

**LINCOLN COUNTY  
VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION  
Monday – December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - 10:00 a.m.  
Lincoln County Government Services-Merrill, WI  
Lincoln County Veterans Office – Room 146**

AGENDA

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Introduction of New Members: Timothy Panfil/US Army & John VanLieshout/USMC
3. Appointments to the Lincoln County Veterans Service Commission: Claude Willet Nov 2019 - Nov 2022 – Timothy Panfil Nov 2019 – Nov 2022 – John VanLieshout Nov 2019 – Nov 2020
4. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
5. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting
6. Review Vouchers and Sign Voucher Schedule
7. Financial Report

CLOSED SESSION

8. Convene into Closed Session Pursuant to Sec. 19.85(1)(f) Wis. Stat. for considering financial, medical, social, or personal histories of specific persons.
  - a. Veterans Relief Applications for Financial Assistance

OPEN SESSION

9. Take any necessary action from closed session.
10. Veterans Service Office Report
11. Set Next Meeting Date; Adjourn

**DISTRIBUTION:**

**Veterans Service Commission Members:**

**Bruce Gerdes   Claude Willet   John VanLieshout   Timothy Panfil**  
Administrative Coordinator  
Other County Board Supervisors  
Department Heads  
News Media  
Bulletin Boards

County Service Center Bulletin Board    Date: \_\_\_\_\_    Time: \_\_\_\_\_    By: \_\_\_\_\_

Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of this meeting. Please do so as early as possible so that proper arrangements can be made. Requests are kept confidential.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Must be held in a location that is reasonably accessible to the public.
2. Must be open to all members of the public unless the law specifically provides otherwise.

NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

1. In addition to any requirements set forth below, notice must also be in compliance with any other specific statute.
2. Chief presiding officer or his/her designee must give notice to the official newspaper and to any members of the news media likely to give notice to the public.

MANNER OF NOTICE:

1. Date, time, place, and subject matter, including subject matter to be considered in a closed session, must be provided in a manner and form reasonably likely to give notice to the public.

TIME FOR NOTICE:

1. Normally, a minimum of 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting.
2. No less than 2 hours prior to the meeting if the presiding officer establishes there is a good cause that such notice is impossible or impractical.

EXEMPTIONS FOR COMMITTEES AND SUB-UNITS:

1. Legally constituted sub-units of a parent governmental body may conduct a meeting during the recess or immediately after the lawful meeting to act or deliberate upon a subject which was the subject of the meeting, provided the presiding officer publicly announces the time, place, and subject matter of the sub-unit meeting in advance of the meeting of the parent governmental body.

PROCEDURE FOR GOING INTO CLOSED SESSION:

1. Motion must be made, seconded, and carried by roll call majority vote and recorded in the minutes.
2. If motion is carried, chief presiding officer must advise those attending the meeting of the nature of the business to be conducted in the closed session, and the specific statutory exemption under which the closed session is authorized.

STATUTORY EXEMPTIONS UNDER WHICH CLOSED SESSIONS ARE PERMITTED:

1. Deliberation of judicial or quasi-judicial matters. Sec. 19.85(1)(a)
2. Considering dismissal, demotion, or discipline of any public employee or the investigation of charges against such person and the taking of formal action on any such matter; provided that the person is given actual notice of any evidentiary hearing which may be held prior to final action being taken and of any meeting at which final action is taken. The person under consideration must be advised of his/her right that the evidentiary hearing be held in open session and the notice of the meeting must state the same. Sec. 19.85(1)(b).
3. Considering employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee. Sec. 19.85(1)(c).
4. Considering strategy for crime detection or prevention. Sec. 19.85(1)(d).
5. Deliberating or negotiating the purchase of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session. Sec. 19.85(1)(e).
6. Considering financial, medical, social, or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of specific charges, which, if discussed in public would likely have an adverse effect on the reputation of the person referred to in such data. Sec. 19.85(1)(f).
7. Confering with legal counsel concerning strategy to be adopted by the governmental body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved. Sec. 19.85(1)(g).
8. Considering a request for advice from any applicable ethic board. Sec. 19.85(1)(h).

