

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WDVA Briefing of October 18, 2007

Platteville, Wisconsin

**Board Members Present**

Peter Moran  
Marv Freedman  
Rodney C. Moen  
Jackie Guthrie  
William Andersen  
Walter Stenavich

**Legislative & Program Review Members Present**

Marv Freedman  
Vera Roddy  
Steve Lawrence  
Duane Miskulin  
Jim Young  
Tim Thiers  
Mike Furgal  
Scott Berger  
Don Heiliger

**Long Term Care Committee Members Present**

Rod Moen  
Jackie Guthrie  
Lewis Harned  
Rick Scollon  
Jerry Polus  
Christine Jordan  
Ken Wendt

**Financial Committee Members Present**

Bill Andersen  
Walter Stenavich  
Al Richards  
Mike Demske  
Jim Gausmann  
Joe Campbell  
Al Kochenderfer  
Bill Hustad

**WDVA Staff Members Present**

Bill Kloster, Acting Secretary  
Anthony Hardie, Executive Assistant  
Bill Crowley, Commandant, King  
Jimmy Stewart, Chief Legal Counsel  
Ken Abrahamsen, Budget Director  
Colleen Holtan, Budget Office  
Mike Diaz, Division of Veterans Homes  
Gary Wistrom, Acting Commandant, WVH-UG  
Ken Black, Division of Veterans Benefits  
Randy Krueger, Bureau of Fiscal Services  
Andy Schuster, Public Affairs Director  
David Rueth, Program Coordinator  
Julie Van Metre, Executive Staff Assistant

**Council on Veterans Programs Present**

Connie Allord, UWV  
Russ Alsteen, NCUSA  
Cleon Brown, USSVWWII  
Rick Cherone, MOPH  
Donna Chrzas, CVSO  
Phil Cote, Am. Legion  
Jesse Haro, CWV  
Paul Fine, ANU  
Mark Foreman, VVAW  
Bill Hustad, WVV  
Chris Kanios, VFW  
Jerry Rabetski, PLAV  
Clif Sorenson, WACVO  
Clarence Stoel, DAV  
Jack Stone, PVA  
Tim Thiers, AMVETS

**Others Present**

Jon LiDonne, CVSO Association President  
Kelly Moran  
Joni Moran Peterson, Unit 220  
Eugene P. Moran  
JoAnn Moran, Unit 220  
Marie Biever  
Marty Moran  
Margo Murphy, Unit 220  
Jim Moran  
Tim Moran  
Shannon Budworth  
Tom Moran  
Elizabeth Moran  
Mike Moran  
Ida L. Moran  
Rhonda Carlin-Moran  
Ryan Carlin  
Jerry Moran, Crawford County Sheriff  
Cheryl McCormick, Unit 220  
Pauline Shrede, Unit 220  
Lorraine Davig, Unit 220  
Talene Buroker, Soldiers Grove, Unit 220  
Janet McCormick, Soldiers Grove, Unit 220  
Bernard McCormick, Soldiers Grove, Unit 220  
Frank McCoy, Soldiers Grove, Cmdr Post 220  
Ann Stenavich  
Pastor Robert Chukwur, Gays Mills  
Tim Murphy, LVER, Platteville  
Phoebe Baker, Platteville, US Navy non-active  
Joachim Hanson, UWP Vet Club  
Robert Quillen, UWP Vet Club  
Allen Macaulay, UWP Vet Club  
Megan Bumham, UWP Vet Club  
Marcia Anderson, Board Member Nominee

The briefing session by WDVA staff for Board, Council and Committee members commenced at 1:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Frank McCoy followed by a moment of silence in memory of our prisoners of war and missing in action.

1. Certification of Notice of Meeting and Roll Call

It was certified that the meeting was properly noticed.  
Roll call of Board members: 6 members present for a quorum.  
Roll call of Legislative and Program Review Committee members: 9 members present for a quorum.  
Roll call of Long-Term Care Committee members: 7 members present for a quorum.  
Roll call of Financial Committee members: 8 members present for a quorum.  
Roll call of Council on Veterans Programs members: 16 members present for a quorum.

Chairman Moran introduced Board nominee Marcia Anderson. Ms. Anderson was appointed by Governor Doyle and awaits Senate confirmation to join the Board of Veterans Affairs.

2. Presentation of Board's Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award

Mr. Moran commented about the genesis of the award and then made some remarks about the recipient of the award. The award was presented on behalf of the Board by Vice Chairman Marv Freedman, Board Secretary Rod Moen and Chairman Pete Moran.

The first recipient of the Board's Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Eugene P. Moran of Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin. Attached to these minutes is copy of a proclamation that accompanied the plaque presentation.

The next presentation of the Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award will be at the Board's December meeting in Union Grove. The recipient there will be selected from a pool of veterans who reside in the southeast corner of the state. An electronic application for this award is on the Department's website.

3. Board Committee Appointment

None.

4. Legislative Report—Anthony Hardie

Mr. Hardie highlighted several upcoming events around the state:  
October 23—Supermarket of Veterans Benefits at the Ho-Chunk Convention Center in Baraboo  
October 23—American Legion Post 52 in LaCrosse will hold a stand down from 9 am to 4:30 pm  
October 25-27—DAV Department of Wisconsin fall conference held at the Hotel Mead in WI Rapids  
November 2—Madison Vet Center commemorative and grand opening ceremony on Butler St  
November 6-7—Supermarket of Veterans Benefits in Waukesha  
November 11—a comprehensive list of veterans events taking place across the state can be found on the Department's webpage.

The Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bond (QVMB) program is the program at the federal level that allows for the state to issue tax exempt bonds whose proceeds are used to be able to provide state veterans home loans in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is one of five states in the nation that has a veterans home loan program authorized under this provision of the internal revenue code. The other four states are Oregon, Alaska, California and Texas. Two years ago we were successful in having eligibility for QVMB changed so that it was no longer just veterans whose service began prior to 1977, it was all veterans. A year ago Congress passed legislation that made some of those changes permanent and granted WDVA and the state \$25 million in bonding authority to be phased in over five years. Currently a subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on legislation, a provision of which was to increase the bonding cap to \$100 million as opposed to the current \$25 million level.

Congressman Ron Kind, Congressman Paul Ryan, and Congressman Earl Blumenauer of Oregon were the key legislators to help make sure that our request was included in this legislation. The name of the legislation does not yet have a number but it is called "The Heroes Earning Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2007." The \$100 million would be phased in over a five-year period ending in either 2010 or 2011.

The WDVA has been working closely with Congressman Tom Petri, a senior member of the House Education Committee, on revitalizing the Troops to Teachers (TTT) Program. H.R. 711 is legislation that would help to ensure that TTT can be used in most of the state's school districts once again. The legislation is being included in the No Child Left Behind Act.

We have also been working closely with Rep. Petri on funding levels for the State Approving Agencies (SAA). The legislation ensures that the current funding levels of \$19 million will be extended. It is included in one of the appropriation bills and continues to move forward.

Previously, \$25 million in long term bonds was approved for the state veterans home loan program. WDVA needs corresponding state authority to issue those bonds and that is normally done in the state biennial budget process. We do not currently have that expanded state authority, and this year's \$10 million of federal QVMB bonding authority will expire irrevocably on December 31, 2007. The action yesterday by the State Building Commission at the request of Capital Finance allows for that \$10 million to now be issued in commercial paper which can be turned around much more quickly than long-term bonds, but the federal authority for \$10 million in QVMB bonds still expires irrevocably on Dec. 31, 2007.

A memo dated October 15 from Acting Secretary Kloster entitled, Impacts if There is no 2007-09 Biennial Budget was provided to the Board. The \$10 million bonding issue is the most critical of all the issues of what happens if there is no budget. A second memo dated October 16 highlights items that are still in the biennial budget that if the budget does not pass, all the items would not take place.

Mr. Hardie provided a list of veterans bills being tracked by the Department. Assembly Bill 270 and Senate Bill 143, changing the makeup of the Council on Veterans Programs, were passed by the Senate Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs. Assembly Bill 75 provides for assistance for veterans affected by depleted uranium and was passed by the Assembly and had a hearing in the Senate Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs.

A memo from the Vets for Vets Student Organization on the UW Madison campus outlines six issues, the first being ensuring no cuts are made to the Wisconsin G.I. Bill. Legislation is being circulated by Senator Sullivan that would both remove the statutory requirement for the Department to have a pre-application and calls for the full payment of grants that would have been denied due to the pre-application.

Mr. Hardie had the opportunity to spend a couple days on the road with the Governor and the Administration with regards to the Governor's initiation of Special Session Senate Bill 1, and the Governor made it clear that he would not accept a budget that did not keep the promises made to veterans in the bill he signed into law on Memorial Day 2006 that provided full free tuition to Wisconsin's veterans. This budget bill preserves current law with regards to the Wisconsin G.I. Bill. It provides the full amount of funding requested by the Governor of \$11.6 million. Secondly, the Assembly version of the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit was included, which significantly expands the program. It removes the age 65 limit; secondly, it allows for those with individual Unemployability -- those who are compensated at the 100% rate but who do not have a combined rating of 100% to also be included and; thirdly, it dramatically liberalizes residency to just 5 years of continuous state residency at any time after entry onto active duty.

Mr. Freedman said that the Governor's clear message was that he would keep intact the Wisconsin G.I. Bill as is under current law.

#### 5. Programs Report

Ken Black reported that the following CVSO Bulletins were sent out:

- Bulletin #801 announcing the retirement of WDVA employee Shirley Mitchell
- Bulletin #803 clarifying the Department's policy regarding the Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant Program (ANVG) and the VA Health Care System
- Bulletin #806 announcing the new Home Loan rate of 6.25%
- Bulletin #810 regarding revision to the lender's manual

#### State Veterans Cemeteries

- There were 67 burials in September
- Expansion at the Northern Cemetery nearing completion
- Anticipate restarting columbarium burials by the end of October
- Northern Cemetery successfully completed the triennial inspection
- Southern Cemetery received approval to proceed with design of the new columbarium
- Final approval on remaining expansion design is pending
- Remaining expansion projects totaling \$5.4 million will occur pending approval from the State Cemetery Grants Program sometime in fiscal year 2009. This will include a new cemetery master plan, new committal shelter, additional vaults and burial gardens and cremation burial gardens and scattering garden
- All three cemeteries will conduct Veterans Day ceremonies on November 11

#### Women Veterans Program

- Conference was extremely successful
- 210 registrations, 158 attended
- An after-action review is being conducted

#### Veterans Homeless Program (VAP)

- VAP at Chippewa Falls is projected to open in November, pending final approval
- VAP building dedication at Chippewa Falls on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.
- CVI, the VAP contractor is meeting requirements
- Contractor to visit Chippewa Falls for future consideration of managing that program
- Union Grove VAP has moved to Cottage 16. Veterans will be accepted into single room occupancy in November
- King and Ft. McCoy homeless programs function well are at near capacity

#### VetEd Grant Program

- The fall semester VetEd pre-applications were down 50% from the fall of 2006
- Wisconsin G.I. Bill to 100% at UW and Technical Colleges

#### National Guard Reintegration

- Anticipating largest reintegration event on November 3-4 at Wisconsin Dells. Nearly 500 members of the 1-121 Field Artillery and their families will be served
- There will be individual reintegration services on November 10 at Ft. McCoy for National Guard troops

## Loans

- Loan volume in the Home Loan Program was \$7,012,368 in August and \$4,172,200 in September
- Loan volume in the Personal Loan Program was \$577,175 in August and \$707,300 in September
- Loan volume in the Home Improvement Loan Program was \$275,483 in August and \$62,500 in September
- The Veterans Trust Fund delinquency rate was 2.16% in August and 2.37% in September

## 6. Veterans Homes Report

Micabil Diaz gave an overview of activities in the Division of Veterans Homes. Next month WDVA will be conducting an analysis of the charges for the care and maintenance of the Homes pursuant to VA 6.01(16) of the Administrative Code. Members must receive a 30-day notice of rate increases. On August 20<sup>th</sup> WDVA received a letter from the federal VA recognizing our facility at Union Grove as being eligible to receive per diem payments. Those payments will be retroactive to October 6, 2006 and total about a half a million dollars. The Homes' citations report for August was submitted to the Board. The Homes' survey reports were submitted by both Commandants and will be discussed at the Long Term Care Committee. Representatives from WDVA met on October 10<sup>th</sup> with the Division of Facilities Management and the architects to discuss the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Home project. This is the first step in the process of a new home at Chippewa Falls.

