

**Veterans’ Service-Related Ailments Task Force
Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2022, 12pm-2pm**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

- a. Meeting called to order by William Sutton at 12:08pm.
- b. Roll call taken and quorum established with 9 members at roll call.
- c. IDVA staff members present: Kourtney Hopkins, Sara Augustinas.
- d. Guests: Kwame Crawford and Abbie Holland-Schmidt.

Senator Wilcox	Present
Representative Kifowit	Present
Representative Swanson	Present
Director Prince or designee	Present
COL John Fulk	Absent
Christopher Spears	Absent
Nikita Richards	Present
Kimyada Wellington	Present
Michael Iwanicki	Present
Michelle Ramlow	Absent
Summer Padaoan	Present
Eric Peterson	Present
William Sutton	Present
VACANT	
VACANT	

2. Reading and Approval of Minutes from November 14, 2022

- a. Mike Iwanicki-motion to approve
- b. Nikita Richards-second
- c. Sutton-Minutes are approved as is

3. Old Business

a. Legislative update on extension request

i. Sara Augustinas- there was not an extension request filed during veto session. Training compliance also has to be updated by December 31st of this month as the Task Force does not dissolve until December 2023. Most of the people on this call have provided their training certificates, however, if we do not have copies to submit of the training certificates emails have been sent out.

ii. Summer Padaoan- is extension necessary if the report is being filed on time? In lieu of extending the report, do we have any interest in renewing the Task Force? Does it make sense to ask the Task Force to be extended with potential for amendments or wait for something new?

iii. Representative Kifowit- we can always submit an amended report to the report that we file. The Task Force does not disband at the end of this year but at the end of next year in case there are any additions. That was the intent.

iv.. Padoan-We can see what the outcome of today will be. We could potentially make a new motion to continue with extension request. We can kind of open that up once we have gone through the draft.

v. Sutton- Anything else?

vi. Representative Swanson- if we meet the timeline and we continue with our mission we should meet our timeline to meet legislation intent.

vii. Kourtney Hopkins- Before moving to reviewing the report, we need to establish the meeting schedule for the next year. Does the group want to meet monthly or bi-monthly? Legislation requires bi-monthly.

viii. Richards- comfortable to bi-monthly

ix. Sutton- is there a motion to meet bimonthly. I motion that the committee once every two months unless called upon by the chairs to meet monthly.

x. Richards- Second

xi. Vote to meet bi-monthly:

Senator Wilcox	Yes
Representative Kifowit	Yes
Representative Swanson	Yes
Director Prince or designee	Yes
COL John Fulk	Absent
Christopher Spears	Absent
Nikita Richards	Yes
Kimyada Wellington	Yes
Michael Iwanicki	Yes
Michelle Ramlow	Absent
Summer Padoan	Yes
Eric Peterson	Yes
William Sutton	Yes
VACANT	
VACANT	

xii. Representative Swanson- May 15th in session and February has a couple of Monday state holidays

xiii. Kourtney Hopkins-Schedule to be published by the end of this month.

b. Review of report (share screen of draft report; group went through report and made edits as needed; pertinent conversational notes were captured)

- i. Representative Swanson- we did not address the shortages of VSOs across the state
- ii. Padoan- This is a valid thing we should address. Do we do this now or in an amendment later?
- iii. Anthony Vaughn- when we say shortage of VSOs, what is the compared metric?
- iv. Representative Swanson- we identify the veterans and how many VSOs are there in a comparable state organization, state VA, VACs...do we have enough capacity to service or provide services to every veteran out there who may need them from the time the application is placed and the qualification letter returns?
- v. Representative Kifowit- Wasn't there legislation that tasked that to be done?
- vi. Representative Swanson- it was to look at demographics on relocating. What is our comparisons of VSOs to other states?
- vii. Representative Kifowit- we should wait for the findings from that legislation and do an addendum to the report.
- viii. Representative Swanson- I think its homework we can do in our next years work. When delegating VSOs to districts did we take into account the number of veterans in that district?
- ix. Representative Kifowit- Sara added to the chat. They have until December 31, 2023.
- x. Augustinas- just to draw everyone's attention this was subject to appropriation, and we did not get a line item and there was not a corresponding appropriation.
- xi. Representative Kifowit-we can make sure the line items get put into the budget. Its important to still file report and add a caveat that about the Public Act information to fully address the situation.
- xii. Vaughn- we are in the process of contracting to do this even though we do not have the appropriation at this time. We are trying to work with other government agencies, colleges and universities to get a report completed. With respect to our report, do we need to add or look at later?
- xiii. Representative Swanson-We definitely need to look at it. We need to address it and not leave it hanging. We need the manpower to get the documents prepared or we aren't going to be able to assist the veterans with their compensation.
- xiv. Vaughn- we need to look at states with comparable number or veterans or the states with the highest rates.
- xv. Representative Swanson-both are good approaches.
- xvi. Senator Wilcox -what if we add that we are going to investigate this further in 2023?

xvii. Representative Kifowit- we can add an amendment down the line especially if we decide not to do a conclusion at the end. Add as follow up item to work on through 2023.

xviii. Sutton- I motion to continue addressing through 2023

xix. Senator Wilcox-second

xx. All in favor

xxi. Representative Swanson- reading through this we missed another point with our National Guard members ETSing after serving or upon retirement receiving any type of a Transitional Assistance program. They are certainly eligible for service-connected compensation. I am working with General Cobetto to include AD members when they return to IL and our NG Soldiers and Airmen to provide them the information and knowledge to follow up with VA care and services.

Nikita Richards and Kimyada Wellington had to leave to meeting before finalizing report. They elected to register their vote for approval.

4. New Business

a. Vote to approve report

a. Vote the content of the report with the understand that there will be minor edits to follow and formatting changes:

Senator Wilcox	Yes
Representative Kifowit	Yes
Representative Swanson	
Director Prince or designee	Yes
COL John Fulk	Absent
Christopher Spears	Absent
Nikita Richards	Yes
Kimyada Wellington	Yes
Michael Iwanicki	
Michelle Ramlow	Absent
Summer Padoan	Yes
Eric Peterson	Yes
William Sutton	Yes
VACANT	
VACANT	

Report approved.

3. Open Discussion

- a. Sutton- Additional 7 VACs coming in 2023

6. Adjournment

- a. Representative Kifowit-motion
- b. Senator Wilcox-second
- c. Meeting Adjourned at 2:53pm

7. Next scheduled Meeting is February 27, 2022, 12:00pm-2:00pm

8. Resources provided in chat:

HB 2991 [Illinois General Assembly - Full Text of HB2991 \(ilga.gov\)](https://ilga.gov/legislation/2021/legislation.aspx?ID=2991)