CLOSED SESSION RESTRICTIONS:

1. Must convene in open session before going into closed session.
2. May not convene in open session, then convene in closed session and thereafter reconvene in open session with twelve (12) hours unless proper notice of this sequence was given at the same time and in the same manner as the original open meeting.
3. Final approval or ratification of a collective bargaining agreement may not be given in closed session.

BALLOTS, VOTES, AND RECORDS:

1. Secret ballot is not permitted except for the election of officers of the body or unless otherwise permitted by specific statutes.
2. Except as permitted above, any member may require that the vote of each member be ascertained and recorded.
3. Motions and roll call votes must be preserved in the record and be available for public inspection.

USE OF RECORDING EQUIPMENT:

1. The meeting may be recorded, filmed, or photographed, provided that it does not interfere with the conduct of the meeting or the rights of the participants.

LEGAL INTERPRETATION:

1. The Wisconsin Attorney General will give advice concerning the applicability or clarification of the Open Meeting Law upon request.
2. The municipal attorney will give advice concerning the applicability or clarification of the Open Meeting Law upon request.

PENALTY:

1. Upon conviction, any member of a governmental body who knowingly attends a meeting held in violation of Subchapter IV, Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, or who otherwise violates the said law shall be subject to forfeiture of not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$300.00 for each violation.

**LINCOLN COUNTY**  
**Veterans Service Commission**  
**August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**  
**Lincoln County Government Services Building**  
**Lower Level Meeting Room**  
**801 N. Sales St. Room 107.2**  
**Merrill, WI 54452**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Mike VanLieshout and Claude Willet

**Members Absent:** Bruce Gerdes

**Visitors:** Rick Wolf, Tyler Harland

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Chairman VanLieshout. Acknowledgement of Tyler Harland from Merrill Area Public School AV Department.

**2. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Motion to accept April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting minutes by VanLieshout. Willet seconded, all ayes-Motion carried.

**3. Review Vouchers and Sign Voucher Schedule**

Vouchers turned in for reimbursement.

**4. Financial Report**

The Secretary presented the financial report for the period 01/01/2019 – 08/01/2019.

Motion by VanLieshout to approve the financial report, Willet seconded.

All ayes - Motion carried

**5. Closed Session**

Motion by VanLieshout to go into closed session pursuant to sec. 19.85(1)(f), WI Stat. for considering financial, medical, social or personal histories of specific persons which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have an adverse effect on the reputation of persons referred to in such histories or data.

Specifically under consideration are the applications referenced below. Rick Wolf is allowed to stay in the closed session. Tyler Harland is asked to step out for closed session.

Roll call vote: VanLieshout-Aye Willet-Aye

All Ayes – Motion Carried

The Commission went into closed session at 10:12 a.m.

a. Application for Rental Assistance (02/01A-2019)

Motion by VanLieshout to return to open session.

Roll call vote: VanLieshout-Aye Willet-Aye

All Ayes – Motion Carried

The Commission went into open session at 10:17 a.m.

Tyler Harland returned to the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

**6. Closed Session Action**

- a. Motion by VanLieshout to approve Rental Assistance (03/02A-2019), Willet seconded, all ayes, motion carried.

**7. Veterans Service Office Report**

Service Officer gave over view of upcoming Wisconsin State Association of County Veterans Service Commissions (WSACVSC) conference that will be held Friday, Sept 13, 2019 in Marshfield, WI. Talked about upcoming Accreditation Training that Rick and Pam will be attending in Madison in September.

**8. Set Next Meeting Date/Adjournment**

Next meeting date will be November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 10 a.m. at the Lincoln County Service Center- 801 N. Sales St. Room 107.2, Merrill, WI

Motion by VanLieshout to adjourn, seconded by Willet.