Mr. Freedman asked at what point in time do we submit the necessary requests and paperwork to the federal government to be placed on the funding priority list for construction of the new home at Chippewa Falls. Mr. Diaz said that has already been done and we are on the waiting list at priority #88. The state already set aside \$4.5 million in the 2005-07 capital budget which is 35% of the cost of construction, with the federal VA to pay the remaining 65%.

Acting Commandant Wistrom from the Union Grove Home reported a census of 176. The skilled nursing facility, Boland Hall, increased its census from 53 to 80 since the last report. The first and second floors of Boland Hall are now at full capacity and final preparations are in progress for admitting members onto the third floor. Due to preparations for the upcoming conversion of rooms in Fairchild and Shemanske Halls, the assisted living census has decreased from 105 to 96. Admissions are made as vacancies occur. Conversion of the 10 double rooms into 15 singles in Fairchild and Shemanske Halls continues to progress. The conversion will upgrade all newly converted rooms as well as the remaining double rooms with ADA compliant bathrooms, replacement of windows, replacement of hot water heaters, water softeners and pneumatic controls for the heating/air conditioning units. The construction could start by November 15<sup>th</sup>. The reconstruction of the loading docks at Maurer and Boland Halls are in final stages.

Licensing and survey hurdles are nearly complete for the delicatessen and it should open within a few weeks. The member/family picnic was held on September 30<sup>th</sup> and there were about 500 attendees. The last of the four new buses was received. These buses will be used to transport members to medical appointments and to their ongoing activities. On September 11, the VFW of Wisconsin Ladies Auxiliary President visited the campus. On October 5<sup>th</sup> the AMVETS Commander and Ladies Auxiliary President visited the Home. Upcoming events: Halloween costume party on October 31, Veterans Day Program on November 11<sup>th</sup>; Pearl Harbor Day Program on December 7 and the member/family Christmas party on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Commandant Crowley reported that the King Home has 73 applications pending; the average length of time from receipt of the application to the date of admission is 42 days. The current census is 711 with 38 vacancies. The Home Exchange received \$43,413.15 in August and September. The Home Exchange experienced a net loss of \$792.00 for August and September but had a 12-month net gain of

\$688.14. The Home Gifts and Bequests account had donations of \$19, 929.54 and expenditures of \$10,253.21 for a net increase in the account of \$9,676.33.

Major events at the Home: September 9 Military Order of the Purple Heart King Day; September 14-16 AMVETS King weekend; on November 11 there will be a Veterans Day Program, and on December 7<sup>th</sup> there will be a Pearl Harbor Day Program.

Mr. Andersen wanted to know the balance in the Gifts and Bequests account. Mr. Crowley said the net available unencumbered balance is \$608,725.58. This does not include the separate funds for the King Koach and the other vehicles at Union Grove. In addition there is \$69,645 that the Board had previously encumbered for specific items.

## 7. Financial Report

Ms. Holtan began with the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. Operating expenses exceeded revenues resulting in a \$2.5 million operating loss through the first quarter of fiscal year 2008. The year-to-date operating loss, which is \$212,537 greater than the loss for the first quarter of fiscal year 2007, caused fund equity to decrease to \$42,690,222. Assets and liabilities plus fund equity each decreased \$5.4 million since September 30, 2006. The September 30, 2007 cash balance was \$20.6 million, an increase of \$2.8 million since June 30, 2007 as cash receipts exceeded cash uses.

Through the first quarter of fiscal year 2008, operating expenses at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove continued to exceed revenues resulting in a fiscal year-to-date net operating loss of \$1,348,977 and a \$1,342,841 decrease in fund equity. Reported revenues do not include \$540,000 of skilled nursing VA per diem that did not meet accounting principles for revenue recognition in fiscal year 2007, but which are recognizable based on authorization received from the USDVA in August 2007. Total assets at September 30, 2007 were \$350,781 greater than September 30, 2006. The September 30, 2007 cash balance was a negative \$1,945,000.

The fiscal year-to-date net loss in the Veterans Trust Fund was \$1,528,669. Assets in the Veterans Trust Fund totaled \$69.8 million as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, a decrease of \$6.8 million since September 30, 2006. Those decreases include cash and the unpaid principal balance of veterans and mortgage loans outstanding. The September 30, 2007 cash balance was \$25,372,197 as fiscal year-to-date cash uses have exceeded receipts by \$1.85 million.

Fiscal year-to-date operating expenses in the Mortgage Loan Repayment Fund exceeded operating revenues by \$7,982,231, an increase of \$9.1 million over the same time period in fiscal year 2007. Included in the operating expenses was \$9.4 million of interest paid on bonds subject to either special redemption or mandatory sinking fund redemption. The cash balance in the mortgage loan repayment fund was \$118,761,229 as of September 30, 2007.

The Veterans Trust Fund loan portfolio delinquency rate for September was 2.37% overall, and 2.40% for the Personal Loan Program. The Primary Mortgage Loan Delinquency Rate for August was 0.68%. Thirty-two Primary Mortgage Loan applications were received in September 2007.

Ms. Holtan talked about the sale of general obligation refunding bonds that took place October 17<sup>th</sup>, an item that is on the Board's agenda for October 19<sup>th</sup>. The total amount sold was \$20,570,000 that includes \$420,000 of underwriter's discount, leaving lendable proceeds of \$20,150,000. This is considered new money for tax purposes and will reduce the amount of bonds issued under the 2007 QVMB volume cap to \$9.58 million. Closing for those bonds is scheduled to take place on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

8. Recess/Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mr. Stenavich and carried on a voice vote that the Board adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

It was moved by Mr. Heiliger, seconded by Ms. Roddy and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative and Program Review Committee stand in recess.

Mr. Moen announced that the Long Term Care Committee stands in recess.

It was moved by Mr. Gausmann, seconded by Mr. Hustad and carried on a voice vote that the Financial Committee stand in recess.

It was moved, seconded and carried on a voice vote that the Council on Veterans Programs adjourn until 8:00 a.m. on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

The time was 2:20 p.m.

# *Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs*

## *Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award*

### *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS**, Eugene P. Moran was born July 17, 1924 in Scott Township, Crawford County, Wisconsin, and enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in Madison on October 21, 1942; and

**WHEREAS**, he served as a B-17 Flying Fortress, Tail Gunner with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Corps stationed in England and flew five bombing missions, and on November 29, 1943, while on a bombing mission at 28,000 feet above Sandbostel, Germany, near Bremen, the tail section he was in was shot off the plane; and

**WHEREAS**, with severe gunshot wounds and a bullet riddled parachute, he rode the tail section down at the rate of 100 feet per second; and he survived the descent, but sustained a crushed skull when the tail section hit a tree trunk before crashing to the ground; and

**WHEREAS**, his life was saved by a Serbian doctor, also a POW, who surgically repaired his severe head wounds after which he was a Prisoner of War for almost eighteen months, being inhumanely incarcerated in POW camps in Germany, Prussia and Poland, and surviving solitary confinement, relocation on a "hell Ship" on the Baltic Sea, and a 600 mile forced march from early February to late April 1945 during one of the harshest winters on record; and

**WHEREAS**, he was liberated on April 26, 1945, at Bitterfeld, Germany; was discharged on December 1, 1945, holding the rank of Staff Sergeant and was awarded two Purple Hearts, the Air Medal with Gold Leaf Cluster, the European Theater Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal; and

**WHEREAS**, he is a Life Member of American Legion Post 220, Soldiers Grove, WI, serving as Post Commander ten times and also serving as Post Adjutant, Service Officer, Vice Commander, and Chaplain and as Chair of a host of Post service projects, he has served as Wisconsin American Legion 3<sup>rd</sup> District Vice Commander and Sergeant-at-Arms, attended all but four State American Legion Conventions since 1946, and attended two National American Legion Conventions, and he is a Life Member of the Disabled American Veterans and American Ex-POWs, and a 20-year member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and

**WHEREAS**, he has served for twelve years as a member of the Crawford County Board of Supervisors, 20 years as Chief of the Soldiers Grove Volunteer Fire Department, 22 years as a charter member of the Soldiers Grove Rescue Squad, 30 years as a Fire Warden, many years as a member of the Saint Philips Parish Council, and has promoted countywide Americanism, Veterans Day Programs and supported Girl Scout and Boy Scout endeavors; and

**WHEREAS**, with his late wife, Margaret, he raised nine children to become responsible, productive and patriotic citizens.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Peter J. Moran, Chair of the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs, proclaim **EUGENE P. MORAN** as the first recipient of the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of October 2007.

