

Illinois Veterans Advisory Council – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 13th, 2023

Illinois Department of Affairs

WebEx

The Illinois Veterans Advisory Council meeting was called to order at 1000.

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence

Roll Call

NAME	APPOINTED BY	PRESENT
Kevin Kilkenny	Marine Corps League	
Stanley Olenjack	IDVA Director	X
Al Reynolds	Disabled American Veterans	X
	President of Senate	
Senator Sue Rezin	Minority Leader of Senate	
Rep. Lance Yednock	Speaker of the House	X
Rep. Dan Swanson	Minority Leader of the House	X
Bill Wolff	IDVA Director	X
Frank Gutierrez	IDVA Director	X
Megan Everett	IDVA Director	X
Vince Long	IDVA Director	X
Command Sgt. Maj. Dena Ballowe	National Guard	
Shannon Yount	Attorney General	X
	IL Secretary of State	
Jorge Bermudez/Rich Wuthrich	IL Department of Securities	X
Mike Peck	The American Legion	X
Keith Wetherell	AMVETS	X
Peggy Arick	Blue Star Mothers of America	X
Tim Kennedy	Catholic War Veterans	X
Dr. Jerry Field	Jewish War Veterans	X
Joe Schaler	Military Order of the Purple Heart	X
Lee Lopez	Military Order of the World Wars	X
Ray Dieter	Reserve Officers' Association	X
John Murray	IACVAC	X
John Degroot	Veterans of Foreign Wars	X
Roy Dolgas	Vietnam Veterans of America	X
Kevin Wathen	IDVA Director	
Bob Tyler	MOAA	X
Senator Craig Wilcox	DSTF Position	X
Alternates:		
Justin Miller	VFW	

Greg Padovani	American Legion	X
Art Duutkovic	MOWW	
Jay Davis	VFW	X
Hugh Shown	ROA	X
George Mulvaney	MCL	X
Elizabeth Roxworthy	DMA	X

Womack: Chairman roll call is complete and a quorum has been met.

Tyler: So, patient with the lieutenant governor of the state fair, and he got myself invited to her a military economic development committee meeting that's going to happen here in a couple of weeks. And then at the coin fare, I had a conversation with Shannon from the office, but that got me to thinking about, you know, a couple of meetings ago we talked about the importance of trying to get the [inaudible 00:00:27] Uh, connected with some of the other agencies in the state that are you know, that are doing other things for veterans that haven't included members of your staff. How's your progress going on getting those connections?

Director Prince: You know, we've got some good work going on those people sitting in the room there with you Daniels and we're pretty close with Secretary of state's office in regards to veteran transition and who's getting driver's licenses and stuff with our gold star plates. Our agencies working closely with the attorney general's office in regards to the veterans benefit guide. And that we can be Co, authors on that incredible guide that the attorney general's office has worked on. And the list goes on. And not even up here in this area Kevin parks. And again convened a group to get together with the and others to start establishing what we're calling a master calendar of events. Hello, veterans know some of the things that are happening across the state. I was pleased to hear that you were invited to that and having those conversations. I was also made aware of the tenant governor's military transition team.

And trying to find out more details on what that's all about. So, we can get our, get our people into those meetings as well. So we're excited about the conversations that we're having with everyone and making progress, which is even more exciting.

Tyler: This out of curiosity is there a forcing function of some sort within the state where, you know, all the directors of these agencies get together once a year for hot dogs or something to talk about collaborative efforts.

Director Prince: Yeah, it's interesting. You must be reading my email because I don't think as much as you do, apparently, but CMS is actually having a meeting with all the agency directors. In October to get everybody together in the same room and talk. Uh, but we don't wait for that. I've been working with director Kelly, for example, on security profiles for our offices, and our veterans homes, director raven, over at CMS. I've met with her in person to go over hiring

strategies. So, there is an official meeting, but unofficially we're meeting with the directors on a regular basis to resolve concerns and issues that affect veterans and [inaudible 00:02:51].

Wetherell: Super thanks, sir. Thank you. Sir. Danielle, would you like to expand a little bit on the progress of that stuff that you're working on?

Luevano: Sure yes. Um, so kind of working on 2 things working with the secretary of state on the gold star license plates also working with them on getting some demographics and information of all those who are receiving the veterans designation on their driver's license and trying to work with them in. Just getting some information on transitioning veterans. We know the veterans are going to the DMV to change their driver's license. We are not receiving that information. So trying to get a pathway with Secretary of state. And a collaboration of sorts, and getting that information over to us so we can reach out to the veterans. Um, we did get some information from DoD that they are going to be updating some of the memorandum of understandings for the pathways for us to get that information. Okay, um, it is going to be rolled out to all the states in 5 phases. Unfortunately, we're in the very last phase, Illinois is, but that's great news. So we can be proactive instead of reactive. We, we will be getting some information on the active members who will be transitioning into our state, so we can reach out to them proactively.

Wetherell: No, thank you Excellent.

Okay, I was going to just bring up the Saint Clair county property tax, or the property tax bill that was passed was vetoed by the governor, but it's going to be brought up in the veto session. From my understanding. It was vetoed not because of our piece, but for some other clarity on some things, and it shouldn't him up any progress from my understanding. If anybody else would like to expand on that, they can do the same thing here.

Degroot: That's what we're hearing too, that is accurate.

Wetherell: Okay, excellent Thank you. Mr. Patterson. Would you like to provide some progress on some remarks regarding the and satellite offices and things?

