disability so did not have anywhere to go for help.
- B. Will suspend the operations and swear in all of the newly elected officers.
- C. Larry thanked the commission for allowing him to have another year of leadership. Thank you to the staff at the VAC for their dedication and hard work.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES PREVIOUS MEETING

- A. Commission Meeting March 25th, 2025 (open)
- B. Motion to accept the notes: Paul Cravens
- C. 1st : Frank Mlyniec
- D. 2nd: Robert Angone

VI. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- A. Introduction of New Team Member
- B. VA Claims Award Log
 - a. 36 million rolling and reoccurring Dec 2024. Service connected
- C. Financial Assistance

- a. Update the financial assistance policy since it is fairly low usage
- D. Peer Support Recover Specialist Updates
 - a. 10 homeless veterans were helped to find housing
 - b. Problem solving court has been used
- E. Mental Health Coordinator Updates
 - a. Counseled 10 veterans
 - b. Going to the will county detention center to help the veterans that are incarcerated
 - c. Awarded the 708 grants from the 100,000 from the board to get a new vehicle as well as implementing things like acupuncture. Looking for ketamine clinics
 - d. Monthly buddy checks to ensure the veteran is doing ok.
- F. Outreach Updates
 - a. Designated outreach VSO: The VSO cycles through each month multiple locations.
 - b. The VSO has attended 25 events
 - c. He also has attended ad hoc events
 - d. Jeff is able to see 3 veterans in 4 hours through the outreach program
- G. VetFest 2025
 - a. Need a raffle basket and a side dish for each post
 - b. This event helps raise awareness about suicide prevention
 - c. September 27th at Stone City VFW 2199 in Joliet
 - d. Farm 2 Veteran is who the VetFest will be benefiting
 - e. There is a rain date is September 28th
 - f. Still in need of donations for the raffles

VII. APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- A. 1st: Robert Angone
- B. 2nd: James Hogan

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. 1300 Copperfield Building Update
 - a. The Copperfield building is on schedule
 - b. Met with the project director and was assured everything is on track.
 - c. HVAC will be installed in September, and the roof is already completed.
 - d. The windows are done
 - e. The press release will be going out this week regarding the inside work beginning
 - f. A grand opening will be released for the building.
- B. Financial Assistance Policy
 - a. There is still money to be spent
 - b. The policy was amended years ago and will be put into the FY 26 budget request to expand the policy which will require the commission to vote
 - c. If approved, it will be implemented and allow to help more veterans than under the current policy
 - d. Enhance the programs that are working well and try to eliminate those that are not.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Amend Quarterly Meeting Date in June to Align with FY Budget Process
 - a. The bylaws the meeting is at the end of the month, but the county meeting is in the middle of the month.

- b. Motion to move the meeting to the beginning of the month of June to allow for the budget to be finalized to bring to the county before their meeting.
 - c. Meeting to be moved to the first week of the month in June.
 - d. Motion to approve
- 1st: Raj Pillai
 - 2nd: Paul Cravens
- B. FY26 Budget Proposal
 - a. The VAC is currently funded by the General Corporate fund
 - b. The VAC has the 3rd largest veteran population within the state.
 - c. The VAC currently is not staffed to handle the volume so there is a need to request more money for the FY 26 budget.
 - d. The county sends a questionnaire to understand what services are offered. They also ask to provide the goals and objectives for the budget year.
 - e. The request also asks for \$130,000 for furniture in Copperfield. The county will only go through the one vendor for the furniture
 - f. There are increases for multiple budget items to account for the larger facility
 - g. FTE is currently 12, Part time employees 2
 - h. There is a request for additional employees
 - i. Increase the Mental Health VSO
 - j. Part time Fitness Attendant for the Gym
 - k. The total listed for personnel on the budget request includes the amount for all proposed roles.
 - l. The last Page the Kane County was high for education in the budget. This was an issue with the decimals on the chart.
 - m. There is a program that helps with housing in regard to poverty. You would need to apply for this program, and they help with the utilities. This program has been decreased
 - n. Aldi cards for the veterans to buy paper products as well as their personal items
 - o. Marketing is the Swag for the events, updated outreach gear.
 - p. Per Diem is going to be new this year
 - q. Furniture there are 2 DCO grants out there. They are reaching out to try and get these grants to assist. The DCO could go towards HVAC.
 - r. The only other option would be to levy taxes
 - s. The proposal is a win since we would be helping more veterans
 - t. The county has never not approved when something is needed
 - u. Emergency housing to go on the 4th floor
 - v. This will go to the county board tomorrow to be discussed and then will go up the chain.
 - w. They will most likely approve the budget at the July meeting
 - x. Motion to approve
 - y. 1st: Paul Craven
 - z. 2nd: Frank Mylniec

X. EXECUTIVE CLOSED SESSION

- A. Motion to enter closed session :
 - a. 5ILCS 120/2 Sec2(c)21: Approval of closed minutes March 25th, 2025
- B. Motion to accept the minutes as written and remained closed:
- C. Motion to remain closed
- D. Motion to return to open session.
- E. Motion to approve items discussed during closed session.

XI. FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMISSION

- A. Next training conference is in September for VSO; commission members can go to learn more about the process to help veterans that come into the post. The agenda will go out to the commission to allow everyone to see what they would like to attend.
- B. Would like the commission to push out information on the legislation to their families and post members to ask for witness slips to ensure the veterans are being assisted.
- C. Will need to determine which bills to get behind and which ones to support.
- D. You could put the witness slips on the social media.
- E. The emergency management meeting is next Wednesday. The first call came in for the storms down in St Louis. They called to get help for a veteran from the post close to the veteran that was impacted.
- F. All of the county programs are working together and coming to the VAC for additional assistance if needed.
- G. Last week was boys state for the American Legion. They are provided with information on governmental to help them push and lobby for the veterans.
- H. Jen and the staff have been doing an amazing job with veterans making it known at the posts.

XII. DELEGATE ANNOUNCEMENTS

XIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN

- A. 1st: Clarke Christiansen
- B. 2nd: James Hogan

Next Meeting October 7th, 2025
American Legion 1977
14414 Ford Dr New Lenox