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PETER J. MORAN  
Board Chair



M I N U T E S  
LEGISLATIVE AND PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Meeting of October 18, 2007

**Committee Present**

Marvin Freedman  
Scott Berger  
Mike Furgal  
Don Heiliger  
Steve Lawrence  
Duane Miskulin  
Vera Roddy  
Tim Thiers  
Jim Young

**Committee Members Excused**

Bud Mautz  
Paul Weprinsky

**WDVA Present**

William Kloster, Acting Secretary  
Anthony Hardie, Executive Assistant  
Jimmy Stewart, Chief Legal Counsel  
Bill Crowley, Commandant, WVH-K  
Gary Wistrom, Acting Commandant, WVH-UG  
Mike Diaz, Division Administrator  
Ken Abrahamsen, Budget Director  
Colleen Holtan, Budget  
Ken Black, Division Administrator  
Randy Krueger, Bureau of Fiscal Services  
Andrew Schuster, Public Affairs Director  
David Rueth, Program Coordinator  
Julie Van Metre, Executive Staff Assistant

**Others Present**

Connie Allord  
Marcia Anderson, Board Appointee  
Russ Alsteen, NCUSA  
Bill Andersen, Board Member  
Cleon "Pat" Brown, USSVWWII  
Joe Campbell  
Rick Cherone, MOPH  
Donna Chrzas, Columbia CVSO  
Phil Cote, American Legion  
Mike Demske, VVA President  
Paul Fine, ANU  
Mark Foreman, VVAW  
Jim Gausmann, LaCrosse CVSO  
Mark Grams, Dodge CVSO  
Jackie Guthrie, Board Member  
Lewis Harned  
Jesse Haro, CWV  
Bill Hustad, WVV  
Christine Jordan, Walworth CVSO  
Al Kochenderfer  
Kevin Kavanaugh  
Jon LiDonne, Waupaca CVSO  
Rod Moen, Board Member  
Pete Moran, Board Chairman  
Jerry Polus, Brown CVSO  
Jerry Rabetski, PLAV  
Al Richards  
Rick Scollon  
Judith Singer  
Clif Sorenson, WACVO, Eau Claire CVSO  
Walter Stenavich, Board Member  
Clarence Stoel, DAV  
Jack Stone, PVA  
Tom Taber, Grant CVSO  
Ken Wendt

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting of the Legislative and Program Review Committee was called to order at 2:30 p.m.; a quorum was present.

2. **Certification of Notice of Meeting**

It was noted that proper notice of the meeting occurred.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Mr. Heiliger, seconded by Mr. Furgal and carried on a voice vote to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2007 meeting.

4. Action on AMVETS Resolutions 06-07 Aid to Needy Veteran Grant Improvement Recommendations; 07-07 Veterans Education Grant Pre-Enrollment Requirement; 08-07 Veterans Education Grant Income Limit; 09-07 Veterans Education Grant Delimiting Date

Mr. Freedman said that the subject matter of all four resolutions has been previously acted upon by the Legislative and Program Review Committee and the Board. The Aid to Needy Veteran Grant Resolution goes directly to matters that have already been adopted as policy by the Committee and the Board. The Veterans Education Pre-Enrollment Requirement takes a position consistent with the Department and the Board. The Veterans Education Grant Income Limit will be held for the development of the 2009-11 biennial budget. The Veterans Education Grant Delimiting Date, likewise, the Committee and the Board previously took the position that the issue will be considered in the 2009-11 biennial budget.

It was moved by Mr. Thiers, seconded by Mr. Heiliger and carried unanimously on a voice vote to receive and file the above four AMVETS Resolutions.

5. Discussion and Action on the 2007-09 State Budget

Mr. Freedman had requested from the Department an informational paper on the impact to the Department if there is no 2007-09 budget as well as information with respect to what initiatives were originally requested by the Department, approved by the Board and submitted by the Governor that would not take place until a budget passes. Each member of the Committee received that informational paper so that the veterans community can understand and be conversant in an informed fashion when speaking to your legislators. Mr. Freedman highlighted that in the budget bill as approved by Joint Finance, the Senate, and the Assembly there is a provision that increases the bonding cap by \$85 million. Without that increase, if we don't have a budget bill or authorizing legislation before January 1, 2008, WDVA will lose the ability to issue \$10 million in QVMB authorized bonding for veterans home loans. Mr. Hardie highlighted other impacts on WDVA's operations and programs if no biennial budget or separate legislation is enacted during the 2007-09 biennium.

Mr. Freedman asked if there is a statutory requirement that the only way to give a CVSO grant, if there is not a budget, is by taking applications as first come/first serve, or could the amount of money that exists be prorated over all the counties? Mr. Kloster said that because our fiscal year ends in the middle of the calendar year, we then pay the grants out of the next year's budget authority. It's a built in structural deficit that WDVA is trying to correct and it should not have any impact on the money getting to the counties. WDVA pays all the grants up through the end of the fiscal year (June), then in July when we go into the state's next fiscal year, we'll pay the remainder of those grants.

6. Discussion and Action on the Need for Additional USDVA Vet Centers in Wisconsin

Mr. Freedman said there is an effort going on within the Wisconsin Congressional Delegation to try and prepare the necessary documents to request the US Department of Veterans Affairs to create two new vet centers in Wisconsin.

Regarding the alleged misuse of personality disorder discharges by the US Department of Defense, Mr. Freedman had an opportunity to speak with Senator Barack Obama in Madison on

Monday about personality disorder discharge issues and it is something about which the Senator is greatly concerned.

#### 7. Briefing on WDVA DD214 Certification and Retention & Safeguarding Policies

Mr. Kloster said the Committee members were provided with written material on the procedures that WDVA is using to safeguard DD214s and other records, along with several Department policies regarding that matter. Additionally, Mr. Kloster said that about 98% of DD214s come from the Department of Defense sources and separation centers. We consider those certified official copies. That leaves about 2% that come directly from veterans, family members or funeral directors. The current law for state veterans benefits does not specify that we are required to have a certified copy of a DD214 before we can provide benefits to a veteran. We do retain all the copies of discharge documents that we receive and they are placed on file within our record-keeping system. If we suspect any kind of tampering or fraud with the documents we would report that to the appropriate authorities. We have requested refresher training from the Department of Defense in recognizing and detecting such tampering with documents.

Under the safeguarding of the documents, several new steps have been taken along with updating our policies. The procedure for requesting documents is contained in the statutes under 45.04 and in the Administrative Code under VA 1.10.

Mr. Freedman reported that the CVSO Advisory Council, at its September meeting, heard a proposal that if WDVA has a copy that they know to be a certified copy--either it's embossed, Copy 6, comes from the Army, etc., they will put a raised certification stamp on it. If they don't have a known certified copy, then there will be a red stamp across the top that says uncertified copy. Mr. Freedman asked how long before that new policy will be instituted. Mr. Kloster said that once Mr. Perelman returns from vacation next week, he will be able to get that accomplished fairly shortly. A CVSO Bulletin will be distributed once the policy is instituted.

#### 8. Secretary's Matters

Acting Secretary Kloster said that the Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant Process Action Team had its first meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 7 November. In addition, he highlighted that the Museum had another very successful Forest Hills Cemetery event which continues to grow each year. The Women's Conference was an extremely successful event. The Acting Secretary attended the reception on Friday and the conference on Saturday. Finally, there was a meeting yesterday with representatives from the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the Department of Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs about the preservation center which is one of the key elements that has to happen prior to construction of any new building that would house the Historical Society, the WDVA and the Veterans Museum. We are probably four years away from any construction of the preservation facility but the project continues to move forward.

#### 9. Public Input

Rick Cherone asked about Assembly Bill 201. Mr. Hardie said that the sales tax exemption and property tax exemption are both measures that were contained in the Department's budget. The Joint Committee on Finance split those out. The property tax did not move forward, the sales tax did. There is this separate legislation if necessary, but the sales tax measure is contained in every version of the budget that has moved forward to this point.

10. Committee Members' Matters (Not Subject to Adoption)

Tim Thiers mentioned that the VAPs at King and Tomah are full. While at the AMVETS weekend at King, he was talking to individuals at the VAP-King who said they were hoping something could be done to refurbish the second floor of the facility to house more vets. Is that a possibility? Mr. Black said it is something that has been looked at. Mr. Kloster said the original plan was to refurbish the second floor to allow for single room occupancy beds there, not necessarily VA per diem homeless beds. Unfortunately, it is an old building and right now we do not have the funds to remodel it. WDVA has included single room occupancy at Chippewa Falls and at Union Grove with the movement from Cottage 1 to Cottage 16. The single room occupancy revenue that is generated will come primarily to the Department. That will be separate revenue that is not needed to run the per diem homeless program. Mr. Thiers asked for some estimate on the possible rehab so that organizations could chip in matching funds.

11. Next Meeting Date.

December 13 at the Wisconsin Veterans Home, Union Grove, Wisconsin

12. Adjournment.

It was moved by Mr. Thiers, seconded by Mr. Miskulin and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting; the time was 3:00 p.m.

Marvin Freedman  
Chairman

M I N U T E S  
LONG TERM CARE COMMITTEE  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Meeting of October 18, 2007

**Committee Present**

Rod Moen  
Jackie Guthrie  
Christine Jordan  
Jerry Polus  
Rick Scollon  
Lew Harned  
Ken Wendt

**Committee Members Excused**

Charles Allen  
Kevin Kavanaugh  
Mary Meyer  
Alan Walker

**WDVA Present**

William Kloster, Acting Secretary  
Anthony Hardie, Executive Assistant  
Jimmy Stewart, Chief Legal Counsel  
Bill Crowley, Commandant, WVH-K  
Gary Wistrom, Acting Commandant, UG  
Ken Abrahamsen, Budget Director  
Colleen Holtan, Budget  
Mike Diaz, Division Administrator  
Ken Black, Division Administrator  
Randy Krueger, Bureau of Fiscal Services  
Andy Schuster, Public Affairs Director  
David Rueth, Program Coordinator  
Julie Van Metre, Executive Staff Assistant  
Pat Shaughnessy via Teleconference

**Others Present**

Connie Allord, UWV  
Russ Alsteen, NCUSA  
Bill Andersen, Board Member  
Marcia Anderson, Board Appointee  
Scott Berger, Marathon CVSO  
Cleon "Pat" Brown, USSVWWII  
Joe Campbell  
Rick Cherone, MOPH  
Donna Chrzas, Columbia CVSO  
Phil Cote, American Legion  
Mike Demske, VVA President  
Paul Fine, ANU  
Mark Foreman, VVAW  
Marvin Freedman, Board Vice Chairman  
Jim Gausmann, LaCrosse CVSO  
Jesse Haro, CWV  
Bill Hustad, WVV  
Al Kochenderfer  
Jon LiDonne, Waupaca CVSO  
Duane Miskulin  
Pete Moran, Board Chairman  
Jerry Rabetski, PLAV  
Al Richards  
Vera Roddy, UWV  
Judith Singer  
Clif Sorenson, WACVO/Eau Claire CVSO  
Walter (Ann) Stenavich, Board Member  
Clarence Stoel, DAV  
Jack Stone, PVA  
Tom Taber, Grant CVSO  
Tim Thiers, AMVETS/Manitowoc CVSO  
Jim Young, Vernon CVSO

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting of the Long Term Care Committee was called to order at 3:15 p.m., a quorum was present.

2. **Certification of Notice of Meeting**

It was certified that proper notice of the meeting occurred.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Mr. Wendt, seconded by Mr. Harned and carried unanimously on a voice vote to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2007 Committee meetings.

4. Actual Overtime Worked in Each Nursing Category—Bill Crowley

Commandant Crowley provided some charts to Committee members that demonstrate what the actual average overtime for each person in each of the different nursing categories. A pay period is two weeks and the start of the state fiscal year is pay period 15. CNAs averaged about four and a half hours per pay period or a little over two hours per week in overtime. Nurse Clinicians or RNs are just at two hours per pay period or an hour a week. The LPNs are at two and a half hours per pay period or just a bit above one hour per week. In fiscal year 2008 you will see somewhat of an increase in overtime for CNAs. CNAs have been asked to work overtime hours to be able to participate in culture-change training in addition to their regular work shift. Another significant fact in the nurse clinician overtime, included in that calculation is one registered nurse who volunteers for all the overtime that is possibly available, so she alone averages about twenty hours per pay period.