Patterson: Yeah, so a lot of the issues that have the play, just with the satellite offices, or at tenant locations is the vacancies that we've experienced with our regular locations, so we are seeing some progress in that. October the 2nd, we're going to have 3 new full time service officers come on board that's going to be in late County, Marion County, which is Centralia office and then the key office, which is Co, located with our veteran's home. So, there's that we also have some 3 interviews for being slotted right now for additional vacancies. And then it's about 6 to 8 that are in the process and getting very close to getting to the interview process. So the solution for the itinerant locations is the multiple locations, because that's where we're based them out of and then we're able to go out. So, right now, what we're doing is the, the biggest disparity is down in the Southern Regional area.

And that's the, the, the supervisor is trying to be in the offices as they can based on the schedule that they've established. So, we do still trying to aggressively get out to the itinerant locations. In

many instances, especially in the southern region, the itinerant locations are the rural areas that are that are less served by major populations. So, yeah, there's been a lot of recent progress, basically in the last month is, we will be the hiring cycle has started for these, so you can kind of get a gauge on that on how fast that it takes in once we actually do start the direct interviewing process on how long it takes to get somebody in that seat so it's about 60 days from the time that we do our review of the applications.

Wetherell: Wow. Okay. Thank you. Very much. I had a question. Yes, sir. Mr. um.

Dolgas: A couple meetings ago we agreed upon getting a van to travel the southern part of Illinois. Has anything been done about that?

Patterson: So, let's still on the proposal area. I mean, we, we, we mentioned it. I don't I wouldn't say we agreed, but because there's a funding mechanism, there's gonna be,

Wetherell: I think the idea was shared explore. But I don't think it was like, concrete to and it is something that we and we're just now entering. Well, obviously from what we're saying, the rural areas. Yeah. It sounds like we need something like that.

Dolgas: That's exactly what the, uh, So, with the, you could probably get those from that center, there's probably a couple of them laying around.

Patterson: Yeah, there there's some deviation between the 2 governmental bodies state that we

Degroot: If I could fill in that, that was on my list of things to talk about too, especially in southern Illinois, I would like to offer to help with a BFW, especially in our posts down here and we know that whole area's so underserved. Maybe BFW could assist and again the word out, and they advance for the from the could visit some of our post in southern Illinois, and we could advertise this a little better.

Patterson: Yep, that sounds business to the group. Thank you. And it's definitely part of the calculus for when we're able to get something on the road for that.

Wetherell: Yes. Okay. Thank you. All right, moving on, uh, last meeting we spoke about veterans transitioning, and just to try to get some continuity there and we heard a lot of really good ideas. And, um, you know, there's some things that are in the hopper that are hoping to make that transitioning veterans situation a little bit easier. And to help the state of Illinois to become leaders in that, um, that arena today, I would like to discuss a very touchy subject and a serious subject Veteran suicide, um. If most might be aware that September is national suicide prevention month, and I thought it would be a good time to bring this subject up in front of this body. And, uh, see what kind of ideas and things. That could be shared that could maybe be helpful or a good resource for others to utilize some might be aware, I'm not sure July 21st we had a veteran that worked for me and the, he was a veteran service officer for the BFW American Legion and currently was. And he committed suicide on July 21st. It was a pretty terrible, tragic situation. Greg Strong was his name. Mr. Strong worked at the Danville, VAMC. He had, you know, contacts

with all the resources that anyone could use to prevent this type of thing from occurring. However, he chose not to utilize those. He even had the knowledge and things to help others with those type of situations. And unfortunately, um, he didn't think about helping himself.

So that being said, you know, with someone that has all those options, and they chose not to use, utilize them. It's a, it's a lot more technical question than anyone that I could answer anyway. But I would like to open up the floor to see if what resources other organizations might have that they wouldn't mind sharing that might be beneficial to others. That might be suffering from this type of situation. I would open it up to the floor.

Tyler: Well, Keith you and I had mentioned before, you know.

Uh, folks that commit suicide, you know, that there's a feeling out there that they're crazy or something and they really aren't. They, they're operating quite logically in their mind, uh, when they reached the conclusion of, of where that is. And 1 of the best things that anybody can do to help somebody who's in that depressed world is they a, you're combat buddy the phone call to, you know, touching base with, with somebody that's out there. So, uh, you know, the army and the guard and, um, several of the other organizations are really pushing the reach out and, you know, call Joe and see how he's doing today. Uh, just to let him know that somebody cares about it, you know, and that. It helps that individual understand that they're connected to more people than just themselves and there's more impact to any decisions that they make. And, you know, my, my clinician colleagues for the most part, you know, really emphasize the connectedness with other people is one of the best things we can do to keep people from getting into that place of depression and doing suicidal acts. So I really encourage all of us as we can in our individual chapters and post and whatever to have. Some sort of check in with your buddy, uh, kind of programs going on. So, people can do that.

Wetherell: Thank you. Would anybody else, sharing anything

Dieter: Ray Dieter here

Wetherell: Yes, sir. Mr. Dieter

Dieter: As a physician who used to work at the Hines V. A. hospital. Let me just mentioned that we even had suicides occur in the hospital with veterans, so I think this is a very important topic and I'm Thank you for bringing it up.

Wetherell: Yes sir Mr. Dieter.

Dieter: Incidentally, I don't know I was signed in or not, but I am here.

Wetherell: Yes, sir.

Mr. Shown did you have something you would like to see a huge down here?

Shown: Just to mention that, uh, beyond just the veterans organizations uh. We have at our church comfort dog ministry. And we have reached out to veterans in our area. And every month on the 22nd of the month, we have a dinner and we invite veterans and their families to come to this dinner.

And the reason they meet on the 22nd is, I've heard that there's 22 veterans and active duty military folks commit suicide every day, 22 a day and I know that the military active duty and things are working to try to help that situation, prevent that situation but, the churches and other organizations can reach out as well. Thank you.

Tyler: The director's newsletter here that you put out the 1st of the month on that, and said that we're actually making progress. We're down to 17 a day instead of 22. so you're going to have to change your dinner date 17. well.

