

STATE OF INDIANA

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

302 WEST WASHINGTON STREET ROOM E120
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2738



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Dennis Wimer, Director

Indiana Veteran Affairs Commission Meeting

January 11, 2019 at 1300

Present for meeting: Chairman Steuterman, Acting Director Vincent, Senator Niezgodski, Sen Tomes, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Baker, Mr. Ballard, Mr. Kendall, Mr. Hylton, Mr. Coley, CSM Gordon and Mr. Elsener

Absent: Rep Macer and Rep Zent

Location: Indiana Government Center South Rooms 1 and 2, Indianapolis, Indiana

Chairman Steuterman: Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Steuterman: Verified Quorum.

Chairman Steuterman:

- Motion to pass minutes: Jay Kendall motion, second by Greg Baker. Minutes pass
- MFRF rules adopted on Jan 3, 2019.
- Grant Services Rules in progress
- Acknowledged Cathy Griffin – services to incarcerated veterans

Acting Director Vincent, IDVA status update:

- Creating Benefits Book to be posted on website
- Indiana Veterans' Cemetery – 107 interments, 170 headstones set (27 spouses and dependents) memorial certificates. Bust of WWI Medal of Honor recipient – Samuel Woodfill.
- Indiana Veterans' Home – 203 residents
- Coordinating Rules for hyperbaric oxygen treatment and homelessness
- Working with Indiana State Department of Health on MOU for hyperbaric

Cathy Griffin – Department of Corrections:

- Warden Miami Correctional Facility
- DOC – 2300 identified veterans – 1856 verified – 41 female
 - 470 diagnosis of mental health issue
 - All facilities except Rockville have an American Legion

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- Working with Traumatic Brain Injury – of 39 tested 67% showed TBI
- Working on additional grants

Gordon Smith – Indiana Veterans Court:

- 92% of our individuals have TBI.
- One of our challenges is that half of our veterans don't qualify for disability. Big challenge is finding a way to provide benefits.
- Recidivism is less than 3%.

Adryanne Bonner – Communications update:

- The 2019 financial disclosure statements are being done currently.
- 2018 report has been given to the General Assembly.
- Our E-News letter is gaining members we now have 18572.
- 350 companies looking to hire veterans

Jeff Wirt - Employment update:

- For the year 2018 we helped over 149 veterans and their families with jobs.
- We have helped one veteran this year.
- Since 2015 we have assisted 462 veterans in finding a job.
- We have brought on a DWD person into our office – Lupe Martinez to help with the relationship between our two departments.

Jim Morrison - LT Governor Office update:

- As of this morning we have 400 employer providers.
- Next level veterans out of state recruitment since it was started last year there have been 35 base visits made.
- Operating under phase 1 of the program 537 veterans registered.
 - They can register up to 18 months out in conjunction with their TAP program.
 - 29 veterans have moved to IN and gained employment thru the program.
- We have a new collaboration between NextLevel Vets and Purdue to train for a career in agriculture.

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Amber Merten - SAA update:

- Last month SAA received our rating for 2018 we received a grade of satisfactory.
- Cooperative agreement has been signed.
- For 2019 we have 48 compliance survey visits YTD 13 completed.
 - We have assigned ourselves an additional 40 visits YTD 4 completed.
- Working with the commission for higher education requiring eligible students to receive instate tuition.

Tim Dyke - Training and Benefits update:

- Year to date 2018 – plates – 552, tax 604, hunting and fishing 334, tuition and fee 664 on-line applications.
- Processing from 16-17 school year over 3,100 applications.
- By putting it on line the student only has to apply one time and we processed 664 in 2019.
- Accreditation is currently at 88.
 - We have one CVSO that is covering 2 counties.
 - Scott, Davis and Rush counties currently not accredited but working on it.
 - 2 counties with possible retirements.
- Secured Atterbury again this year for the CVSO conference 10-12 June of 2019.
- The GDX report from FY17, not a noticeable change in money coming in to Indiana.
- Recipients did increase by about 3,000.
- Vetraspec is the claims management system we use and 84 counties have at least one account.

Tom White – DSO update NW district:

- He is not present but sent his info to Tim. Traveled about 16,000 miles.
- He held two DVSO meetings,
- Helped Jasper County with accreditation
- Conducted several hours of face to face visit with CVSOs in the district.

Desley Snyder – DSO update SW district:

- Have had 5 new hires in the last year.
- Attend meetings with local organizations and veteran groups.
- I belong to Southern Indiana rehabilitation committee.
- Attended 5 different stand downs in the last year.

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- I have 17 counties and we meet quarterly.