Mr. Moen asked if we are ever in a situation of mandatory overtime and mandatory double shifts. Mr. Crowley said that in almost every pay period there is mandatory overtime and there may be an occasion where someone would work a full double shift but it would be rare. The Home is staffed at the minimum to meet the state and federal requirements. There was a request for 44 additional positions in the budget.

5. Review of Most Recent Survey Citations at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes at King and Union Grove and the Plans of Action to be Taken to Correct Deficiencies

Mr. Crowley indicated the level of deficiencies and summarized what they were and what the plan of correction was. The annual recertification survey in Ainsworth Hall resulted in several citations. The first citation had to do with physical constraints. What the surveyors observed when they visited was that a member's care plan indicated that when he is in his chair and in the vicinity of staff members, he can be checked to see if his safety belt can be loosened or possibly removed if he is participating in some kind of activity with a staff member in the area. A surveyor said that they observed that there were times when there were staff members in the area of that member and that measure was not taken. The plan of correction addresses retraining the staff members to remind them to be more cognitive of the members in their area who have a care plan that allows for their safety belt or restraint to be loosened or removed in that type of a situation. Ms. Guthrie said from her personal experience with her family member there are times when more protective safety measures should be taken and it is a critical balance.

Mr. Scollon said that the state and federal surveyors' position is that it is better to have a resident fall than it is to get hung up in a restraint.

Mr. Moen said there are eight federal citations included in the survey. What is the level? Mr. Crowley said that with one exception, they were Level D; one was Level E (and these are all nursing related citations). The other one is in the area of life safety, the Home was issued a Level C fire safety citation on the eight outside balconies at Ainsworth Hall that are constructed of concrete and brick. The Home received a citation because those areas did not have sprinklers for fire control. The plan of correction required installing sprinklers, which was a challenge because it is an unheated outside area. The plan was accepted and implemented at a cost of about \$1,600 per balcony.

Mr. Pat Shaughnessy, the Deputy Commandant for the Union Grove Home reported to Committee members via teleconference. On September 17<sup>th</sup> Boland Hall received its annual inspection from the Division of Quality Assurance. The inspection lasted four days and consisted of between five and seven inspectors who spent approximately 180 hours reviewing charts and observing care. The inspection revealed two nursing deficiencies, one dietary deficiency and eight physical plant/life safety issues. No deficiency exceeded the scope and severity of E, indicating no harm to members. All citations have been resolved. Re-inspection is expected some time within the next two to four weeks.

Mr. Crowley said that in every long term care facility you will find prominently posted the results of the most recent survey that was conducted at that facility and what the citations may have been, what corrections were done to cure those citations, and a contact number to follow up with the Department of Quality Assurance if they have questions on that survey. Also prominently posted is information on how to contact the state ombudsman if they have any questions about that survey or aspects of care at that facility.

#### 6. Secretary's Matters

Mr. Kloster said the operational assessment still continues to move along. We are currently in negotiations with the vendor to sign a contract. Once that contract has been executed, we will be able to announce the name of the vendor. We anticipate that the vendor will start the operational assessment in early November.

#### 7. Public Input

Mr. Stenavich said the morale of members of the Home is extremely important. When they have a grievance, what procedure to they use to follow through. Mr. Crowley said the first and most available person to speak with is the nurse on their unit. If they don't feel that their complaint has been properly addressed, they would then file a complaint with their social worker if they want to do it internally. That is acted on as a formal complaint and works its way up to the Commandant's office who responds to every complaint personally. If they have a complaint that they don't want to address internally, then they also have the right to go directly to the state ombudsman.

#### 8. Committee Members' Matters (Not Subject to Adoption)

Christine Jordan asked about surveying of Assisted Living. Mr. Wistrom said it is a totally separate survey. They have an annual survey from the Federal VA in order to get the VA per diem. Ms. Jordan asked that CVSOs get a letter when a member from their county is admitted to the Home or when there is a transfer from assisted living into the nursing home. Mr. Wistrom said he would have to look into the HIPAA rules to see if that information can be released.

Jerry Polus asked about disabled veterans rated 70% or greater who are eligible for contract nursing care—has that language been written yet. Mr. Crowley said the federal VA has not yet written the rules. They have agreed on some of the mechanics and the dollar amount that they will pay the respective state veterans home, which will vary from one state to another. It will be linked to the Medicare rate of payment. Mr. Polus said that disabled veterans rated 70% do not always need to go directly to a nursing home, but would like to have home health care or

go to a CBRF, currently the VA does not contract with CBRFs and there is a growing need to consider contract care which is much less expensive.

Mr. Moen asked that the Committee get a breakdown in the financials of the Gifts and Bequests fund at the Veterans Home. Mr. Moen asked if the transfer of funds from King to Union Grove transpired. Ms. Holtan said the transfer was completed during the month of June and reported in August.

9. Next Meeting Schedule.

December 13 at the Wisconsin Veterans Home, Union Grove, Wisconsin

10. Adjournment.

It was moved by Ms. Guthrie, seconded by Mr. Wendt and carried unanimously on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting; the time was 4:00 p.m.

Rod Moen  
Chairman



M I N U T E S  
FINANCIAL COMMITTEE  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Meeting of October 18, 2007

**Committee Present**

Bill Andersen  
Walter Stenavich  
Al Richards  
Jim Gausmann  
Joe Campbell  
Bill Hustad  
Al Kochenderfer  
Mike Demske

**Committee Excused**

John O'Brien  
Bill Bottoms

**WDVA Present**

William Kloster, Acting Secretary  
Anthony Hardie, Executive Assistant  
Jimmy Stewart, Chief Legal Counsel  
Bill Crowley, Commandant, WVH-K  
Gary Wistrom, Acting Commandant, UG  
Mike Diaz, Division Administrator  
Ken Abrahamsen, Budget Director  
Colleen Holtan, Budget  
Randy Krueger, Bureau of Fiscal Services  
Andy Schuster, Public Affairs Director  
David Rueth, Program Coordinator  
Julie Van Metre, Executive Staff Assistant

**Others Present**

Connie Allord, UWV  
Marcia Anderson, Board Appointee  
Cleon "Pat" Brown, USSVWWII  
Rick Cherone, MOPH Commander  
Donna Chrzas, Columbia CVSO  
Phil Cote, American Legion  
Marvin Freedman, Board Vice Chair  
Mike Furgal  
Jackie Guthrie, Board Member  
Steve Lawrence, VFW Adjutant  
Jon LiDonne, CVSO Association President  
Duane Miskulin  
Rod Moen, Board Member  
Pete Moran, Board Chairman  
Jerry Polus, Brown CVSO  
Vera Roddy, UWV President  
Rick Scollon  
Judith Singer, Being There Reaching Out, Inc.  
Clif Sorenson, Eau Claire CVSO  
Ann Stenavich  
Clarence Stoel, DAV  
Jack Stone, PVA  
Tom Taber, Grant CVSO  
Tim Thiers, AMVETS  
Jim Young, Vernon CVSO

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting of the Financial Committee was called to order at 4:05 p.m.; a quorum was present.

2. **Certification of Notice of Meeting**

It was certified that proper notice of the meeting occurred.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Mr. Demske, seconded by Mr. Campbell and carried unanimously on a voice vote to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2007 Financial Committee meeting.

4. **Informational Briefing on Scheduled or Unscheduled Audits of Financial Documents**

Randy Krueger from WDVA Bureau of Fiscal Services said that the Department is annually audited by the Legislative Audit Bureau. The Department has no unscheduled audits.

There is an entrance conference before the audit begins to discuss the scope of the audit, and an exit conference when it is completed to discuss the findings. The State of Wisconsin issues a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) each fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>. WDVA's three GAAP funds are the Veterans Mortgage Loan Repayment Fund, the Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Homes. The Legislative Audit Bureau audits the CAFR and the Independent Auditor's Report is also included as part of the CAFR. The Department of Administration, State Controllars Office conducts an examination of WDVA's internal controls over the disbursement, travel voucher, purchasing card program, and encumbrance carryover process. They also examine WDVA's compliance with the applicable statutes, rules, and regulations related to procurements and disbursements. The last compliance review was completed in March 2004.

Mr. Anderson said those are audits that are done from outside the department. What do they actually look at? Mr. Krueger said they focus on the Veterans Mortgage Loan Repayment Program. They send out letters to veterans who have loans for verification that it's valid. They also look at our internal controls, our processing related to how we track and monitor those loan balances and payments from veterans.

Mr. Anderson asked about inside the department, when something comes up, how do you handle that, and what is the administrative procedure? Mr. Krueger said if something seems unusual in the course of normal processing, an individual would bring it to his attention. There might be a need for updating procedures or new internal controls related to that issue. The Secretary's office may request a review.

#### 5. Internal Control Procedures

Mr. Krueger said that since July of 1987, the Department of Administration (DOA) and WDVA have had a "Cooperative Agreement on Accounting, Auditing and Internal Control Activities" for the purpose of documenting the responsibilities of both agencies with regard to accounting, auditing, and internal control activities. The agreement includes the delegation of preaudit from DOA to WDVA as authorized by section 16.53 of the Wisconsin Statutes. When WDVA is processing invoices for payment to vendors, grants to individuals eligible under our programs, or loans to veterans, we follow the state accounting procurement manual.

In addition to the state rules, WDVA has internal policies. Management is also responsible for establishing and maintaining a system of internal controls used in administering programs. Internal controls mean the plan or organization and methods and procedures adopted by management to ensure that resource use is consistent with laws, regulations and policies; resources are safeguarded against waste, loss, and misuse; and reliable data are obtained, maintained, and fairly disclosed in reports. WDVA maintains an internal control plan that is used to analyze control objectives, control activities, the transaction process, and evidence of controls for disbursements, receipts, journal vouchers, and loan accounting. WDVA periodically reviews and updates the internal control plan as needed for program, policy or procedure changes. Annually, WDVA submits a report on our review of internal controls to the Secretary of the Department of Administration.

Mr. Andersen asked if internal control plans are at the Division level. Mr. Krueger said the internal control plan is a document that he and his upper level staff use to review that there

are active internal controls and how they are evaluated. Mr. Andersen asked when the annual plan is completed and sent to the DOA. Mr. Krueger said it is due in January of each year.

Acting Secretary Kloster added that state credit card use is part of internal controls and internal audit. A supervisor has to recommend an employee as a credit card user and the Deputy Secretary has to sign an authorization for that individual to get a credit card. Everyone who has a credit card has a specific spending limit in concert with their responsibilities and duties. Supervisors have to verify that these credit card purchases are required. The same thing for phone calls, every long distance phone call that is made in the Department is reviewed by the individual making the calls on his or her line. Any personal phone calls must be reimbursed. Travel vouchers are signed by the supervisor and the head of the agency.