Shown: We're working the right direction then. Very good. Well, thank you.

Wetherell: Mr. Shayler

Shayler: I just wanted to comment. I have the honor of attending one of their dinners a couple of years ago, and was very impressed with the community that you feel when you walk in there. And a couple of the customer dogs are there and the food was great, but it was just the community. They didn't know me, but surrounded me and I was very comfortable. So thank you for adding it. I still remember that. Thank you.

Dolgas: A lot of these veterans you could talk to him to your blue in the face. And once their mind is made up, they're going to go ahead and do it without even with all the training and people talking to them and so forth. I think one of the things that that would help. If especially if the reserves or the Illinois guard people. They meet when they come back with their families, because these issues are not just with the vendor himself, he comes back with his issues from the war. But yet he's got geez, I've got to get into a car. We don't have money. Uh, uh. You know, we got grocery bills, we got this, we got that. I think it would really help with the whole family got involved. And work with this veteran on suicide. I mean, because he's going to be a overwhelmed he's going to come back and say. In a war with hell and live at home with my family now, I can't support, em. The way I did and easy way out is, you know. Committed suicide, and I really think that would help, uh, or even with the regular guy who would want to come, you know, set up a meeting at, uh, Lincoln Land Community College. You know, once a week, twice a week, whatever they want. And they bring their families and so forth and, you know, dinner or anything, it's just a meeting. Sure. You know, and, uh, I think that that's something that might really help. Yeah. I don't know.

Wetherell: Thank you. I agree. It's a community issue for sure. And family, you know, it needs to be involved. There's many different, peer resources available and things. I'm just not sure that most know about all the resources available a common theme, and a lot of things that we deal with veterans unfortunately, now.

Dolgas: At the events that they go to intervention, or if you have counselors and so we have lots of counselors. Sure. We'll work with you.

Womack: Sure we do have a couple of like Jack in the Chicago office. Okay.

Wetherell: Mr. Olenjack

Olenjack: Yeah, sure. Now, I'm here in the Kankakee area, we have an organization called buddy, Chuck 22. 22 of the core stands for the other gentleman about 22. To assign today, but the key word about Buddy chapter 22 is all veteran. On the 22nd day and a month. Call somebody a veteran that you haven't heard from in a while. The chat organization now we have down here is working pretty well.

Wetherell: It's a great idea. Thank you for sharing the Chicago office. I understand this or handy.

Gutierrez: Yes, yes, I my hand up, but before I get into what I was going to talk about, I did want to bring up America's warrior partnership and their operation deep dive, which I know the veteran suicide has gone down from 22 to about 17 a day, but Operation Deep Dive also accounts self, injury, mortality, destructive behavior, classification, and combining those numbers with suicide. We're looking at 44. that's a day. Yeah, and I can forward I can forward you for director prince website in partnership with various counties and VFW organizations. Our clinic gathering this information, it's fairly accurate. You'd be you'd be surprised to see the other numbers. They are like, 56% of service members devoted, have a higher rate of suicidal. And very various other, various other, you know, fact, statistics uh, but one thing that I did want to bring up, like, transition is very huge when it comes to suicide prevention. Unfortunately, I have many friends that have, you know, taking their lives. Um, most of them, we're facing financial hardships. When I speak government entity, it's not having the military preferences or not practicing military higher or better in hiring credit. For instance, that's very disturbing because if we're going to if we expect private sector to, you know, higher veterans, we should be doing the same. Yes, the same thing from an entrepreneur level we have major infrastructure projects here in Chicago that have set aside. But 0, veteran own business websites. You know, projects that are receiving federal money. You know, nope, nope. Without synthesized a better known business I have issues with that. And, you know, these entities aren't going to be doing it on their own. Perhaps, you know, we create legislation within the state of Illinois, any project receiving government funding will have will be required to have some signs or be included in the diversity initiatives with an initiative that's all I have.

Wetherell: Thank you. Good information.

Director Prince: Yeah, Frank, thank you. I'm going to add to that. If I may that. I'm very well aware of that study and I think that. If you know what, you know about the then, you know, that that number is indicating the ones that are known to the V.S, yes. What is it also talks about is an exploding rate of suicide amongst active duty guard and reserve population that, despite all the programs, all the different efforts and all, that doesn't seem to stem the tie. The narrative, a

national association state directors and others are working with DoD. To identify who's coming to Illinois within a year of their end of enlistment so that we can get to them before they get out. I'm not going to sit here and tell you that. The problem is because the problem is so massive that 3000, some odd organizations that are working on suicide prevention at any given time. The problem then, in some cases is that the person who's actually suicidal gets lost in the, in the mix. To identify, and Frank said transition is the number one factor right now, for service members, getting out leaving Pleasantville for, by all accounts a place where they have a try and everything to them to come into a system that has basically moved on from the war and everything else, so. These conversations are so very important because if they save one life, that's worthwhile. But the reason that the eye back, and this is why I'm not sure is bringing it up is what can the collectively to draw more attention to that, to push these organizations together to ultimately be fully, fully transparent on what's really happening out there. And it's not just, you know, we just had the 2nd anniversary of Doc, Natalie County 4 kids. So, and so on and so forth. So this is why the chair called this because this is something that the eye back then can help us present to the legislation or legislators, and the governor. Thank you. Mr. chair Frank Thank you. Cool.

Wetherell: Thank you director. Yeah. You know, it's a very complicated issue. And I was just trying to think of something, some way that we could combine resources. And 1 of the things that kind of came to my mind was maybe exploring the possibility of combining all the resources available on this council. And, uh, creating some type of a veteran's suicide symposium, um, specific tell, Illinois. Maybe next spring or next summer the time's not important right now. But I would entertain if anybody would see the feasibility of that, or be interested in exploring this possibility to utilize the resources to possibly put something like this on. Um, is that something that, uh, this body would be interested in exploring. Who's conducting that suicide, uh, workshop in southern Illinois for the Marriott so I.