Joe Devito - DSO update SE district:

- I have 15 counties.
- I have quarterly meetings and each county volunteers to host.
- Currently have 14 CVSOs accredited.
- I am on the Jefferson County Veterans Council.
- I do a monthly radio show, hoping to add 2 more.

Mark Smith – DSO update CE district:

- Have met with the Chamber of Commerce in all of my counties.
- 5 new service officers covering 6 counties.
 - There is one CVSO covering two counties (Shelby and Fayette).
- Rush County will start using Vetraspec.

Cameron Lochner – DSO update NE district:

- I have had one new CVSO in the last year in Allen County.
- Attend town hall events and community outreach events.
- Have had 3 district meetings.

Kevin Hinton – DSO update CW district:

- Last year trained 2 new CVSOs.
- I have 15 counties.
- Attend 3 to 4 meetings with community partners.
- Did 5 to 6 outreach events.
- 2 biannual CVSO training meetings.

Matt Vincent MFRF update:

- We track our data by fiscal year. By July 1, we awarded \$792,000 to 709 veterans.
- We have the pre 9/11 and post 9/11.
 - 73% of the recipients are pre 9/11.
- On pace to do roughly what we did in FY18.
- We have all of the applications broken down by county.

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- We have been working on the SOP and would like for the commission to look at them and give me feedback before the next meeting.
- Working to establish the appeals process.

Jason Thompson Rule update:

- The MFRF rule has been approved by the Gov office. In our 30 day window before it can be published.
- What I recommend is that we adopt a process in where we would engage an Administrative Law Judge and delegate the authority to that judge. The veteran can come in and make their case. Judge will produce an order to either uphold or overturn the appeal.
- 15 days for the veteran to appeal.

Kevin Coley:

- Motion to delegate authority to a judge. We do not have a second.
- Chairman: The motion did not pass.
- We will not have an appeals process for another three months.

Mike Aichele Legislation update:

- We are slotted to receive a \$320,058 grant from the National Cemetery Association to realign the headstones.
- I will begin the grant proposal for expanding grave sites and fixing water run off problems.
- Currently tracking 23 bills.

Matt Vincent – Old Business:

- Grants for veterans services. It is a 2 part rule, one is the hyperbaric oxygen therapy.
 - State Dept of Health wrote the rules, they were approved in Sept.
 - Clark Memorial is the only one that sent a proposal.
- Homeless veteran rule, we are close to sending that to the Indiana register.
 - This is a department rule, not a commission rule. Have 21 days to have a public hearing. Works like the MFRF rule. . We received a moratorium from the SBA on the 21st of December. Comments from commission a week from today.

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Chairman:

- Next meeting on 5 April 2019 in South Bend. It will be posted on our calendar and community calendar.
- Moving meetings around so the veterans have an opportunity to take part in a meeting.
- Meeting is adjourned 3:33.

Erika Steuterman, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)
Chairman

Date

Matthew Vincent, Acting Director
IDVA

Date

Ken Hylton, American Legion

Date

Greg Baker, VFW

Date

Richard Caldwell, AMVETS

Date

Jay Kendall, CVSO Representative

Date

CSM James Gordon, INNG

Date

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Mr. Greg Ballard, Member

Date

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Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Dennis Wimer, Director

Indiana Veterans Affairs Commission
Friday, April 5th, 2019 1:00 PM
South Bend, Indiana

Commission Meeting Minutes

General Information and Reviews:

Pledge of Allegiance: Pam Schweizer-Betz – CVSO Marshall County

Roll Call:

- **Present for meeting:** Greg Baker, Richard Caldwell, Jay Kendall, Dennis Wimer, Kevin Coley, Rep Karlee Macer, Rep Dennis Zent, Greg Ballard
- **Absent:** Chairman Steuterman, Ken Hylton, CSM Jim Gordon, Sen Niezgodski, Sen Tomes
- Verified Quorum

Election of Chairman Pro Tem:

- Elect a chairman pro tem in the absence of Chairman Steuterman. Greg Baker makes the motion to nominate Greg Ballard. Jay Kendall seconds. Motion passes. Mr. Ballard is elected Chairman pro tem.
- Motion to pass minutes. Jay Kendall makes motion to approve, second by Richard Caldwell. Minutes approved.

Open Door Law Discussion: Mr. Luke Britt was to review the Open Door Law. Due to problems with the media feed he could not be heard. He will be brought in at a future meeting to review the Open Door Law.