#### 6. Secretary's Matters

Mr. Kloster said the Financial Committee has heard in the past about tax check off revenue and revenue from license plates. The tax check off revenue coming to the Department in fiscal year 07 was \$129,900 and in fiscal year 08, \$102,500. The license plate revenue coming into the Department in fiscal year 07 was \$25,870 and in fiscal year 08, \$22,735. There were some start-up costs in those first two years that had to be recouped by the Department of Transportation and those costs have now been met and we should start receiving, in regards to the license plates, a monthly revenue deposit from the Department of Transportation.

Acting Kloster said that the State Building Commission allowed for WDVA to have the authority to issue commercial paper to secure the money that is available to us this calendar year for use under the QVMB program.

Mr. Gausmann noted that we are in year three of the ten-year solvency plan, how do you feel about the progress? Mr. Kloster said we have been pretty much on track with our original estimates. At the Board meeting in April, Mr. Kloster briefed where we were and new projections. There were some significant changes from the original solvency plan and that had to do with things that were in or not in the budget at the time. In June, Mr. Kloster briefed the Board again on where we stood at that particular time and what measures could be taken to bring us out to about 2014. There are several variables in here that are yet to be determined; the budget is one of them. One of the key elements in the plan briefed in June was a \$7 million transfer of cash from the Homes account into the Veterans Trust Fund for a specified period of time so that we could draw the interest off that account. The authority to transfer that \$7 million is something that is in the budget and we could still meet our goals if the budget is passed before the first of the year. There are many variables dependent upon the passage of the budget. When the ten-year solvency plan was written we were asking for GPR funding to account for some of the administrative costs and that did not happen, or has yet to happen.

#### 7. Public Input

None.

#### 8. Committee Members' Matters (Not Subject to Adoption)

None.

9. Next Meeting Date

December 13 at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in Union Grove, Wisconsin.

10. Adjournment.

It was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Gausmann and carried unanimously on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting; the time was 4:35 p.m.

Bill Andersen  
Chairman

M I N U T E S  
COUNCIL ON VETERANS PROGRAMS  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Meeting of October 19, 2007

**Members Present**

Connie Allord, UWV  
Russ Alsteen, NCUSA  
Pat Brown, USSVWWII  
Rick Cherone, MOPH  
Donna Chrzas, CVSO Association  
Paul Fine, ANU  
Mark Foreman, VVAW  
Jesse Haro, CWV  
Bill Hustad, WVV  
Chris Kanios, VFW  
Jerry Rabetski, PLAV  
Clif Sorenson, WACVO  
Clarence Stoel, DAV  
Jack Stone, PVA  
Tim Thiers, AMVETS

**Members Excused**

Paul Bialk, MCL  
Phil Cote, American Legion  
John Margowski, VVA  
Max Oleson, ARC  
Walter Peterson, Am. Ex-POWs  
William Sims, NABV  
Paul Weprinsky, JWV  
WWI vacancy  
FCDV vacancy

**WDVA Present**

William Kloster, Acting Secretary  
Anthony Hardie, Executive Assistant  
Jimmy Stewart, Chief Legal Counsel  
Ken Abrahamsen, Budget Director  
Randy Krueger, Bureau of Fiscal Services  
Ken Black, Division of Veterans Benefits  
Mike Diaz, Veterans Homes  
Bill Crowley, Commandant WVH-K  
Gary Wistrom, Acting Commandant, UG  
Colleen Holtan, Budget  
Andrew Schuster, Public Affairs Director  
David Rueth, Program Coordinator  
Julie Van Metre, Executive Staff Assistant

**Others Present**

Bill Andersen, Board Member  
Scott Berger, Marathon CVSO  
Joe Campbell  
Mike Demske, VVA President  
Mike Furgal  
Jim Gausmann, LaCrosse CVSO  
Jackie Guthrie, Board Member  
Chris Jordan, Walworth CVSO  
Holly Hoppe, Oconto CVSO  
Michael Jackson, Dane CVSO  
Chris Jordan, Walworth CVSO  
Al Kochenderfer  
Steve Lawrence, VFW Adjutant  
Jon LiDonne, CVSO Assoc. President  
Rodney C. Moen, Board Member  
Pete Moran, Board Chair  
Tim Murphy, Vets Employment Rep  
Ted Mynyk, Iowa CVSO  
Rene Oshinski, VISN 12  
Vera Roddy, UWV President  
Rick Scollon  
Judith Singer  
John Solis, Rock CVSO  
Ann Stenavich  
Walter Stenavich, Board Member  
Tom Taber, Grant CVSO  
Ken Wendt  
Jim Young, Vernon CVSO

1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The meeting of the Council on Veterans Programs was called to order by Chairman Sorenson at 8:00 a.m.

2. Certification of Notice of Meeting

It was certified that proper notice of the meeting occurred.

3. Introduction of Guests and Announcements

Introductions included: new Council members Phil Cote of the American Legion; Max Oleson, American Red Cross; Donna Chrzas, County Veterans Service Officers Association; and Connie Allord, United Women Veterans. Other introductions: Rick Cherone, Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart; Bill Hustad, Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mike Demske, President of the Vietnam Veterans of America; and Vera Roddy, President of the United Women Veterans.

4. Approval of Minutes of August 16-17 Meetings

It was moved by Mr. Kanios, seconded by Mr. Fine and carried unanimously on a voice vote to accept the minutes of the August 16-17 meetings.

5. Council Communications

Council Secretary Alsteen reported that the Council on Veterans Programs received a letter from James W. Roseborough, VISN Network 12 Director regarding a Fisher House in Milwaukee on the VA Medical Center grounds. A letter was sent to the Chairs of the Veterans Committees of the Legislature regarding the Council's support for the Veterans Assistance Foundation's request to become a member of the Council. A letter was received from the Wisconsin American GI Forum director for consideration of a seat on the Council on Veterans Programs.

It was moved by Mr. Fine, seconded by Mr. Kanios and carried unanimously on a voice vote to add an agenda item at the December meeting of the Council regarding discussion and endorsement of the American GI Forum as a member of the Council on Veterans Programs.

There was some discussion and questions regarding a Fisher House. Mr. Sorenson said this item should be on the agenda for the December meeting of the Council.

6. Museum Foundation Report

Mr. Hustad said the Museum had a successful golf fundraiser in July. They are now planning the Museum Gala scheduled for November 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Museum gallery. There is a silent auction that can be accessed on line.

7. Discussion/Action on Criteria for Eligibility for Admission to the Council on Veterans Programs—Clif Sorenson

Mr. Alsteen suggested that the Chairman form a special committee that would meet a number of times to come up with some eligibility criteria. Mr. Sorenson asked for volunteers to sit on the committee and they are: Paul Fine, Mark Foreman, Rick Cherone, Russ Alsteen, Tim Thiers and Clif Sorenson. The special committee will meet December 13 immediately following the adjournment of the Financial Committee.

#### 8. Discussion/Action on Military License Plates

Discussion took place regarding the red/white/blue license plates that are being phased out. Mr. Hardie said there is controversy and Rep. Musser is considering legislation that would preserve the old plate or give a choice for the new plate as well as calling for the redesign of the medals. Mr. Kloster said that the Department of Transportation was asked to attend this meeting to offer input on this agenda item but they are not present today.

It was moved by Mr. Thiers, seconded by Mr. Haro and carried on a voice vote to recommend that the Board of Veterans Affairs endorse Representative Musser's bill to revert back to the red/white/blue license plates.

Mr. Cherone asked that Chairman Sorenson draft a letter to the Department of Transportation inviting them to the December meeting for a more in-depth discussion.

#### 9. Secretary's Matters

Mr. Kloster echoed Mr. Hustad's announcement of the Museum Gala on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. In the past there has been a silent auction prior to the dinner in the Museum gallery. This year the silent auction is online at the Museum Foundation's webpage.

#### 10. Old Business

Mr. Alsteen asked about follow-up on the presentation made at the last meeting by Mr. Carter Doering regarding government issued burial markers in public cemeteries. Mr. Kloster said that he received correspondence from Mr. Doering who later went on WDVA's website and realized that all the information on how to correct these errors and get replacements is already on our website. What needs to be done is more communication by this Council with their organizations to let them know that the information is available on the WDVA website.

#### 11. New Business

Mr. Cherone said there is a group at the UW Milwaukee campus called WHO (Welcome Home Operation) that wants to have an area where veterans can come to use a computer and get information on loans and grants. The goal is that service organizations would have access to this office to be there once a month to help the veteran with benefits. He would like this to be expanded to all the other campuses around the state. Ms. Singer said that she started the organization on the Milwaukee campus and their main concern is educational benefits.

#### 12. Activities within the Veterans Community

- Expansion of the Veterans Assistance Program in the Chippewa Valley
- AMVETS King Weekend was held. Keep sending your post newsletters to the members there.
- November 30 Annual AMVETS State Dance in Waupaca, contact Tim Thiers
- Manitowoc County, United Veterans Council Veterans Day Banquet
- October 26 Annual Union Grove Women Veterans luncheon
- Women Marine's Association is hosting the annual all-service veterans luncheon on October 27<sup>th</sup> in Milwaukee
- The Women Veterans Clothing Room received very nice clothing donations. Similarly, the VFW Men's Clothing Room and the Women Veterans Clothing Room are in need of winter coats and winter boots. Ms. Roddy will collect these at the December Board meeting
- Navy Club annual banquet in Wausau on November 3<sup>rd</sup>

- The Department of Veterans Affairs has a website accessible by two addresses: [www.dva.state.wi.us](http://www.dva.state.wi.us) and [www.wisvets.com](http://www.wisvets.com) for Veterans Day information, etc.
- The Wisconsin Badgers Salute to Veterans football game was September 1
- September 7<sup>th</sup> was the Supermarket of Veterans Benefits at Ft. McCoy
- September 21<sup>st</sup> POW/MIA Recognition Day in Madison
- September 25-27 the County Veterans Service Officers Association Fall Conference was held in Madison
- September 30 was the Women Veterans Conference at Ft. McCoy
- October 6<sup>th</sup> was the Wisconsin National Guard Retiree Day at Ft. McCoy
- October 23 Supermarket of Veterans Benefits in Baraboo at the Ho-Chunk Convention Center from 1 to 7 p.m.
- October 25 the Consulate General of France from Chicago will be presenting the Legion of Honor to five World War II veterans from Wisconsin in Milwaukee at the War Memorial
- November 3 the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation hosts the Tribute to Freedom Gala at the Museum
- November 6-7 Supermarket of Veterans Benefits in Waukesha at the Expo Center
- November 11 Veterans Day events, the theme is Honoring all who Served—ceremonies will be held at the Spooner Cemetery at 1 p.m.; at the Union Grove Cemetery at 11 a.m. and at King Cemetery at 10:30 a.m.
- The new Veterans Assistance Program—Klein Hall dedication on December 4 at Chippewa Falls
- December 7 Pearl Harbor Day ceremonies hosted by the Department—7:30 a.m. at King and 10 a.m. at Union Grove
- January 17, 2008, Gulf War Illness Recognition Day, WDVA will hold a conference
- Yesterday the Board gave out its first Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award. An application form was supplied to Council members to submit nominations for this award.