Director Prince: I'm actually attending that tomorrow. That's it. Marion VAMC in that community there that just had one up in the headset because of work with the providers and so. It is happening around there. The idea then for us is because what do we want to achieve that versus just having a conference that says, hey, we had a conference in yet.

Yeah, yeah, I'm talking about.

Tyler: What, and what would what would be different from what we're doing for what they're doing director.

Director Prince: Okay, but we also have the governor's challenge working through the state deal. Our department is working with the governor's challenge, which has 52 States and territories that's working on the term family member service members, veterans and family, suicide prevention programs. For IDVA purposes we have permission to study with Dr. Shauna Springer to identify. Dr Shauna Springer is a national expert on this topic working with first responders. And her recommendation was as Frank mentioned, and, as I mentioned was, we need to get into the transition phase when we define the veterans before they get out. Introduce them to the

state and the organizations. And some preliminary studies on our part from veterans affairs has some things some classes that we could be holding around the table under represented Kippur we talked about this welcome home, Illinois. You know, 6 days kind of tax class. Welcome, new Illinois. Here's what you're gonna expect. We'll try and so on and so forth. That's kind of what we're looking to do is having a welcome back to Illinois summit. Where we're inviting people who have recently returned or are you thinking about coming back and then having kind of that. One stop shop, moreover, connecting them with the BA, connecting with their counting back, connecting them with Chicago vets and so on and so forth. All these folks that are there to not just say, go to our website or our website. Is that we found them and the circle spins around each person's problem that faces veterans in general is you have to put in for this, put in for that, put in for this and put it in for this. And we've got some experts on connectivity in this room, and on this, when we get this committee. Yours, especially with what you guys have done in Chicago events, and keeping a tribe connecting. I'm hoping to achieve that versus a conversation about what we can do to help the suicide. I liked the whole concept of welcome to Illinois, but I feel like maybe, like, we could even 1 up that expense by, like, come to Illinois because Illinois has some of the best benefits for veterans in this entire country. And, you know for us to have a flyer to go out to all the Tampa, Tampa. Just outlining, you know, all of our benefits. See state specific benefits, you know, that might even help draw more veterans to the state.

Tyler: Yeah, yeah, well, part of my question, the reason for the question director and Mr. chairman was, you know, to avoid duplication of effort if we're already engaged with those other folks that are doing that and we've, we've got this going on one more committee be doing something, it's taking the same people that are on those other committees and I. And while we, you know, we can sit around and talk about it. I think some of the things that the director was talking about with the connecting the tribe and the transition, and those kinds of things has a big impact on the suicide thing and working in collaboration with those other things. So. I'm just wondering what the value of us sitting around next spring, talking the same issue that they're actually working on will do for us.

Wetherell: No, that's a great point. And I, I see the point. I think my idea was to utilize the resources in this council that are available, um, just hearing the folks. Today, I mean, I didn't know anything about the buddy check 22 half of these. I've never even heard of and I think that's something that I'm interested in getting some information sharing. That, you know, people can utilize, um, that we can share with our organization. Exactly. That everybody can take back to their organizations. And share, and I'm just figuring out some way to get some

Um. You know, I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel. There's already several groups that are way more advanced in this stuff than anything that I would even attempt to, you know, help with. However, I feel like. With the, uh, all the knowledge and, um, the resources available in this council, um, there just has to be some type of resolve that we could come up with where we could be helpful. That's kinda what my, what I'm thinking of here. So, um, does anybody a handout.

Wetherell: Oh, representative Swanson.

Rep Swanson: Thank you. Thank you. Bye. Thank you for recognizing me just a couple questions. Um. We throw them a number around 22 and we throw on the number around 17. what is the statistics in Illinois? And do we have a demographics or geographic that were predominantly suicides are happening in Illinois? And do we have any statistics to show if it was an active duty? Suicide member, or if it was the National Guard or arm reserved. Um, just wondering what that drill down is to kind of help us better focus our efforts not to say that we should forget one part of the state over another or one branch over another. But I think it would help us better focus on. Should we focus on the Marine quarterly should we focus on legion on the. Are the statistics for the soldiers, or the veterans in Illinois for suicide? He's been working on it.

Wetherell: Thank you, um, does anybody know where those, I don't know where we can locate any of the, uh, data um, that's something I definitely would be interested in looking into representative and, uh. I will do so see if we can find some of that info for you for everyone involved. Okay, yes, Danielle.

Luevano: If I might add on. So, I'm 31 years old, um, pretty young. And I was hesitant on sharing that information with you all today, but I will say that the VFW, the legion, the Marine Corps league. All of those organizations are amazing organizations. And I feel like they do a lot for the community, and for the veteran community, however, I feel that younger veterans are not going to those places anymore so I think that as they're as veterans are coming home, we have got to find some different avenues of reaching out to them and bringing them into a close knit community or revamping what we already have in the legion and VFW and things of that sort because, even myself, being young walking into a VFW, it throws them off and then being a young female, you know so, then that's my fault too. You know, I should go into these places and show my peers like, okay, let's go. This is our tribe. This is our community, but we need to start preaching that and revamping it and bringing the younger generation and holding them and with our hearts, you know.

Wetherell: That's an excellent point.

Tyler: I think that we're missing out on it. Massive demographic there.