All Ayes – Meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Submitted by,  
Rick Wolf - Secretary

**WISCONSIN STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSIONS (WSACVSC)  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE - SEPTEMBER 13, 2019  
American Legion Post 54, Marshfield, WI**

**MINUTES**

**In Attendance**

There were 55 persons paid attendance. (2018 attendance was 45, 2017 attendance was 24)

**CVSOs who paid for county membership and the cost of sending one or more representatives who attended the Conference:**

Barron (1), Clark (3), Crawford (1), Door (1), Douglas (2), Fond du Lac (1), Jefferson (2), Juneau (2), Kenosha (3), Kewaunee (2), Lincoln (4), Menominee (5), Oconto (4), Oneida (1), Rusk (2), Sauk (2), Sheboygan (4), Taylor (2), Vilas (2), Walworth (2), Waushara (1), Winnebago (5), Wood (2) and St. Croix Tribe (1).

**Note:** Sawyer and Vernon Counties paid for county membership but no attendees were able to attend.

**Counties that did not pay for county membership and did not send a representative to attend the Conference:**

Adams, Ashland, Bayfield, Brown, Buffalo, Burnett, Calumet, Chippewa, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Dunn, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Grant, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Iron, Jackson, La Crosse, Lafayette, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marathon, Marinette, Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Portage, Price, Racine, Richland, Rock, St. Croix, Shawano, Trempealeau, Washburn, Washington, Waukesha, and Waupaca.

**Call to Order**

Interim President Nellie DeBaker called the WSACVSC Conference to order.

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Tom Snider opened the Conference with a Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome Address:

Steve Barg from Marshfield City Administration gave a Welcome Address representing Marshfield Mayor Bob McManus who was unable to attend.

CVSO Rock Larson gave a Welcome Address representing the Wood County CVSO office..

**Business Meeting**

**Audit Report**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice Tom Snider presented the WSACVSC Audit Report performed by Rock County CVSO John Solis for the period 4/13/18, when the audit period began, through 7/31/19. No problems.

Motion carried.

**Minutes from 9/7/18 Conference and 5/22/19 Executive Committee meetings**

Motion carried.

### **Treasurer Report 4/13/18-7/31/19**

The beginning balance on 4/13/18 was \$5,521.08 and the ending balance on 7/31/19 was \$6,340.82.

Motion carried.

Note: If you did not receive copies of the above documents at the September 13, 2019 Conference, please contact Bill Erickson [Bill.erickson@kenoshacounty.org](mailto:Bill.erickson@kenoshacounty.org) to request your copies.

### **Stipend and Expenses for Secretary-Treasurer**

Article IX Section III in the WSACVSC Bylaws states that the Secretary-Treasurer is entitled to a \$300 stipend per calendar year along with reimbursement for expenses.

Approve payment of \$633.98 to Bill Erickson for his Secretary-Treasurer duties for calendar years 2018 and 2019 along with \$33.98 in expenses.

Motion carried.

### **Bylaws Committee Report**

The Bylaws Committee consisted of Chair Tom Snider, President Nellie DeBaker and Secretary - Treasurer Bill Erickson. A number of CVSOs active in WSACVSC also provided input, review and suggestions. The Bylaws were revised to equalize current veteran population demographics in the State of Wisconsin and to provide greater inclusion of all veterans within the State. The previous bylaws divided WSACVSC into four regions with the following veteran population distribution; Southeast Region=43%, Southwest Region=12%, Northwest Region=14% and Northeast Region=31%. Another reason for revising the bylaws was to include and welcome more fully the eleven Tribal Areas with their veteran populations into the WSACVSC organization. Accordingly, the four disproportionate veteran population regions were converted into eight Districts corresponding to the eight Congressional Districts with more equitable veteran population and creating a ninth District comprised of the eleven Tribal Areas. Each of the eight Districts will have two directors selected by the commissioners and CVSOs from each respective District. The two directors from District Nine will be selected by the eleven TVSOs.