### 13. Public Input

Ms. Guthrie, in her position as public affairs director of the Wisconsin National Guard talked about donations for service members. Mailing addresses of service members cannot be given out. Wisconsin service members deployed at this time is at an all time low and they are really not in need of personal supplies. You can show your support through a website called America Supports You and a Wisconsin website for all service members at [www.wingfam.org](http://www.wingfam.org). You can also open your arms and donations to service members' families here at home.

Mr. Taber announced that Jon LiDonne, Waupaca County Veterans Service Officer was recently elected President of the CVSO Association of Wisconsin.

Mr. Campbell spoke about the VA's enhanced use proposal to improve the grounds and facilities at the VA in Milwaukee. Regional trauma centers, a Fisher House and expansion of Wood National Cemetery are proposed. Mr. Sorenson said that this issue will be a discussion/action item at the Council's December meeting.

### 14. Election of Officers

Mr. Fine nominated Clif Sorenson as Chairman of the Council on Veterans Program. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Alsteen. No other names were placed in nomination. It was moved by Mr. Rabetski, seconded by Mr. Alsteen and carried unanimously on a voice vote to elect Clif Sorenson as Chairman.



Mr. Fine nominated Tim Thiers as Vice Chairman of the Council on Veterans Programs. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Alsteen. No other names were placed in nomination. It was moved by Mr. Rabetski, seconded by Mr. Stone and carried unanimously on a voice vote to elect Tim Thiers as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Fine nominated Russ Alsteen as Secretary of the Council on Veterans Programs. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Thiers. No other names were placed in nomination. It was moved by Mr. Rabetski, seconded by Mr. Stone and carried unanimously on a voice vote to elect Russ Alsteen as Secretary.

15. Next Meeting Date

December 13-14 at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in Union Grove.

16. Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Cherone, seconded by Mr. Kanios and carried on a voice vote to adjourn, the time was 9:25 a.m.

Clif Sorenson  
Chairman

**BOARD MINUTES**  
**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
Meeting of October 19, 2007  
Platteville, Wisconsin

**Board Members Present**

Peter J. Moran  
Marvin J. Freedman  
Rodney C. Moen  
William H. Andersen  
Jackie Guthrie  
Walter M. Stenavich

**Board Members Excused**

Mack E. Hughes

**WDVA Present**

Bill Kloster, Acting Secretary  
Anthony Hardie, Executive Assistant  
Bill Crowley, Commandant-King  
Jimmy Stewart, Chief Legal Counsel  
Mike Diaz, Division of Veterans Homes  
Ken Abrahamsen, Budget Director  
Colleen Holtan, Budget Office  
Ken Black, Division of Veterans Benefits  
Gary Wistrom, Acting Commandant-UG  
Randy Krueger, Bureau of Fiscal Services  
Andy Schuster, Public Affairs Director  
David Rueth, Program Coordinator  
Julie Van Metre, Executive Staff Assistant

**Council on Veterans Programs Members Present**

Connie Allord, UWV  
Russ Alsteen, Navy Club  
Cleon "Pat" Brown, USSVWWII  
Rick Cherone, MOPH  
Donna Chrzas, CVSO Association  
Paul Fine, ANU  
Mark Foreman, VVAW  
Jesse Haro, CWV  
Chris Kanios, Sr., VFW  
Jerry Rabetski, PLAV  
Clarence Stoel, DAV  
Jack Stone, PVA  
Tim Thiers, AMVETS

**Others Present**

Scott Berger, Marathon CVSO  
Joe Campbell  
Mike Demske, VVA  
Mike "Gunner" Furgal  
Representative Phil Garthwaite  
Representative Steve Hilgenberg  
Chris Jordan, Walworth CVSO  
Al Kochenderfer, VFW  
José León, Senator Kohl's Staff  
Jon LiDonne, Waupaca CVSO  
Tim Murphy, Vets Employment Rep  
Ted Mynyk, Iowa CVSO  
Renee Oshinski, VISN 12  
Rick Scollon  
Judith Singer, Being There Reaching Out, Inc.  
John Solis, Rock CVSO  
Ann Stenavich  
Tom Taber, Grant CVSO  
Ken Wendt  
Jim Young, Vernon CVSO

**1. Roll Call and Introductions**

The meeting of the Board of Veterans Affairs was called to order at 9:40 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a moment of silence. A quorum was determined present after roll call of members. Chairman Moran introduced Representative Steve Hilgenberg who made comments on the budget and funding for veterans benefits. Representative Phil Garthwaite echoed what Rep. Hilgenberg said about the budget. He voted for the budget because there was funding for the Wisconsin GI Bill included. Chairman Moran introduced José León from Senator Herb Kohl's office.

**2. Certification of Notice of Meeting**

It was certified that proper notification of the meeting occurred.

### 3. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Moen, seconded by Mr. Andersen and carried on a voice vote to approve the minutes of the August 16-17 meetings.

It was moved by Mr. Stenavich, seconded by Mr. Andersen and carried on a voice vote to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2007 teleconference meeting of the Board.

### 4. Public Hearing on Proposed Administrative Rule Regarding Pre-Application for the VetEd Program

Chairman Moran called for the start of the public hearing on proposed Administrative Rule regarding pre-application for the VetEd Program. Chief Legal Counsel Jimmy Stewart said the public hearing will solicit testimony regarding proposed amendment to Chapter VA 2.02(3)(b) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. The proposal amends the VetEd tuition reimbursement grant program so that an applicant has 180 days from the commencement of a semester or course to provide the Department with a pre-application. The current rule language requires a pre-application to be submitted within 30 days of the start of a semester or course. The Department will prepare a final draft of the proposed rule and the appropriate accompanying materials for delivery to the Legislature which will review the proposed rule and determine if it will become a permanent rule. Oral testimony can be taken now and written testimony can be accepted prior to October 26, 2007.

Chairman Moran called for any testimony on the rule change. There was no oral testimony rendered and Chairman Moran closed the public hearing.

It was moved by Mr. Freedman and seconded by Mr. Moen that the Board authorize the Department to prepare a report on the hearing once the time expires for written comments and proceed with the rule making process, including transmitting the requisite paperwork concerning the rule to the appropriate legislative entities. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

### 5. Board Members' Matters

Chairman Moran reported:

- Received a letter from the CVSO Association thanking the Board for supporting the elimination of the pre-application requirement for the VetEd Grant Program.
- Attended the Badger Salute to Veterans at Camp Randall Stadium.
- Worked with Secretary Kloster and Vice Chair Freedman on the development of the Board's Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Worked with Vice Chair Freedman on the revision of the Board's page on the Department's website.
- Invited by the State Treasurer to attend the unveiling ceremony for the Fallen Soldier's Art Project, was not able to attend but did have an opportunity later to meet personally with the State Treasurer.
- Will attend the presentation of the French Legion of Honor to Wisconsin Veterans by the Counsel General of France at the War Memorial in Milwaukee on October 25th.
- Thanked Grant CVSO Tom Taber for courtesies extended to the Board over the past two days.

Vice Chairman Freedman reported:

- Attended the Salute to Veterans at Camp Randall.
- Joined Secretary Kloster and Governor Doyle in accepting the game ball that was presented before the game began. That ball and the one from last year will be put on display at King and Union Grove Veterans Homes.
- Participated in the September 5<sup>th</sup> Board conference call to set interest rates on the Primary Mortgage Loan Program.
- Attended the POW-MIA Recognition Day event on September 21 at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.
- Represented the Board at the CVSO Association Fall Conference business meeting in Madison on September 24.
- Attended the CVSO Advisory Council meeting on September 27 and later that evening the Association Banquet in Madison.
- Attended and represented the Board at the Paralyzed Veterans of America's annual banquet in Milwaukee on September 29.
- Joined the Chairman to view the Fallen Soldier Project exhibit in Madison and met with the State Treasurer and the Deputy State Treasurer on September 17.

Wally Stenavich reported:

- Attended the POW-MIA ceremony in the Museum in Madison.
- Working with Andy Schuster and Deb Canak at the WVH-Union Grove to put together a Pearl Harbor Memorial at Boland Hall on December 7 at 10 a.m.

Rod Moen reported:

- Visited the Highground in Neillsville a couple weeks ago to place a plaque.
- Visited the Veterans Memorial in Arcadia.

Jackie Guthrie reported:

- Attended the Badger game Salute to Veterans.
- Attended the Women's Conference at Ft. McCoy.

Bill Andersen reported:

- Attended the 11 October press conferences that Governor Doyle had in LaCrosse and Eau Claire on veterans issues and the state budget.

#### 6. Board Action from Committee and Council Meetings

CVSO Advisory Council. Mr. Solis highlighted items of discussion at the meeting held on September 27 in Madison. There were no motions passed that need Board action.

Legislative and Program Review Committee. Mr. Freedman said the Committee took action on the AMVET Resolutions which are on the Board's agenda. He highlighted the discussion that took place regarding DD-214's.

Long Term Care Committee. Mr. Moen said the Committee reviewed survey citations at the veterans homes and the plans of action taken to correct deficiencies. It was noted that overtime continues to be a problem with CNAs and will be so until the budget is

passed and new positions are made available. There were no motions passed that need Board action.

Financial Committee. Mr. Andersen said the Committee had two briefings regarding internal controls and audit functions of the Department. There were no motions passed that need Board action.

Council on Veterans Programs. Mr. Thiers said the Council passed a motion in support of Assembly Bill 518 regarding license plates. They held an election of officers and they are: Clif Sorenson, Chairman; Tim Thiers, Vice Chairman and Russ Alsteen, Secretary.

Mr. Freedman said that the Board Committees, Subcommittees and CVSO Advisory Council have the authority to communicate with the Legislature only with the concurrence and approval of the Board. The Council on Veterans Programs is in a unique position because it is a separate statutory body and the one thing he would like to do is encourage representatives from the Council to communicate their concerns and views with respect to the license plate issue directly with the committees that will hold hearings on this in the Assembly and Senate.

#### 7. VISN 12 and VISN 23 Reports

Renee Oshinski delivered a report for both VISNs. Mr. Robert Beller is the new Director of the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee. Mr. Michael Murphy has been appointed as the Director at the Iron Mountain, Michigan VA Medical Center. Recruitment continues for the Director at the Tomah VA.

Regarding the budget, VISNs 12 and 23 within the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs are currently doing business on a continuing resolution. They are operating at a level above last year, the President's budget was very generous and for the first time the budget that was put forward by the veterans organizations was matched by the President. The VISN 12 budget for the coming year is about a 9% increase over this fiscal year and in VISN 23 it is about a 12% increase. VISN 12 hired 160 additional people to do mental health care. Fiscal year 2008 will see about the same level of additional people. In VISN 12, 92% of combat veterans seeking primary care are scheduled within 30 days of their desired appointment date.

VA Medical Centers throughout the network are hosting flu clinics to make it easier for enrolled veterans to get their flu shots.