Yeah, and that's an excellent point. And, you know, it provides just another layer another variable of not getting information from the right people utilizing technology for one segment and utilizing not using, you know, there's just different ways and I feel like that's one of the bigger issues is just providing the help, it can go one way. So, some one, some, someone to me, I mean, I might get a word of mouth, but to someone else younger, you know, that doesn't really go in the same circles as these veterans service organizations. You know, they might have to rely on some type of social media or something of that nature to get that information. You know, that's why I think you're going back to Representative Swanson case. It wouldn't be interested to see that data of, like, you know, the specifics on the demographics of who, and this is affecting the most and so on and so forth. Um, you know, that would be very helpful information.

And your point, Danielle, about the age, if you look around the table and all of us. And all of our organizations are grappling with we're aging out, uh, you know, and we're not able somehow or another to attract the younger veteran into any of our organizations. I don't think anybody at this table in their organization is probably the average age of most of the organizations is about 75 or older.

Wetherell: Yeah, that's true. Mr. Peck did you have your hand up? You're muted on mute. Yeah, yeah, no, I can.

Peck: Thank you just one item.

Womack: He needs to disconnect

Wetherell: If you're on two lines. Mr. Peck disconnect one of them. You're getting some feedback. Please. Thank you.

Peck: Okay. Well.

Wetherell: Please start cricket it's usually what happens when I'm when I'm talking about, right? Hold on one second.

Patterson: While we're waiting on that yes. Service or well, I just wanted to point out. As an, as an initiative from the Department of Veterans Affairs, during this period of time, for the, you know, suicide awareness um, I'm not sure how many have seen the director's message that had went out. I thought that I was gonna bring. That was impressive. I didn't want him to be involved in the conversation where I said that and then the last I thought that was very, very well put together and. Yes, I just told them that. Yeah.

Wetherell: There was, um, uh, Mr. Patterson brought up a good point. Um, director prince has an excellent suicide prevention video. And actually, when Mr. Strong, tragically took his life, that was the video I shared with all the employees and it was very helpful and very well received. Um, you could find it. I Googled it and found it real quick. Um, it's available on IDVA websites who I believe, so. But thank you for doing that director. That's an excellent resource. Mr. Peck did you get your no. Mr. Dolgas

Dolgas: Yeah, regarding the veterans organizations I have an idea that I think would help the organizations. Get membership and be able to help their members by opening up a daycare at all their facilities. But the problem is, you got to hire someone, you know, with a license. You got to have sprinkler systems and so forth, but the ones who could do it. I think would be really great. You gain a member and you gain a family, like a atmosphere. And if these people are, uh, can talk about suicides. So, they can talk about this or that. And I think that would be a great way to really help the posts by making money instead of, I don't know what take care of course, but. So, that they are, we're only going to charge you 500 dollars a month. Or something like that. So now you're saving money. And you're getting good care and, uh. And besides that, you could have daycare for seniors a lot of the members are getting older and now you have these senior people

who like, children, you know, they would play with the children and you be covering two basis for the family who left to take care of their father or their brother, or whatever that can be done by going to a event center or both and they're getting some enjoyment out of it and everybody's happy but again I think it's a big cost for somebody Um, but it's a thought, you know yeah. For the ones who could do it.

Wetherell: Yeah, good, good info. Mr. Shayler

Shayler: And along that line I know the one of their, what they're going to start really addressing is trying to come up with a senior daycare program to the VA, and whenever they roll that out, but it's, they're looking at trying some way to do that right now. So that's a good point.

Wetherell: Thank you for those thoughts. Is there somebody put their hand up or? I just see anything.

Peck: It's Mike. second, I'm trying to get through to you.

Wetherell: Oh, okay. That's better.

Peck: Okay, but my comment was on the veterans treatment towards getting mentorships. Now that's how the friends are suicide. But we desperately need for veterans. And in the family, the goals who have suicides, I would like to urge the providing assistance and see if there are certain claims available for that family. I think that's.

Wetherell: Thank you Mr. Peck does anybody else have anything? They would like to share on this topic? Thank you.

Dieter: May I

Wetherell: Yes, sir. Mr. Dieter.

Dieter: Having commented the VA it has strong concerns, and all along this line and prevention. I like to just mention that the medical community has frequent programmes, in fact, they have another one coming up right? Quick. State of Alaska has changed some of their requirements for licensure so is Illinois or mental health. But one word that, or maybe more in one word, but one word awareness, if you're aware of any potential discussion or comments by an individual, you should certainly act on that to try and prevent this problem, but health care, we'd love to have someone tell us how to prevent some of these problems. So, thank you your discussion. And if there's anything I can do, or suggest, please don't hesitate to ask Thank you.

Wetherell: Thank you. Thank you, sir. Uh, anyone else. No, it is a, I think this is something kind of going back to one point is, you know, like. With these events and things, this, this kind of Segways with the master calendar as well, you know, and you know, these events, uh. Like, some of these awareness events and things like that, I think would be helpful to some, but they're not aware that they're actually going on going on and such. So, you know, that that would be helpful to be able to share that info on an, on one the one basically vehicle to have everything on one stop

shop if you will. So, um, it's a topic that I know. We weren't really going to broach cause. It's gonna take a days and days to properly give it the actual time. Um, it's needed to, to discuss however, I just thought it. It was something that would be beneficial to bring up. And again, to share resources, and, you know, maybe it can be helpful to somebody in this council to take back with them. I would like to continue on to, you know, see what more we can do to shore up this situation. And to see where we can be helpful to others. That are, you know, contemplating this this tragic situation. And, you know, I don't know if anyone has any other suggestions on what we can do better or anything. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me. And I'd be happy to share it with this body. Is there anything else on this subject that anyone would like to talk about? Like. All right, thank you. I would like to share a couple of important, suicide crisis numbers. Um, uh, there's a handful of them. Um, you know, and they all go to a person that will help. one is be in 1 800 2738255 option one. Or you can text 741741 you can contact 988 is another one. you can text 838 to 55. Those are all suicide crisis numbers. Um, that I feel like, I know all my employees to have those numbers. Um, we, we make sure that they're readily available and I would urge everyone else to be somewhat flow with those. So representative Swanson, do you have anything else you would like to add to anything? I'm going through the legislators and I think you're the only one on today. Oh, on two I apologize. We'll start with a representative Swanson.

