

Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County  
 June 11, 2025 - Commission Meeting Minutes  
 555 N. Court Street, Conf. Rm. 115, Rockford, IL 61103 5:30 pm

Meeting Opened: 1730 hours - 5:30 pm

Attendees:

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Terrell Lewis - President (Delegate – Rock Valley AmVets Post #922)	Jesus Pereira – Superintendent – Via Zoom
Eric Willard – Finance Coordinator (Delegate - VVA Post #984)	Debra Hoover – VACWC Secretary
Jean Henning (Alternate – Rock Valley AmVets Post #922)	Francesca Montanez – VACWC
Lana McCants (Delegate – VFW Post #342)	Mayra Toral – VACWC
Ken VanLandeghem (Delegate - American Legion Post #288)	Luz Ortiz-Rivera – VACWC
Reuben Hernandez (Delegate – VFW Post #2955)	Timothy Hotchkiss – VACWC
Dave Davis (Delegate - American Legion Post #1207)	Willie Borden – VACWC
George Meissen – Sargent at Arms (American Legion Post #1207)	Michael J. Phillips – VACWC Attorney
John Kline (Alternate – Blackhawk DAV Chapter #29)	Keith McDonald – Winnebago County Representative
Gene Schaefer (Delegate – VFW Post #9759)	
Nancy Clark – Administrative Coordinator (Delegate VFW Post #5149)	
<b>9 Delegates and Alternate from 9 Posts – Quorum Met</b>	

- Opening Ceremonies
- Roll Call – 8 delegates and 1 alternate from 9 posts – quorum met
- Allow Zoom Attendees: Motion: Dave Davis 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ruben Hernandez – Roll Call Vote – Approved (8 yes)
  - John Kline allowed to join via Zoom
- Approval of Agenda as submitted: Motion: Eric Willard 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dave Davis – Voice Vote - Approved
- Approval of Minutes from May meeting: Motion: Ruben Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup>: Gene Schaefer – Voice Vote - Approved
- Public Comments: No public Comments
- Reports:
  - President – Terrell Lewis
    - Special welcome to Jean Henning – Alternate for Rock Valley AmVets Post #922 – first meeting
    - Special welcome to Keith McDonald – Representative from Winnebago County Board
    - Work with secretary if you need assistance setting up your VAC e-mail
    - Listed delegates and alternates who need to complete OMA training
  - Administrative Coordinator – Nancy Clark
    - Reported dates for upcoming meetings
  - Services Chair – Lana McCants
    - No Report
    - No Meeting Scheduled
  - Personnel Chair – Lana McCants
    - No Report
    - No Meeting Scheduled
  - Finance Coordinator – Eric Willard
    - Reviewed provided bank statement
    - FY2025 YTD Report – within budget – Superintendent explained that budget has to break down payroll from operations – we have about 20% of the operation budget remaining

- Presentation of FY2026 Budget – Finance Committee Meeting held May 6, 2025 to review proposed budget. Proposed FY26 expenditure plan has been carefully developed to ensure first off services to veterans while still maintaining fiscal responsibility – the total proposed budget is a 13% decrease from last years budget.
    - Motion to allow Superintendent Pereira to present FY2026 Budget to Winnebago County on June 12, 2025 Motion: Eric Willard 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dave Davis
    - Discussion: The commissioners and the superintendent discussed the following topics in regards to the proposed budget: transportation, advertising/marketing, outreach, Post participation.
    - Keith McDonald – Winnebago County Representative commented: “As a county board member – we care about the big dollar amount – we don’t care which bucket you guys put it in – that’s on you guys – we just want a number on what you are looking for - you can absolutely pick what you want to do with it.”
    - Motion remained open during discussion. After discussion President reopened motion to present the FY2026 Budget to Winnebago County – Roll Call Vote – Approved
    - Finance Coordinator presented “Resolution No. 2025-4 – A Resolution Approving the budget of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County for Fiscal Year 2026.” Secretary read aloud the resolution to the commission.
    - A motion was made to accept Resolution No. 2025-4 – Motion: Nancy Clark 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rueben Hernandez – Roll Call Vote – Approved (8 yes, 1 no)
  - Superintendent – Jesus Pereira
    - Served 318 Veterans
    - \$215,000
    - 23 Madison riders
    - 768 incoming phone calls
    - Visited Carpenters Place
    - Toured Rosecrance May Street Location – learned about the GPD program for homeless veterans/tied to mental health
    - IACO Conference (Illinois Association of County Officials) May 14-16, 2025 in Springfield, IL
    - Networking event with In-crowd 815 – met a lot of folks of the community
    - Approved for our SAMS (System for Award Management) and GATA (Illinois Grant Accountability Transparency Act) accounts – allows us to apply for grants
    - Claims – 142 Intent to files – 93 turned into VA Disability claims, 5 pension claims, 16 death and DIC, 23 supplemental, 15 HLR and 1 VBA – as a result \$602,000 in retro payments, approx.. \$2.3 will be awarded in the next 12 months
    - Staff has been seeing 5-6 people a day
    - Collaboration with Sheriff’s Office in July
- Correspondence
  - Secretary read a correspondence from an 8 year Navy Veteran praising the VACWC for the services we provided to him specifically thanking Superintendent Pereira
- Unfinished Business
  - Second reading of the By-Laws Changes – Secretary shared the by-laws changes on the screen showing the changes that were suggested by the By-laws committee – a printed copy of the By-laws changes were provided to each commissioner as well
  - Motion was made to approve the By-laws changes Motion: Dave Davis 2<sup>nd</sup>: Lana McCants
  - Discussion: Commissioner Lana McCants discussed Article 5/Section 5 (page 3) with concerns that the verbiage may not fall within the MVAA – Attorney Phillips addressed her concerns
  - Roll Call Vote – Approved (9 yes)

- New Business
  - At our last meeting we approved Resolution 2025-03 – “A Resolution scheduling semi-annual reviews of closed session minutes of meeting of the VACWC.”
  - Motion to enter closed session and to allow Superintendent Jesus Pereira, Attorney Michael Phillips and Secretary Debi Hoover to remain in the closed session: Dave Davis 2<sup>nd</sup> Eric Willard – Voice Vote Approved
  - Entered into closed session at 6:42 pm to discuss minutes of meeting lawfully closed under 5ILCS 120/2, weather for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06
  - Returned to open session at 6:57 pm
- Veteran Community Events
  - Submit events to [vac@vac.wincoil.gov](mailto:vac@vac.wincoil.gov)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month – American Legion Scholarship Dinner, Post 1207
  - Every Tuesday 9:00 am – 11:00 am – VA/SheVets Breakfast at Johnny Pancakes
  - June 12 – Illinois Women’s Veterans Day – Demonstration of Unity 11 am - Meet and Greet 3-7 pm
  - July 17 – July 20 – The Wall that Heals – Vietnam Veterans
- Closing Ceremonies
- Next VACWC Commission Meeting – Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 5:30 pm – 555 N. Court Street, Conf. Rm #115, Rockford, IL
- Motion to Adjourn: Ruben Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup>: John Kline – Voice Vote Unanimous
  - Meeting Adjourned 1902 hours - 7:02 pm