The VA Medical Center in Minneapolis opened the Rice Lake Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) on September 26 in Rice Lake and one in Hayward on June 4. Hayward and Rice Lake CBOCs are managed by the Minneapolis VAMC and the clinics expect a combined enrollment of 1,700 patients. Open house and ribbon cutting ceremonies are scheduled at both clinics today, October 19, 2007.

Outreach efforts are focused on those service members returning from current conflicts. Outreach efforts include participating in re-integration events and monthly individual re-integration training hosted by the Department of Defense.

Mr. Andersen read an IG report that says that the VA significantly distorts the percentages when it comes to patients being seen within 30 days. Is that a problem in VISN 12 and 23? Ms. Oshinski said that the report has created a firestorm within the Department and there is disagreement internally with what the IG found. The VA is commissioning another audit by an outside accounting firm to look at the data.

8. Action on AMVETS Resolutions 06-07 Aid to Needy Veteran Grant Improvement Recommendations; 07-07 Veterans Education Grant Pre-Enrollment Requirement; 08-07 Veterans Education Grant Income Limit; 09-07 Veterans Education Grant Delimiting Date

Mr. Freedman said that comparable resolutions to the Aid to Needy Veteran Grant Improvement Resolution and the Veterans Education Grant Pre-Enrollment Requirement were previously received and filed. With regard to Veterans Education Grant Income Limit and the Veterans Education Grant Delimiting Date the Board previously took the position that we will take those particular kinds of requests into consideration when we are developing the 2009-2011 biennial budget. As a result, at the Legislative and Program Review Committee meeting yesterday, members moved to receive and file the four AMVETS resolutions.

It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mr. Stenavich and carried unanimously on a voice vote that the Board receive and file the four AMVETS resolutions.

9. Discussion and Action on the 2007-2009 State Budget

The Department provided reports to the Board regarding the impact on veterans programs if a budget does not pass. The chairman and the vice chairman stand ready to help with the budget process and will work with the Department closely in necessary follow-ups.

10. Funding for the Primary Mortgage Loan Program and Setting Interest Rates

Secretary Kloster said he had hoped to have a new source from which the Department could lend money for primary mortgage loans. Unfortunately, Capital Finance has not yet calculated the final interest rate. A telephonic meeting will have to be called to take care of this business, possibly Tuesday afternoon October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

11. Discussion and Board Action on Proposed Modification of Board Policy on Draft Board Committee, CVSO Advisory Council and Board Minutes

Mr. Freedman said that previously, unapproved minutes were available to anyone who requested them. The current policy of not disseminating minutes until they are approved is under reconsideration. Rather than trying to have a policy that, even if it isn't intended to deprive the public of certain information, it does create that perception.

It was moved by Mr. Freedman that the unapproved minutes of all the Board, all Board Committees and Subcommittees and the CVSO Advisory Council shall be prepared with a clear and distinct watermark on each page disclosing that the document consists of unapproved minutes. Unapproved minutes shall be distributed as currently done by the Department. However, copies of watermarked, unapproved minutes shall be deemed public records and shall be made available, upon request, to anyone who requests them. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stenavich and carried unanimously on a voice vote.

12. Discussion of Process for Submission and Consideration of Proposed Draft Changes to the Board of Veterans Affairs Rules of Procedure

All Board members are afforded the opportunity to submit recommendations they would like to have considered for changes to the Board Rules of Procedure. Input to Mr. Freedman is requested by November 19<sup>th</sup> and he will prepare the recommended changes to be distributed in advance of the December Board meeting. This will be taken up as a Board agenda item at the December meeting of the Board.

13. Discussion of Board Related Paperwork Reduction Initiative

Mr. Moran said that several Board members expressed concern with the amount of paperwork generated at its meetings. Mr. Freedman researched electronic transmissions in lieu of some of the paperwork. It potentially could become legally problematic if electronic transmissions were to be used to any greater degree than is currently used. Many of the documents are received at three different points in time. Rather than duplicating copies of everything that has been provided to the Board and Committees, he suggested placing the burden on the members to bring what was sent to them previously and then not having the Department reproduce all that information in Board, Committee or Council member packets.

Mr. Moen would like to receive a week in advance of the meeting an organized black binder containing all the reading material related to meeting agenda items. Mr. Freedman said the challenge of having a packet prepared a week ahead of time and in one place is that there are things that are literally being prepared the day before and sometimes the morning of the Board committee meetings. Mr. Moran does not want to see a reduction in the content or quality of the material they are currently receiving. Reports could be standardized or simplified without giving up any quality or content. Mr. Freedman asked that the Secretary prepare a list of what the Department considers to be reporting requirements that need to be done on an ongoing basis based on requests by the Board and submit that to the Board Chair for review so that a determination can be made whether some of those items are necessary.

14. Discussion of Locations for 2008 Regular Board Meetings

The locations for meetings in 2008 will be determined at the December meeting. Mr. Moen was in favor of holding meetings throughout the state to allow individuals locally the opportunity to appear before the Board. Mr. Moen believes that in odd numbered years, one meeting in Madison is not enough. A lot of veterans attend these meetings and they would have the opportunity to talk to their state Representatives and Senators while in Madison.

15. Secretary's Matters

Mr. Kloster had a meeting with the student veterans organization on the campus of UW Platteville last night. There were about 25 student veterans who attended the meeting. Mr. Schuster and Mr. Rueth attended with the Secretary. Mr. Rueth has the responsibility in the Department of dealing directly with the Department of Revenue and the University System with the Wisconsin G.I. Bill and the Wisconsin property tax credit programs.

The statutes require agencies to submit a biennial report on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The WDVA biennial report was submitted to the Department of Administration in accordance with the statutes. Notification was sent to the veterans community that the document is on the Department's website for anyone to review. We are statutorily required to provide 52 copies to the library system for placement in various libraries. A few extra copies will be

made but Mr. Kloster encouraged everyone to download it from the Department's website. Mr. Moran asked that Board members get a printed copy.

Mr. Kloster took the opportunity to publicly recognize Department staff that prepare for and attend the Board meetings: Mike Diaz, Bill Crowley, Gary Wistrom, Pat Shaughnessy, Ken Black, Randy Krueger, Seth Perelman, Ken Abrahamsen, Colleen Holtan, Jimmy Stewart, Anthony Hardie, Julie Van Metre and Andy Schuster.

Mr. Moran asked that the Board be reminded of the request for donations of clothing for the VFW Men's Clothing Room and the Women Veterans Clothing Room. Ms. Roddy will be picking up these donations at the December meeting in Union Grove.

#### 16. Public Input

Joe Campbell expressed his dismay over using a blog site as a source of information on the Department. This site has nothing but bad things to say about everything the Department of Veterans Affairs does and he would like to go on record as challenging these parties to use their free speech to put out positive comments about the wonderful things that are being done by the Department.

Mr. Campbell asked the Board to consider recognizing the Golden Corral for their Military Appreciation Monday which will be Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup> this year. For the past six years the Golden Corral Restaurant has offered free meals to all veterans from 5 to 9 as well as contributing over \$1.9 million to the Disabled American Veterans. There is a Golden Corral in Appleton, Green Bay, Waukesha and across the country. He asked the Department, on behalf of the Board to thank them for their continued support of veterans. Mr. Moran supported this suggestion and asked the Department to do that for the Board.

Mr. Campbell spoke about the issues of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, the National Cemetery, a trauma center, and a Fisher House operation.

Jon LiDonne recognized Rene Oshinski for taking the time to attend and report at these Board meetings.

Mr. Alsteen recognized Bill Kloster for taking over a difficult task when Secretary Scocos was activated and he thought Bill was doing an outstanding job.

Tom Taber, Grant County Veterans Service Officer, thanked the Board for meeting in Platteville. He gave an update from the VA Regional Office about CVSO calls no longer going to Milwaukee but are going to be transferred to a centralized system in St. Louis. The VA has continued centralization in Milwaukee for processing the pension applications for 12 states. Jon Baker, Regional Office Director and John Kuehl, Deputy Director will be gone from the VA Regional Office after the first of the year.

John Solis, Rock County Veterans Service Officer, said when CVSOs go on the Department's VBATS system, if they request a discharge and there is not a document number on it, WDVA can only send it out as a hard copy or a faxed copy. He asked that a bulletin go out to CVSOs informing them about this matter.

#### 17. Other Matters (Not Subject to Adoption)



There were no other matters that came before the Board.

18. Next Meeting Date and Location

December 13-14 at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in Union Grove.

19. Adjournment

There was a notice published on Wednesday about the Board of Veterans Affairs' October 19<sup>th</sup> public meeting going into closed session after adjournment. It was moved by Mr. Freedman that the meeting of the Board of Veterans Affairs be adjourned and that a closed session of the Board be convened specifically allowed under section 19.85 (1)(f) and (g) of the Wisconsin Statutes to consider the investigation of charges against specific persons, the discussion of which I believe would likely have a substantially adverse affect upon the reputation of any persons who are the subjects of that investigation discussed in a public meeting. Any discussion of the investigation of charges may also require a discussion with Legal Counsel of the Department, concerning the Department's strategy for any litigation it is or is likely to be involved in related to said investigation and my motion is intended to include any such discussion should it become necessary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stenavich. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote: Mr. Moran, aye; Mr. Freedman, yes; Mr. Moen, aye; Mr. Andersen, aye; Ms. Guthrie, aye; Mr. Stenavich, yes. The time was 12:00 p.m.

Pete Moran  
Chairman

B O A R D   M I N U T E S  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Closed Session of October 19, 2007  
Platteville, Wisconsin

The closed session meeting of the Board of Veterans Affairs was called to order at 12:10 p.m. on Friday, October 19, 2007 in Platteville, Wisconsin.

It was certified that proper notification of the meeting had occurred.

A roll call of members was taken with the following members present: Moran, Freedman, Moen, Stenavich, Andersen and Guthrie; and the following member absent: Hughes. A quorum of the Board was present. No other parties were present.

The matters noticed as the subjects of the closed session meeting were discussed. No motions were made or acted upon as a result of the discussion.