The Offices of President, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and Past President will remain in effect but the number of Directors will increase from eight to eighteen for a total of twenty three members on the WSACVSC Executive Committee. This will increase attendance at the Spring Executive Committee meeting with greater input and support in planning the logistics for the Annual WSACVSC Conference and other WSACVSC initiatives. At the May 22, 2019 Executive Committee meeting there were seven members present consisting of four commissioners and three CVSOs. The 2018 Spring meeting saw six members present with three commissioners and three CVSOs.

This change from regions to Districts will also allow the two Directors in each Congressional District to have greater impact with their respective US Congressperson in advocating for greater support and funding for needy veteran issues in the House of Representatives. The District Nine Directors can join the other Directors in their respective Congressional District for even greater advocacy impact.

Tentatively approve the revised bylaws with further review and revision by the newly elected and enlarged Executive Committee which will give final approval.

Motion carried.

Commissioners and CVSOs who are interested to be added to the Bylaws Committee should contact Bylaws Chair Tom Snider [winnts@northnet.net](mailto:winnts@northnet.net) or call 920-810-0692.

### **Election of the expanded Executive Committee**

With the expansion from two Directors in each of the previous four regions to two directors in each of the expanded nine Districts it was necessary to fill the newly created Director positions. All current Directors were grandfathered in with their previous term of office. Commissioners and CVSOs congregated into groups within their newly created District to select Directors to fill the new Director positions. Nominations were submitted filling most of the vacant positions with several remaining unfilled due to low attendance from several Districts.

(a) To approve the slate of candidates submitted by attendees from their respective Districts with the provision that names can be submitted for automatic approval for the vacant Director positions anytime following the conference to the Secretary-Treasurer who will add the names and distribute the revised slate to the Executive Committee, (b) To approve Nellie DeBaker from Interim President to President (Nellie moved up from 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President to Interim President following the passing of President Ken Wendt), and (c) To approve Brian Jopek as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

Motion carried.

### **Date of 2020 WSACVSC Conference**

It was discussed by a number of conference attendees that some of the CVSOs who attended the 2018 WSACVSC Conference were unable to attend the 2019 WSACVSC Conference because September 13, 2019 occurs one workday prior to the CVSO-AWI weekly Conference beginning on Monday September 16, 2019. The 2020 CVSO-AWI Fall Conference will be held October 5-9, 2020 so there is no apparent conflict with the WSACVSC Conference being held on September 11, 2020, the second Friday in September, per WSACVSC bylaws (2020 is a leap year).

### **Keynote Speaker**

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Mary Kolar was the Keynote Speaker at the WSACVSC Conference. Secretary Kolar welcomed input from the floor throughout her Keynote Address.

Secretary Kolar began by urging CVSOs and Commissioners to encourage all veterans to sign up and register with their CVSO/TVSO office because it can provide benefits beyond what the veteran may or may not be eligible for. She mentioned the case of a widow following her husband's death who contacted her CVSO office to inquire if she was entitled to any survivor benefits due to her late husband being a veteran. Sadly, she was not eligible for any survivor benefits because her husband had never filed a claim with his CVSO office.

The following issues were raised by the following attendees and responded to by Secretary Kolar: Kenosha CVSO Ali Nelson raised the issue that the Veterans Treatment Court receives no funding from WDVA or the Federal government and is solely dependent upon county funding which has a potential limiting factor across the State. Secretary Kolar responded that she is painfully aware of this unfunded mandate and will continue to address this issue and seek WDVA funding for this worthy effort to provide a second chance to worthy veterans.

Several attendees spoke about individual medical care cases that were not approved. Secretary Kolar requested these cases be forwarded to WDVA for review.

Governor Evers has allocated \$1.4M for the Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP) which divides the state into eleven districts and "...connects Veterans to community services, provides case management and support, with a special focus on treatment and recovery." There was discussion whether this funding amount could better serve needy veterans if it were distributed directly to CVSOS offices. This raised a further issue that differences in county allocation for CVSOS operations, with some counties allocating more and some counties less, can hamper financial assistance to needy veterans. There was a suggestion that WDVA should become involved with counties in determining this allocation amount based on factors such as number of veterans in the county, etc.