Rep Swanson: Thank you Mr. chairman. Um. To bring everyone up to speed. I've had several calls from veterans, who felt that they were not being recognized for their veterans service. When they applied for their for a job with the Illinois Department of transportation. The veterans didn't feel a preference points of awarded. And this isn't just but several calls I think they reach out because of my position on the affairs Committee and other committees. So, I prepared a letter and sent a letter last week to the secretary of transportation. And also sent a letter to the transportation, of course, hires the people with [inaudible 00:46:12] is the organization or agency in the state of Illinois. That awards a qualification and the preference points. My letter basically to the secretary of transportation was. I want to know how many veterans applied for jobs. And how many veterans were hired, how many non-veterans applied for jobs and how many non-veterans were hired over the past year. My letter to CMS was a little bit more extensive. I asked the last 5 years' worth of data for both those categories. I think it's time that, I mean, like I said, I've had several veterans reach out and say, hey. I've been doing the snowbird job for quite some time and I wasn't even hired this time around. I've been a snowbirds for many years. I applied for a full time job with this transportation. And someone a non veteran with no experience is. So, I want to hold their feet to the fire and surely we are doing what we say we're doing by statute, and that's recognized in our veterans for their military service.

Wetherell: Appreciate it, thank you Representative Swanson. Oh, okay. Does anybody have any questions for Rep Swanson regarding that matter? Yes.

Brown: Oh, yes representative as you go through that from what? I understand they change the rules on veterans preference. It used to be absolute veterans preference when it came to hiring and from that from what I understand now, they're just getting veterans preference in reference

to them getting the interview. Where before is if a, that was interviewed. It didn't matter what the points were if they were hiring them off the street. It didn't matter where they landed in the, in the pool. That veteran had absolute veterans preference. So if we interviewed 5 people. And of the 5, one was a veteran and that veteran was the lowest scoring person within that interview we had to hire that veteran. I don't believe that that is the case anymore. So that may be part of that issue.

Wetherell: That was as a result of a lawsuit. I remember reading about that as well and that's highway maintainer specific I thought right?

Brown: I don't think so. I think that's across the board within the state of Illinois. Okay.

Wetherell: Um, Chicago office

Gutierrez: Mr. Swanson. This is Frank with the other side. I would like to may be have all one on one offline to further discuss this because I, I have additional numbers that would just blow your mind.

Rep Swanson: Sure, my phone number is 309 334 7474 my office, my phone number. My cell phone is 309 507 2975. And of course, my email address is on these emails that are sent out to all of them unless you, uh, um. If you want that, I can certainly give that to you also tie in your email. Thank you.

Gutierrez: Thank you.

Wetherell: Um, representative, do you have any anything that you would like to add to anything?

Rep. Yednock: Done the issue around the hiring, so I told him I would be inquiring about her as well and we'll wait to see what the data. The attorney general, the, and anybody else has to give us information on that and I also want to say, thanks to everybody for having a very difficult frank discussion about issues suicide. So that's all I have for today.

Wetherell: Thank you representative, Sen Wilcox, did you have anything you would like to add, or say.

Sen Wilcox: Here, no, I appreciate it. Sorry for being late I got caught up on our production line. But, yeah, I'll be working with the reps, wants to see what comes of the data as we, uh, receive it. Okay.

Wetherell: Chicago office you have your hand up. Thank you for. Just took it down. Okay. Just took it down. Okay. Um, miss Yap. Do you have anything from the attorney general's office? You'd like to share.

Yount: Just bringing up the, uh, that we kicked off our 2nd, series of webinars. I'm going to drop the flyer into the chat box individuals can RSVP data to attend webinars. Right now we have 3 different times. We have, which is the staging version of Voicera service member appointment

rights for reservist and national guardsmen. We have presentations on the military veterans assistants act. And then we also have a presentation that will take place in November for a [inaudible 00:51:34]. And that will take place in November. I'll drop the flyer into the chat box. And I think that's it for right now if anybody has any questions, um, they can reach out to me, but that's all right now.

Wetherell: Okay, thank you. Miss Yount. Is there anyone from Secretary of state on, or? No right? Eric, but Eric, from did you have anything you would like to share red? No, okay. Is there any other items from any of the staff or directors or director plants? Do you have anything else that you would like to add? To touch on no.

Director Prince: Yeah, I just want to say, personnel thing we are, we offered a position to chief of staff week and approved a new chief of staff, or will begin on October 2nd and so for information to come to the group about that. But we're very excited about that. And that's it.

Wetherell: Okay, thank you Director. Shannon?

Yount: Yeah, I, I apologize. I know I just spoke and then as we were talking about that I wanted to give kudos to Angie or conducting a, an impact to the presentation for members of the bureau. And giving us a, a rundown, the veteran homes. This information very useful for when individual called the help line seeking information.

Wetherell: Okay, thank you. Is there anyone else that had? I had a question regarding reports, like the Illinois veterans, some report and different things like that, that we usually get with the minutes. Um, I was going to see if we could start getting those added to when we send out the minutes. We'll just like. Is that something that that's feasible?

Womack: Which reports would you like?

Wetherell: The home report and what other reports did you have

Womack: Legislative?

Wetherell: Yeah, The legislators good. Cause it has all the bill is there. Mm. Hmm. Mm. Hmm.

Womack: That'll be in the homes report.