The closed session adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Peter J. Moran, Chair  
Board of Veterans Affairs

**MINUTES**  
**CVSO ADVISORY COUNCIL**

September 27, 2007  
Madison, Wisconsin

**Members Present**

Nick Benzinger, Shawano  
Andrew Clark, Outagamie  
Mark Grams, Dodge  
Mike Haley, Chippewa  
Michael Jackson, Dane  
Fred Kaiser, Waushara  
Ted Mynyk, Iowa  
John Solis, Rock  
Robert Stone, Rusk

**WDVA Present**

Bill Kloster, Acting Secretary  
Anthony Hardie, Executive Assistant  
Jimmy Stewart, Chief Legal Counsel  
Ken Black, Division of Veterans Benefits  
Seth Perelman, Division of Administration  
Andy Schuster, Communications Director  
David Rueth, Program Coordinator  
Joe Bertalan, Transition Employment Coordinator  
Chris Schuldes, Veterans Benefits Bureau Director  
Scott Schipper, VetEd  
Mel Brandl, Regional Coordinator  
Nate Nez, Regional Coordinator

**Others Present**

Mark Baldwin, Washington CVSO  
Duane Bauer, Dunn CVSO  
Richard Bayer, Racine CVSO  
Chris Beer, Green County  
Scott Berger, Marathon CVSO  
Gerald Beuthin, Green Lake CVSO  
Ray Boeckman, Sawyer CVSO  
Ken Brown, Ozaukee CVSO  
Donna Chrzas, Columbia CVSO  
Michael Clements, Portage CVSO  
Dan Connery, Dane County  
Yvonne Duesterhoeft, Jefferson CVSO  
Diane Fenske-Joiner, Forest CVSO  
Marv Freedman, Vets Board Vice Chair  
Rick Gates, Polk CVSO  
Jim Greendeer, Ho-Chunk Nation  
Eleanor Harris, Dane County  
Teresa Hartjes, Wood County  
Richard Hasse, Marquette CVSO  
Holly Hoppe, Oconto CVSO  
Chris Jordan, Walworth CVSO  
Bill Kowalski, Marinette CVSO  
Sandra Kramer, Richland CVSO  
Carl Krantz, Washburn CVSO  
Rock Larson, Wood CVSO  
Mary Lex, Langlade County  
Jon LiDonne, Waupaca CVSO  
LeAnne Loesel, Buffalo County  
McAuliffe, Kevin, Ashland CVSO  
Kerry Metoxen, Oneida Nation  
Charleen Moscinski, Wood County  
Dale Oatman, Langlade CVSO  
Barbara Olson, Barron CVSO  
Ken Rock, Door CVSO  
Chris Scoville, Dane County  
Shirley Shaw, Dane County  
Greg Sniegowski, Asst. Wood CVSO  
Clif Sorenson, Eau Claire CVSO  
Judy Steckbauer, Winnebago Dep.CVSO  
Tom Taber, Grant CVSO  
Tony Tyczynski, Sauk CVSO

Debbie Waite, Eau Claire County  
Tammy Walters, Oneida CVSO  
John Wertschnig, Fond du Lac CVSO  
Rick Wolf, Lincoln CVSO  
Jim Young, Vernon CVSO  
Shari Zeichert, Marathon County  
Marcia Ziegler, Clark County

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting of the CVSO Advisory Council was called to order at 3:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A quorum was present.

2. Certification of Notice of Meeting

So noted.

3. Approval of Minutes of August 16, 2007

It was moved by Mr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Kaiser and carried on a voice vote to approve the minutes of the August 16<sup>th</sup> CVSO Advisory Council meeting.

4. Announcements and Introductions

Introductions included: Shirley Shaw, Dan Connery, Eleanor Harris and Chris Scoville from the Dane County Veterans Service Office; and Marvin J. Freedman, Vice Chairman of the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs.

5. Report from Solis on Services Provided to Transitioning Soldiers (carried over from August meeting)

There were no additions to the report made at the August meeting.

6. Suggestions from CVSOs on How to Make the Home Improvement Loan Program More Viable

The biggest obstacle to the program is that it is not user friendly and takes a longer time to process than it would take to get a local bank loan. The HILP is restrictive to home improvement only, there is no flexibility. Mr. Kloster said that the reason for the restrictions on the Home Improvement Loan Program is because the source of the funds comes from bonds. The state has given the authority in the constitution to bond for veterans home loan programs and it has been determined by the courts that the home improvement loan falls under that category. The personal loan is funded from cash in the Veterans Trust Fund and doesn't have those restrictions.

Recommendations from CVSOs for improving the program:

1. Combine HILP and PLP into a multiple use loan, if that were possible.
2. Eliminate the HILP and increase the PLP limit to \$50,000 instead of \$25,000.
3. Allow the CVSO to do the title search.
4. Consider having a home improvement loan for emergency situations where it wouldn't meet the standard requirements but could address the issues that arise in an emergency.

7. Procedures for Requesting DD-214's

Mr. Solis asked what the Department uses to certify a veteran's eligibility for state programs. Do you certify that the veteran is eligible based on a copy of a DD-214 that the veteran has supplied to you? Mr. Perelman said that if the veteran signs his name on his DD-214, WDVA accepts that. When WDVA certifies it, we are not saying that we know for sure that this is genuine; we're saying that this matches the one we've got. Mr. Solis was concerned with the veteran who might alter his DD-214, sign it and send it in to WDVA as genuine. Mr. Perelman said there is no process that permits us to interrogate those DD-214's. Mr. Grams said that if the CVSIO community feels that there needs to be some verification, then we'll have to initiate legislative action to make that happen. Mr. Grams said CVSIOs should discuss among ourselves how or if we want to do that. Mr. Kloster said that this issue came up at the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs conference as well and it will be addressed again. It is something that is not unique to Wisconsin, it is a nationwide problem. The National Association discussed establishing a liaison with DOD to make sure that states get the proper copies of DD-214's.

Mr. Perelman offered a proposition that if WDVA has a copy that we know to be a certified copy--either it's embossed, Copy 6, comes from the Army, etc., we will put our raised certification on it. If we don't have a known certified copy, then we'll put a red stamp across the top that says uncertified copy. After an affirmative response from CVSIOs, Mr. Perelman said he will work on putting that proposal into practice.

Mr. Perelman further reported that in the past, as the Administrative Code allowed, when a CVSIO requested a DD-214 telephonically, we sent it out. We changed the policy, which is also consistent with the Administrative Code, and we started asking for either an e-mail or a fax request for the DD-214. The reason for that change is that once the US VA started having high profile security problems, we received a lot of scrutiny from the public and the legislature as to WDVA's security procedures--how we safeguard veterans' records, how we assure that records aren't stolen or disclosed improperly. A security review was undertaken and new locking doors were installed to tighten up the physical security for those records. We also took a look at how we released a veteran's record. We determined that we needed an audit trail, paper trail, for any release of a veteran's record in case of an inquiry. The email or fax doesn't have to be elaborate, we don't require a reason why a CVSIO needs that document, we assume you need that document because you are promoting the benefits that this veteran is entitled to as the Administrative Code requires.

#### 8. PTSD Panel Update

Mr. Hardie and Mr. Freedman are co-chairs of the PTSD panel which convened several months ago with the purpose of providing advice to the Secretary with regards to the GPR funding that would come through the Legislature for a state level PTSD program. Mr. Hardie said that, unfortunately, the PTSD funding initially proposed by the Department and recommended by the Governor of \$100,000 GPR in each of the two years did not make it through to the next stages of the budget. That funding became substantially less--\$75,000 in year one and \$50,000 in year two and of that, \$15,000 in each year was earmarked for the Center for Veterans Issues in Milwaukee to use for outreach to homeless veterans who have PTSD.

Mr. Hardie said that as of today there is still no budget. There are negatives expected to transpire if there is not a budget by tomorrow, however, at this point it is unclear that there will be a budget.

The PTSD panel has had some good discussions. There is good CVSO representation and participation on the panel. A report will be prepared that will consist of several areas that have been discussed. Discussion has taken place on what other states are doing and where the areas of need exist. The report will highlight what services are currently provided in the state and what's known about the needs of particular veterans' populations. We know that 92% to 93% of those currently serving in Iraq will see actual combat. We know that PTSD rates are through the roof and could come close to those experienced by Vietnam veterans. The report will include a likely recommendation of what can or cannot be done with the funding at the level that has been proposed by the Legislature up to this point. The panel is prepared to state that since the funding is so low, nothing of significance can be done. The most significant recommendation of all will be the PTSD panel is recommending that the panel continue in an advisory capacity and make recommendations based on what kind of a role a future panel should have.

#### 9. Secretary's Matters

Mr. Kloster said that he is on the CVSO Association Conference agenda after this Council meeting and he will do a briefing at that time. He asked Ken Black to make introductions of new employees in his division.

Scott Schipper has taken over the VetEd Program. He has been with the Department for two weeks. He was on active duty with the US Army and served three years. Scott is from Green Bay. The other new staff person is Leslie Amegashie who replaces Shirley Mitchell. Leslie is taking care of the Assistance to Needy Veterans Program.

Mr. Black said the Assistance to Needy Veterans Process Action Team convenes for its first meeting on October 3 in Madison. They will start taking a look at making it a more user-friendly program.

#### 10. Public Input

Tony Tyczynski reiterated that a certified copy from the state, which the VA regional office accepts as a certified of the original, can no longer be used by CVSOs as certified copies when we submit a 526 to the regional office.

Rick Gates voiced his concern that the PTSD project started as "rural" outreach and he hoped that it continues to be rural. It sounds as though some of the money is already earmarked for Milwaukee. Rural areas do not have access to things that metropolitan areas do and it is a source of aggravation. On the Home Improvement Loan Program, Mr. Gates said to eliminate some of the hoops to make it easier to get or make it a lot more competitive. The only way to jump through some of those hoops is if you're going to save some money doing it.

Tammy Walters had questions about the DD-214. How many DD-214s does WDVA get from the veteran directly? Mr. Kloster said that was a question for the records people, but he assumes that the number is small. Ms. Walters asked why not tell the veteran to bring the DD-214 to the Veterans Service Officer and have them certify it and then WDVA can accept it. Mr. Kloster wants to make sure what all the ramifications are because he doesn't want to end up hurting other people down the line because we want to stop one or two people who are abusing the system. WDVA will look at it.

Marvin Freedman highlighted for information purposes that the Board of Veterans Affairs, starting at the October Board meeting, will be awarding a Wisconsin Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award to a veteran at each of its Board meetings. They are hoping that CVSOs will keep this in mind once the nomination process is opened for the purpose of identifying people within your areas. Four of the six awards each year will be awarded on a regional basis—SE, SW, NE, NW regions. Two of the awards will be statewide awards. The counties in each region coincide with the CVSO Association's breakdown with one exception, Dane County will be considered part of the southwestern region. The Veteran Lifetime Achievement Award will recognize veterans who have compiled a record of exemplary service as a military member, a veteran and a citizen during the veteran's lifetime. The award will be a plaque supported by a proclamation signed by the Board chair. Hopefully by the time of the October 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting there should be webpages through the WDVA website that will contain information on how to nominate someone. The virtual link for it will be [www.wisvets.com/BoardAward](http://www.wisvets.com/BoardAward).

11. Council Members' Matters (Not Subject to Adoption)

Fred Kaiser requested that WDVA place the names and phone numbers of WDVA employees on the website.

Michael Jackson acknowledged the service of Ted Mynyk as Vice Chair for the last year. Michael Jackson presented a plaque to Regional Coordinator Mel Brandl recognizing him as an Honorary CVSO. Mr. Jackson thanked the Department for all the courtesies extended to him during his year as Association President. He then presented Julie Van Metre with a yellow rose as thanks for acknowledging that he was in a position of importance by referring to him (if only for a short period of time) as "Mr. President."

12. Next Meeting Schedule

The next meeting will be held on December 13 at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in Union Grove.

13. Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Stone and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the CVSO Advisory Council meeting, the time was 4:00 p.m.

John Solis  
Chairman