Jefferson County CVSOS Yvonne Dueterhoeft raised the issue of the relationship between CVSOS grants and VORP. She also spoke about a program implemented in Jefferson County that created a foundation that included local bankers along with financial and therapeutic mentors that provides loans to veterans in financial straits who are facing eviction or other needy financial circumstances as an alternative to the veteran seeking out predatory loan programs that could contribute to homelessness and potential suicide. She distributed a handout of this program and offered her services to assist other CVSOSs in implementing this program in their counties.

The State of Wisconsin has approved the transition from a skilled nursing facility to a Community Based Resident Facility (CBRF) for the King Veterans Home.

Walworth County CVSOS Nathan Bond requested the levy cap be expanded to enable increased assistance to more needy veterans.

There were requests that the funding from Veteran Homes to the Veterans Trust Fund should be halted and other avenues should be explored to cover the Veterans Trust Fund.

The new Green Bay Veterans Housing Recovery Program (VHRP) facility will be able to house seventeen veterans.

Kenosha County CVSOS Ali Nelson spoke on the high cemetery requests by Illinois veterans at the Union Grove cemetery resulting in underfunding by WDVA. Secretary Kolar responded that there are now two new veteran cemeteries opening in Illinois which should alleviate this overload situation in Union Grove.

A number of attendees shared information on obtaining additional funding from organizations within their counties to supplement their county allocation.

### **Best Practices by Commissioners to Support the CVSOS/TVSO Operation**

Commissioners Jim Schmidt, Bruce Wilbur and Bill Erickson led a panel discussion on Best Practices by Commissioners to support their C/TVSO (CVSOS/TVSO) and the C/TVSO operation. The following suggestions were submitted from the floor and by the panel. One of the CVSOSs stated that these suggestions could be incorporated into training for new commissioners.

1. Ask the C/TVSO how you can support the C/TVSO and the C/TVSO operation. After discussing these suggestions with them, offer your own suggestions and discuss with the C/TVSO.
2. Always work with the C/TVSO, never blindside or undermine and always run your ideas and suggestions through the C/TVSO and obtain their approval before undertaking any action.
3. Discuss and assist the C/TVSO in updating the C/TVSO bylaws. Research other county/tribal bylaws as a resource.
4. Be available to assist the C/TVSO by having the commission review specific claims for emergency financial assistance from veterans with anger management, threat or other unsteady mental conditions who appear having the potential intent and capability to verbally and otherwise damage the C/TVSO's public image if their request is denied as frivolous or untruthful. It's less likely the claimant will attempt to slander the commission publicly than against the C/TVSO.  
The commission can be available to review requests over a certain amount, (eg. over \$500), more than one request from a claimant in a calendar year and over a lifetime amount.  
If the C/TVSO denies requests and the claimant appeals, they can appeal to the three member Commission which will review and perhaps interview the claimant and forward its decision to the C/TVSO.  
If the C/TVSO upholds denial by the Commission and the claimant wishes to appeal, direct the claimant to the appeal process.
5. Contact the local Workforce Development agency to learn if the claimant is receiving public assistance benefits (FoodShare, W-2, Medicaid etc.) and the income reported by all members of the household who are on one or more of these programs to ensure that these incomes are included in the claimant's request for C/TVSO financial assistance.
6. Assist the C/TVSO to seek other agencies and organizations that can provide emergency assistance and resources for legitimate requests before using C/TVSO funds.
7. If confidentiality is an issue, request the veteran requesting assistance sign a release allowing the C/TVSO to release information to other entities in an effort to assist the needy veteran.
8. Work with the C/TVSO to request additional county/tribal funds to assist needy veterans.
  - a. Address the Finance Committee of the County Board of Supervisors and/or meet with the County Executive to request additional county funding for the CVSO operation.
  - b. Write a letter addressed to the County Board and the County Executive listing the need for additional county funding for needy veterans and containing the signatures of the commanders of the veteran organizations and prominent community individuals within the county.
  - c. Write a letter to VOP (Voice of the People) in the local newspaper and request an appearance on Community Forum on the local radio station to explain the need for additional county funds to support needy veterans within the county.
9. Assist the CVSO to locate isolated veterans in the county.
  - a. Communicate with local law enforcement, postmasters in rural townships along with gas stations, convenience stores and bars in rural areas for possible isolated veterans.