Old Business:

Director Wimer, Military Family Relief Fund update:

- Discussed the History, Funding, Legislation and Standard Operating Procedures of the MFRF.
- Appeals Process
 - Commission discussed future appeals process including process to exempt the Commission and Department from Administrative Orders and Protections Act (AOPA) IC 4-21.5. Future appeals processed will be reviewed at the July 12 meeting

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- Commission reviewed declaration to approve an AOPA process to be implemented through the July 12 meeting. Kevin Coley makes motion to approve with date change from June 12 to July 12 second Greg Baker motion passed unanimous.

New Business:

Policy Review: The Department submitted four policies for review by the commission. Director Wimer highlighted the process for policy review and approval:

1. Policy will be written by the department
 2. Policy will be initially vetted by internal and external subject matter experts and affected parties
 3. Policy will be submitted to Commission as pre-read for review.
 4. Policy will be submitted at the subsequent Commission meeting for final approval after additional vetting with interested parties.
- Policies submitted to Commission:
 1. **IVAC Electronic Communications Policy:** The Indiana Veterans' Affairs Commission (the "Commission") Electronic Meetings Policy (the "Policy") is intended to comply with all relevant law and provide the framework for participation in and the conduct of public meetings where means of electronic communication are used by members of the Commission not physically in attendance.
 2. **Evaluation of Time in Service for MFRF Policy:** To establish the process of evaluating the time in service of an active duty, National Guard, or reserve service member for eligibility for use of the Military Family Relief Fund.
 3. **Customer Service Policy:** To provide the IDVA staff with uniform and appropriate customer service procedures for customers that contact or visit our agency.
 4. **State Benefit Application Process Policy:** To provide standardized guidance on the process of receiving, and completing state veteran benefit applications.

Public Comment:

No Public Comments

Department Reports:

Director Wimer, IDVA Status update:

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- Transparency is one of the key things. Government is best done in the public forum. It is the people's money and therefore we have an added responsibility on how we engage in decisions about this money.
- Communicated with the Department a new organization structure. The team is working on their job descriptions and Director Wimer is coordinating with SPD on next steps.

Mr. Aichele, legislative update:

- Reviewed status of current legislation affecting veterans

Mr. Vincent, division reports:

- All division reports were sent ahead as pre-reads before today's meeting.
- No additional questions

Chairman Pro Tem - Greg Ballard:

- Motion to adjourn. Dennis Wimer makes motion, Jay Kendall second
- Meeting is adjourned at 2:27

Erika Steuterman, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)
Chairman

Date

Dennis Wimer, Director
IDVA

Date

Ken Hylton, American Legion

Date

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Dennis Wimer, Director

Greg Baker, VFW

Date

Richard Caldwell, AMVETS

Date

Jay Kendall, CVSO Representative

Date

CSM James Gordon, INNG

Date

Kevin Coley, DAV

Date

Mr. Greg Ballard, Member

Date

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Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Dennis Wimer, Director

Indiana Veterans Affairs Commission
Friday, July 12, 2019 1:00 PM
Indianapolis, Indiana

Commission Meeting Minutes

General Information and Reviews:

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

- **Present for meeting:** Greg Baker, Richard Caldwell, Jay Kendall, Dennis Wimer, Kevin Coley, CSM James Gordon, Sen Tomes, Mr. Greg Ballard, Rep Macer, Ken Hylton, Chairman Steuterman
- **Absent:** Sen Mrvan, Rep Zent,
- Verified Quorum

Director Wimer introduces Gabrielle Owens as our new General Counsel.
Chairman Steuterman thanks Jason Thompson and Keith Beesley for their service to IDVA.

Modified and approved April meeting minutes. Bottom of first page last line, change Administrative Orders and Protections Act to Administrative Orders and Procedures Act. Baker motion to pass change, Ballard seconds. Commission votes to pass pen and ink change.

Mr. Luke Britt, Open Door Law Discussion

Old Business:

Director Wimer, Review of SBOA/IG Audits:

- MFRF Audit
 - 914 IAC outlines the eligibility for the MFRF being connected to the applicants military service. Discussed how this has impacted the MFRF approvals.
 - IDVA has created policies and a process with the commission to review applications from agency and appeals.

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- TANF Audit
 - Audit found about \$700,000 questioned.
 - By the end of Aug/Sept IDVA and FSSA will have a report out based on the review currently being conducted to review every individual case.
 - Will have a detailed timeline of what we are working on.
- IG Report
 - Looked at all audits and components.
 - Determined nothing was done illegal or unethical.
 - Marion County Prosecutor is still looking at it.