Wetherell: Yeah. Yeah. We'll have the report.

Womack: And the lottery yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Wetherell: Thank you. Thank you, sir. Okay, is there any old business. Okay.

Dolgas: I have a question. Regarding the, um, the slowing down, we have the grant program. Why don't we go? Yeah. Is there anything in there that says that the office here cannot apply for a grant to purchase a truck?

Wetherell: I believe there the IDVA cannot for us to apply our own. Yay. Yeah, I think that the mechanism there would be a veteran service organization would apply for and receive it or if they would, they would donate it overnight.

Dolgas: That'd probably be. Well, maybe that's something we should look at.

Wetherell: We have to be careful.

Dolgas: Yeah, it'd have to be looked I would have to know the vendors organization to purchase then donate it, uh,

Wetherell: Sure. Chicago, Chicago.

Degroot: Yes, this Degroot. This is old business that was brought up before, but expanding the website, especially in regards to the [inaudible 00:55:33]. We're really at one page. I think we could benchmark off of other states and somebody brought out we could probably have the master calendar on one of the pages. The other item there, [00:55:51] I think is very important that we need to share the annual reports, which are mandated by the stature. And not only have them on our site, but I would suggest that we also expand to, I don't know any association Tony so we haven't been a couple places. There's a lot of vital information that's in these Andrew reports. It's not being shared at all. Some of them might think they just go into the this. Uh, and with that, I just want to expand 11 other thing about the associated economy as, you know. They're doing a great job. We're, we're working with them on a continual basis of BFW. We even have our own chairman. Taken care of Sinclair, but we would also like to see the association to county. Get the presidents of the on board more so more in line with all the standards, and the way should be running. So I know that's a lot all one paragraph there but I think we could do a lot better where at communication.

Wetherell: Thank you, thank you. Did somebody else have their hand up? Is there any other old business? No, go ahead.

Gutierrez: I guess old business sure in regards to the Military service paths, and including disabled veterans, writing metric for free since we're talking about suicide prevention, transition, stuff like that. You know, the road home. They have a have a mental health clinic, forget here in the medical district, and they have, I'm just saying a lot of veterans being able to utilize Metro to get to the city for good would definitely help get the treatment they need. Not only mental health, but other treatments here, Jesse Brown, and even. One thing that line scooter promised was I'm still in conversations with veterans. Veterans receive the military service fast. They're looking to give them a 50% discount. You know, it's, it's pretty awesome seeing that, you know, their private sector and, you know, they're just looking to help the veterans community. Once they do that, I'd like the states to actually give them a bit of recognition. But yet, the last thing I really want to touch on is the children of veterans grants, and if we can figure out a way to award it based off of a veteran population versus specific number per County, bring a little more equity to populations that have larger veteran preference. Yeah, that'd be great. I know we were talking about it and I

just want to keep bringing it up because it's an issue that. You know, I don't have kids, but, you know, there's several of my friends that do, you know, it's just something that I hold dear to my heart, but it's about.

Wetherell: Okay, thank you. Did you have something? No, no, no. Okay. Okay, any other old business moving on is there any new business? A new business new business. Okay. Any questions for me. Or anyone else? No. All right. Good welfare. Anybody have any good welfare.

Degroot: I have something, um. No, somebody's time does that mean? That's the group again. I just like the address. Uh, the veterans assistant commissioner County, and we're still struggling to try to get funds. I notice as general information by bringing up the statewide, because we have half of our population that resides in Cook County. And they're stuck with 3 employees. They're having a hard time hiring people. I just would like to see anything we can do. To get them running because we've got a slight increase, perhaps with the budget coming up, but we are still struggling. And we have half of our veterans population economy. It's totally unacceptable. So I'd like to hear some comments on that.

Wetherell: Okay does anybody here? Mr. Dieter?

Dieter: Not on that specific thing, but I know. County VAC, my question is how often do they communicate back to you folks that and vice versa for advice or discussion or updates or so on.

Patterson: So here in the last few years, and in fact, the statewide training is happening in just another week here on the 18th we have personnel that attend layers and they have personnel that attend ours, which is typically. In May, um, so we do we do a confer with each other, but they have just it's known they have no requirement to present any of their issues to the only Department of Veterans Affairs, we are separate municipalities. Um, but, yeah, we, we communicate with them on a regular basis office to office, um, on a statewide basis, though we would be more than happy to, uh, you know. Get a conversation going with their president, it changes all the all the time as, you know. I think it's a 2 year term that they that they do, but we're more than happy to engage in statewide projects.

Director Prince: Yeah, and I'm going to add to what Mark said. This is Terry Prince we, I talked to Andrew Tangen at least once a week, either through text or phone call connected with the just outgoing president of NAVVSO. So. Uh, who I attempted to recruit to come to Illinois, in fact, but that didn't go over. So well, but we have great conversations going, as Mark said, even in saying, knocking down those walls and doing training together and sharing resources. Like, we talked about, but at the national level, so that conversation in that work is actually happening. That's not something we're trying to make happen. It is happening yeah, and that really will help us out especially the Cook County.

Patterson: Great and also about the Cook County specific, we do have a, uh, an agreement that relationship with Elizabeth, uh, that if, uh, means they do not have an accredited, uh, in their office. We are just 2 blocks down from them with staff at the VA, regional office on Taylor, they

are the juvenile detention center, so we do already have that coordination that's happening and they're sending down claims work to us. The assistance work the direct assistants issues. We send to them.

Wetherell: Thank you. Mr. President does that help Mr Degroot the group does that answer any of your data?

Degroot: We need to do better. That's all.

Shown: Okay. I presume that each one of those County organizations as the other Connie organization leadership numbers and addresses, so they can communicate back and forth also.