Make contact with these veterans for the C/TVSO, inform them they may be eligible for VA benefits and assistance and offer to transport them to the C/TVSO for possible emergency assistance and VA benefits.

- b. Volunteer at local homeless shelters, soup kitchens and food distribution sites to locate veterans in potential need of assistance,
- c. Visit encampments where homeless people reside.
- d. Become a volunteer driver for a local agency which transports people to medical appointments, shopping, etc.

10. Contact the local jail and request to visit inmates who are veterans and inform them of C/TVSO assistance and possible VA benefits when they're released.

Example: Kenosha County CVSO Ali Nelson requested the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department add another question "Are you a Veteran?" to the ten question intake processing form for new inmates. CVSO Nelson then requested the Jail Chaplain meet with the inmate and give them a flyer containing CVSO information and explain the services provided by the CVSO office. Upon discharge, the Jail Chaplain volunteered to transport the newly released inmate to the CVSO office, accompany the person inside and introduce them to the CVSO and then drive the person home. The Jail Chaplain also volunteered to transport the person to and from the next appointment at the CVSO office.

11. Communicate with law enforcement agencies to refer veterans they encounter who appear isolated, suicidal and otherwise needy to the C/TVSO office.

12. Assist the C/TVSO to inform veterans in utility arrears to contact the utility and implement a payment plan to prevent disconnection before the moratorium period begins.

13. Assist the C/TVSO to work with veterans facing eviction and with their landlords.

14. Assist the C/TVSO to seek and coordinate budget management workshop services for veterans who could benefit from these services.

15. The commission can assist the C/TVSO to interact with the Board of Veterans Affairs in the respective Congressional District to advocate for needy veteran causes.

16. Refer veterans with dishonorable discharges to the C/TVSO for possible assistance.

17. Inform the C/TVSO of your willingness to participate with law enforcement in PTSD training.

18. Volunteer to serve in a mentorship program, such as the Veterans Treatment Court, to help veterans.

19. Enter C/TVSO information on social media, Facebook, etc., on the local C/TVSO operation and its services.

### **Highground Veterans Memorial Park Presentation**

Jon Weiler presented information on the Highground Veterans Memorial Park located three miles west of Neillsville. It is the largest veterans park in the US that is not funded by State or Federal dollars. It contains a memorial to those Wisconsin residents who served in Vietnam and to honor the sacrifices of the more than 1,244 lives from Wisconsin that were lost in Vietnam.

It is "...more than a park, it's an experience with 19 tributes, over 150 acres, miles of walking trails and events throughout the year. The healing never stops; the education continues; and the honor represents itself."

### **Future Action Plan**

1. Link up more closely with CVSO-AWI and TSVOs to provide greater impact in advocating on behalf of needy veterans in the State of Wisconsin. WSACVSC has the potential of 249 commissioners from 72 counties and 11 tribes ( $72 + 11 = 83 \times 3 = 249$ ) available in this effort.
2. Greater incorporation with Tribal commissioners and TVSOs into WSACVSC with committee placements, etc.
3. Invite State veterans organizations, such as the American Legion, VFW, etc., to attend and participate in the 2020 WSACVSC Conference and request funding from them.
4. Explore possibility of two day WSACVSC Conference in 2020 where WSACVSC will cover mileage, one night lodging and meals for commissioners to attend this conference.
5. Request funding from WDVA and other sources.
6. Explore corporate funding.

### **Adjourn**

Motion carried.

Minutes compiled by  
Bill Erickson with the assistance of Nellie DeBaker who provided helpful and patient review.

9/26/19 version