



**McHenry County**  
**Veterans Assistance Commission - Public Meeting**  
**MINUTES**

**March 18, 2026, 5:00 PM**  
**County Board Conference Room**  
**Administration Building, 667 Ware Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098**

Members Present: Robert Dorn, Eugene Boxleitner, Dan Chwalisz, Don Smolinski, Michael Breslin, James Koch, William Richards, Charles Chapman, Ken Hauser, John Widmayer, Ed Chambers, Matt English, Patrick Finlon, Daniel Vital

Members Absent: Charlie Morgan, Nicole Bruno, Joe McLachlin, Ray Martin, Mathius Carter, Adam Frank, Mark Havrilak, Doug Stermer, Paul Hildreth, Theresa Deleon, Brian Allen, Jack Repta, Robert Temes, Kevin Adams, Michael Knutson, Michael Wisniewski

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm by Chairman Michael Breslin.

Also present: Carl Kamienski, liaison to the County Board and Polish Legion Post #188 Alternate Erv Gall

- 1.1 Pledge of Allegiance
- 1.2 Invocation - Chaplain Eugene Boxleitner gave the Invocation.
- 1.3 Roll Call of Officers
  - 1.3.a Roll Call of Post Delegates / Alternates – Superintendent Nate Johnson called the roll.
- 1.4 Officers Opening Remarks - Chairman Breslin mentioned that there will be an Executive Board meeting on Wednesday, March 25 at 10:00am.  
  
Sr. Vice Ed Chambers wanted to remind the members that Vietnam War Memorial Day is on March 29th at 2:00pm.

**2. MINUTES APPROVAL**

- 2.1 Approval of Previous Minutes -

**Mover:** John Widmayer

**Second:** Daniel Vital

To approve previous minutes **Approved**

### 3. SUPERINTENDENT'S FINANCIAL REPORT

3.1 Approval of Financial Report - For the month of February, there were several denials for financial assistance due to clients being over the income limit. A total of \$538.24 was approved for rent or utility assistance. We remain under budget and on pace to finish the year at just under \$1,000,000.

Dan Vital asked whether the financial assistance denials were close to the income limits. Several clients are indeed near that threshold. McHenry County is one of the few counties in the state that uses a 150% income threshold; most counties use 100% or 125%. The Townships are considering increasing the threshold to 200%.

Chairman Breslin requested that Superintendent Johnson research how the Townships plan to proceed with increasing their income thresholds.

**Mover:** Daniel Vital

**Secunder:** Charles Chapman

To approve Financial Report     **Approved**

4. **PRESENTATION** - None.

5. **INTRODUCE GUESTS AND NEW MEMBERS** - The Chairman recognized Erv Gall who is the Alternate for the Polish Legion Post #188.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE** - None.

### 8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 E-Board Meeting - None.

8.2 By-Laws Committee - None.

8.3 IACVAC Delegate - None.

8.4 Superintendent's Report

8.4.a Financial Report - Potential changes to policies and guidelines are still in progress.

8.4.b Claims Advocacy - Forty new compensation and pension claims were filed, resulting in \$437,000 in new monthly benefits.

8.4.c Transportation Report - Transportation Coordinator Dolly Schlottman has generated a new monthly transportation report, which is included in the packet.

Charlie Chapman asked whether these are typical figures. Johnson reported that transportation usage has increased significantly in recent months.

8.4.d Mental Health Summit - We hosted this collaborative event with approximately 30-40 attendees and featured seven presentations highlighting various mental health resources.

8.4.e Assistance Suspension - This topic has been tabled until next month.

8.4.f NAMI OPEN HOUSE - Office staff attended the NAMI grand opening for their new building in Crystal Lake. It's a great space featuring a Living Room for individuals in crisis, providing interventions that help them avoid emergency room visits or inpatient mental health facilities.

Bob Dorn asked whether they have a representative on staff who is knowledgeable about military issues. Our SSA, Keema Ward, is onsite two days a week—Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- 8.4.g 4 New VSO's/ 1 MHFA Instructor - Four staff members passed the accreditation course, and their applications have been submitted to the Office of General Counsel to become accredited Veteran Service Officers. We also trained a new Mental Health First Aid instructor, who will be ready to teach in April.

## **9. OLD BUSINESS**

- 9.1 VAC SPACE - A \$388,000 renovation proposal to build three offices within the existing space using ARPA funds was presented to the Public Health Committee. The proposal was rejected for further review. A consultant will be onsite on April 2 to assess the office and conference room and provide an additional bid to be presented to the Public Health Committee.

Chairman Breslin asked what the Posts can do to assist with this initiative. Johnson suggested writing letters or attending a County Board meeting to provide public comment explaining what the VAC does and why the additional space is needed.

- 9.2 Financial Assistance Rules
- 9.3 Outreach Coordinator - The Outreach Coordinator position was unanimously approved by both the Public Health and Finance Committees. It now moves to the County Board for final approval.
- 9.4 VAC 100 Year Old veteran Award - A proposed folder and certificate were shared with the body and will be ordered shortly. Johnson suggested opening it up to 80 and 90-year old veterans as well.
- 9.5 VAC FOUNDATION - A Foundation meeting took place today. Don Smolinski reported on an approved grant application for mortgage assistance in the amount of \$182. The Foundation reluctantly accepted Ken Hauer's resignation and approved Dan Vital as the new member.  
  
John Widmayer noted that the Treasurer's Report is included in the meeting packet.
- 9.6 Records - Record destruction has begun and continues to progress.
- 9.7 New Vehicle Purchase - We are in discussions with the Purchasing Department to identify the exact vehicle needed.
- 9.8 Foundation Directors Insurance - Because the VAC and the Foundation are separate entities, we have been informed that the Foundation cannot be covered under the VAC's Directors and Officers policy. Smolinski believes it may be possible to include two tax IDs under the same policy, so Johnson will follow up with Fidelity Insurance to verify.
- 9.9 Economic Interest Form - Everyone on the Commission will need to complete the Economic Interest Form and return it to the VAC office prior to May 1.

## **10. NEW BUSINESS**

- 10.1 Nomination of Officers - Ed Chambers nominated Dan Vital for Sergeant at Arms.
- 10.2 VAC CONFERENCE ROOM - The conference room table will be moved to the open space at the back of the office. Johnson's office will be relocated into the current conference room so that our new VSO can occupy his existing office. A conference room in the building can be reserved at any time as needed.

## **11. GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Carl Kamienski encouraged all to attend the County Board meeting at 7:00pm tonight.

Bob Dorn introduced a Coffee Connect presentation featuring Morgan Luttrell, Navy Seal and Congressman. The first event included 9 spouses, including one first responder spouse. Bob spoke to a Blue Star Banner representative who led the event and she was amazed by the transparency shown by the spouses. Bob emphasized the importance of continuing this initiative to support these spouses. He will contact the Sheriff's office to explore whether a Social Worker can assist in expanding the program.

Amvets 245 is holding a meat raffle at The Hidden Tap, located at 203 E. Main Street in Cary on Sunday, March 22nd at 2:00pm.

A Vietnam Veterans Memorial ceremony will take place on Sunday, March 29th at 2:00pm at the County Administration Building in Woodstock.

**12. BENEDICTION**

Chaplain Eugene Boxleitner gave the Benediction.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mover:** Charles Chapman

**Second:** James Koch Approved