Chairman Steuterman, Policy Review/Approval

- Electronic Communications Policy
Motion to approve Kendall, Baker second - Policy is passed
- Qualifying Military Service Policy
Motion to approve Caldwell, Kendall second - Policy is passed

Customer Service Policy

Motion to approve Baker, Hylton second - Policy is passed

- State Benefit Application Policy
Motion to table policy Ballard approve, Baker second
Edits will be made and brought back at the next commission meeting

ALJ Sandra Jensen, Review Appeals Process and Activities

- Status of current appeals
 - 19 MFRF cases originally submitted
 - Six scheduled for hearing. Two appeared. Issued non final orders to dismiss them. One was voluntarily dismissed by the petitioner and the other three petitioners did not appear.
 - They have seven days to reply. Any notice that is served by regular mail, the statute requires mail time is added (Three days) so it is essentially ten days.
 - Commission will take the final action.
 - Prepare a final order for the commission to sign off on.

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- The remaining 13 cases were set in blocks of time, six for Aug 28 and seven for Aug 29.
- By October have everything ready for Commission to sign.
- Motion to continue process and use Sandra as our ALJ to look at appeals and revisit in October. Kendall motion to continue, Baker second Motion is passed

New Business:

Chairman Steuterman, Commission Taskforce Discussion:

- Three person team to make up taskforce to look at appeals.
- Have five volunteers to ensure there are at least three available to review. Use electronic communications policy to accommodate everyone.
- Motion to come up with five person panel to look at appeals after ALJ has come to a determination Baker moves, Hylton second Motion is passed
- Small taskforce to bring in outside people to get more diverse ideas and representations.
- HB 1257 Process:
 - **IDVA employee MFRF Process**
If an employee wants to submit for funding, the commission has to be the ones to review it.
 - **Greater than \$2,500 process**
Create a taskforce to look at requests for more than \$2,500.
Coley motion to use same five person team to deal with appeals process, Baker seconds Motion passes
- Policy Review:
 - **Veteran Suicide Training Policy**
Want to make it clear that our staff is trained to handle situations that could arise.
 - **MFRF Income Determination policy**
Chairman - Get ideas out there for a more refined policy by October.

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Public Comment:

Jason Murry – State Suicide Prevention Coordinator

- For every six Hoosiers who die by suicide, one is a veteran.
- There were 164 veteran suicides last year.

Kent Morgan – Veteran Advocate

- How many days is the appeals process on average.
- Do we have anything in place to protect the veterans who may be suffering from PTSD. Chairman- we should be able to move faster now because we have a process in place.

Department Reports:

Director Wimer, IDVA Status Update:

- Changes have gone into effect and organization chart is on our website.
- There are two main open positions. Operations Director and Outreach Director
- There were 65 candidates for the Operations Director position.
- Agency structure has changed about 70%.
- MFRF sent a letter to 106 denials letting them know they could reapply. Over the last three months there is a 50% reduction in denials due to a better understanding of the new rules.

Mr. Aichele, Legislative Update:

- Disability Placard is now available.
- Tracked all veteran related legislation and explained to Governor how each bill effects our agency.
- Cemetery grants are being reviewed.

Director Wimer, Division Reports:

- All division reports were sent ahead as pre-reads before today's meeting.

Mr. Tim Dyke, CVSO Report – Please email any questions to Mr. Dyke.

Chairman Steuterman:

- Chairman Adjourned meeting at 3:08

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Erika Steuterman, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)
Chairman

Date

Dennis Wimer, Director IDVA

Date

Ken Hylton, American Legion

Date

Greg Baker, VFW

Date

Richard Caldwell, AMVETS

Date

Jay Kendall, CVSO Representative

Date

CSM James Gordon, INNG

Date

Kevin Coley, DAV

Date

Mr. Greg Ballard, Member

Date

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Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Dennis A. Wimer, Director

Indiana Veterans Affairs Commission
Friday, October 11, 2019 11:00 AM
Hulman Field
800 S. Petercheff St
Terre Haute, IN 47803

Commission Meeting Minutes

General Information and Reviews

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

- **Present for meeting:** Chairman Steuterman, Dennis Wimer, Ken Hylton, Greg Baker, Richard Caldwell, Jay Kendall, Kevin Coley, Greg Ballard
- **Absent:** CSM James Gordon, Sen Mrvan, Sen Tomes, Rep Zent, Rep Macer

Chairman motion to approve meeting minutes.

- Quarterly Meeting
Motion to approve July meeting minutes. Caldwell motion to approve, Kendall seconds.
Motion to approve passed.
- Ad Hoc Meetings
Motion to approve Ad Hoc meeting minutes. Caldwell motion to approve, Kendall seconds
Motion to approve passed.