Wetherell: Is there any other questions or comments or concerns or anything that anybody would like to discuss?

Shown: Couldn't welfare maybe oh, yeah, sure. Good welfare. Mr. a huge down here. And I will admit my ignorance in the past. But I wanted to mention the Army Reserve minute man's scholarship that is available for young folks to go to universities with, and they essentially will get their way paid through their college up to 170,000 dollars for 4 years. And there, of course, there's requirements for that and there's been and then there's also an obligation to serve after that since you got your education paid for. But, you know, we talked about. Not being aware of things so I want to make just to mention it. That it is available officers and all the universities that have them know about this. But you have to contact them and there, there are other resources. So, it is a fantastic way to get through college and also then it gets you to tenants coming into service, um, where there there's certainly a need for that. So, I have information on that, and then there's certainly available here and other places as well.

Wetherell: Thank you for sharing anyone else with good welfare questions concerns.

Shown: Well, okay. Okay. Arlington Cemetery there's a reconciliation monument that is there. And there's discussions of removing that monument from the cemetery. Because of the wokeness that's going on around our country and, um. It's, it's interesting, it's history and I don't know why we're trying to erase history or change it or something like that. But the statues been there for decades, but now they say, well, maybe. You know, we need to remove it and change history. Maybe. So, I'm sorry if I'm out of line, but I just thought I do have information here on the fact that they want to remove. That you kind of like, at Washington University. They want to remove the statue of Washington come on. Sorry about that. That's okay. Thank you.

Wetherell: Mr. Mulvaney. Did you have something?

Mulvaney: I had to mute myself? Jordan will be in here Marine Corps lead Department of Illinois. I just wanted to bring up two things for the good of the order number one under the Department of Veterans Affairs announcement. Yesterday. I sent it confirmed. The chief, at that time, she was chief of staff Redford. She now has a new position within the she's known the deputy secretary. Congratulations to her tenant, colonel retired. For 20 years going on to another one I just want to

make note and I haven't heard this Friday is filled national a day. It's recognized. I'm going to be honest. The DFW in Vermont. Uh, with my, uh, getting out there and with the VFW out there, we're going to do a November ceremony out there and I just want to make sure everybody remembers our pow's Mia are still not received yet. Uh, last thing I want to mention is. We have a couple of centenarians, which are 100 year old veterans and I like to point out that 2 of the veterans are women Marines. And I think [inaudible 01:08:32] on the phone or female executives that serves during World War 2, and they're still around. We just had a birthday celebration Saturday and what we'd like to do. And what we do is actually reach out to the youth presently serving. And we got a couple of marine reservist, slash active duty personnel, attend the birthday on Saturday. We're going to have, uh, blood, which is not a stranger to the Chicago for county area. Uh, he was the, I believe Illinois veteran of the month, uh, years ago. Uh, and lastly I want to bring up 193 year old. Excuse me, I think correctly 93 years young our manufacturing, all the Korean war on Mr. Willy needs your family actually reached out from North Carolina to ask if we can help celebrate his birthday. And we said, hey, army, Marines, your Navy Airforce, we be able to delighted we put that out on our webpage in any way. And I'll share that with Crystal, if she wants to get that out so, like I say, this is what we do try to bring the younger the old together to for remember rents. And this is how we actually keep in touch with our female veterans. So thank you for you time everybody.

Wetherell: Thank you. Mr. Mulvaney any other getting welfare Mr. Bermudez?

Bermudez: I apologize. I have the worst luck with both? Um, I wasn't sure if anybody had brought up the late county suicide awareness for up this weekend.

Wetherell: No. Wasn't aware

Bermudez: Late county the I guess the VC out there is sponsoring a 22 kilometer rough March, uh, for veterans. And, uh, suicide, uh, awareness, so just looking up a website and that's 1 of the things that, uh, hopefully will get a lot of purchase. Patient

Wetherell: Yes, thank you for sharing.

Bermudez: Thank you.

Wetherell: I'd love to, any other good welfare.

Rep Swanson: If I could. So 29 and 30th is the veterans experience action center. It takes place in Davenport Iowa and, uh. It brings in many different organizations you get to meet face to face with the VA. Person and get your claims and appeals assistants, done there and roll in healthcare. I have a veteran senior fare annually, but this is a huge event with great support from Iowa city hospital. VA hospital and veterans can walk in, they sit down and they actually see counselors before they leave. They've been interviewed by at least a counselor. It's a great event. I hope we as, uh, Illinois. VA is sending someone there to represent the Illinois veterans as they go over there too, because I've been talking to many veterans groups up here, encouraging them to get

over there. So it's from 9 AM to 3 PM. It's at the army, National Guard readiness center on Kimberly road. Great event.

Wetherell: Thank you for sharing. Yes. Anyone else. Good and welfare.

Womack: Kevin Kenny has recipients.

Wetherell: Mr. Kevin Kilenny

Kilkenny: Yeah, I just want him to let everybody know that the, um, Mercer county DAC will be at the senior Expo at valley's resort on the 29th of September. Uh, we'll be there with handouts for veterans that might be wandering through. And hoping to get some participation with both Mercer county.

Wetherell: Thank you very much. Um, anyone else. Well, thank you for all your time today and willingness, I guess to discuss this touchy tragic topic, but I really do thank you and, you know, we'll continue to charge on and see what we can do to to combat this situation. Our next meeting in December information on that meeting the date and location. Everything will be emailed accordingly. Um, if nothing else will adjourn.

Reynolds: Make a motion to adjourn.

Wetherell: We got to motion do we have a 2nd to adjourn?

Tyler: All right, we have a motion in a 2nd,

Wetherell: all those in favor signify by saying aye, same sign for opposed. Thank you very much. This meeting is adjourned. Thank you for your time.