Old Business

Dennis Wimer, MFRF Appeals Process:

- Change in law since last session
- Look at maintaining current ALJ into the next meeting, and what our options are moving forward.
- Motion to pass resolution to continue the use of the ALJ through January. Caldwell motion to continue, Hylton seconds Motion to continue is passed.

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Dennis Wimer, Process to Review MFRF Requests in Excess of \$2,500:

- Rule is \$2,500 is the max and they can appeal.
- Get asked for exceptions almost every day. Initial request for assistance is over \$2,500 or they have already received \$2,500 and want more.
- All exceptions go through the Commission, to include employees who apply for MFRF.

Dennis Wimer, Policy Review:

- IDVA State Benefit Application Process Policy:
 - Give the commission three months to review policies.
- MFRF Time in Service Evaluation:
 - Resolution to count all time including Guard and Reserve time. Motion to approve MFRF time in service evaluation. Kendall motion to approve, Ballard seconds. Motion to approve time passed.
- MFRF Income Determination – What income is considered:
 - Income eligibility standards must be based on federal gross income.
 - Non taxable income is not considered.
 - Motion to approve income eligibility requirements. Hylton motion to approve, Caldwell seconds. Motion to approve passed.
- Veteran Suicide:
 - Motion to approve suicide training. Baker motion to approve, Kendall seconds. Motion is passed.

Gabrielle Owens, Consideration of ALJ Recommendations:

- ALJ looks over appeals and gives her decision.
- Commission has the ultimate authority over the decision to agree or disagree with recommendation.
- Motion to approve recommendations made by ALJ. Caldwell motions to approve, Ballard seconds. Motion is passed.

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New Business

- Motion to have a taskforce to review MFRF rule for potential modifications. Kendall motion to review, Coley seconds. Motion is passed.
- Minimum of three on taskforce. Wimer, Coley, Kendall and Baker volunteered.
- Start meeting in November.

Coley suggests to have signs put up at meeting locations to help the public find the location of commission meetings.

Gabrielle Owens, Tuition and Fee Exemption Appeals:

- Mr. Hepner did not appear.
 - If he can provide just cause for not being here, commission could consider to hear his appeal.
 - Notice of proposed default will be sent unless compelling reason is given.
- Last ad hoc meeting there was a split decision-three to three on a case.
 - Decided it was most appropriate to hear it after a certain date had been met.
 - Case will be heard at next ad hoc meeting.

Gabrielle Owens, MFRF Requests in Excess of \$2,500:

- Currently there are no cases to discuss.

Dennis Wimer, Homelessness Grants:

- Working with MFRF and Indiana Housing Authority.
- Approximately \$800,000 to \$900,000 put into budget to use on grant.
- Million dollars to use over a two year period.
- Holding some back for outreach and communication to help get information out to the public.

Dennis Wimer, Policy Review:

- Limited Use Policy on how to use state equipment for personal use.
Motion to approve limited use policy. Ballard motion to approve, Kendall seconds.
Motion is passed.

Dennis Wimer, Legislative Changes Regarding Tuition and Fee Exemption Appeals Timeline:

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- The law says we have 15 days to hear an appeal, try to move it to within 45 days. Work with the Commission for Higher Education.

Public Comment:

No public comments.

Department Reports:

Director Wimer, IDVA:

- Thanks team for taking care of things while he was off.
- Hiring full time MFRF staff, moving away from contractors.
- Lynn Dickey has been offered the role of MFRF supervisor.
- Anyone unemployed we connect them with unemployment.
- If they are not in the VA benefits system we connect them.
- Partnering with the INNG and their financial counseling program and offering that opportunity to applicants.
- Working with VA health system and working with applicants to get them enrolled through tele-health.
- Will have a system that flows with the INNG, who also has a relief fund. This will help with information regarding applicants
- Interviewing for Outreach Director. 45 applicants, will interview 8.
- DVA website is set up to answer basic questions to help determine what the veteran might be eligible for.

Jim Morrison, Next Level Veterans:

- 590 Veteran Opportunity Partners.
- Goal is to relocate 5,000 veterans and spouses a year.
- 703 veterans and 135 employers registered into the existing INVETS system
- 106 families have been relocated to Indiana.
- Working on Veterans Court funding for counties that do not have one.

Mike Thompson, Division Reports:

- Pre-reads were sent out before hand.

Next meeting will be in Indianapolis on January 10, 2020. Meeting adjourned at 1:07

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Chairman

Date

Dennis Wimer, Director IDVA

Date

Ken Hylton, American Legion

Date

Richard Leirer, VFW

Date

Richard Caldwell, AMVETS

Date

Jay Kendall, CVSO Representative

Date

BG R. Dale Lyles, INNG

Date

Kevin Coley, DAV

Date