

Illinois Veterans Advisory Council – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 11, 2019– 10:30am

Illinois Department of Affairs / Quincy Home

Video Teleconference & Phone Conference Line

Attendance:

NAME	APPOINTED BY	PRESENT
Stanley Olenjack	Marine Corps League	X
Anthony Ortiz	IDVA Director	X
Al Reynolds	Disabled American Veterans	
Senator Toi Hutchinson	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
Clayton Young	IDVA Director	X
Megan Everett	IDVA Director	
Quinn Triplett	IDVA Director	X
Command Sgt. Maj. Sean Carney	National Guard	
Thomas Banning	Attorney General	
Greg Curran	IL Secretary of State	X
Jorge Bermudez	IL Department of Securities	
Myron Kirby, Chairman	The American Legion	X
Keith Wetherell	AMVETS	X
Maureen Cattani	Blue Star Mothers of America	X
William Bradford	Catholic War Veterans	
Dr. Jerry Field	Jewish War Veterans	X
Dan Finn / Joe Schaler	Military Order of the Purple Heart	
Michael Peck, Vice Chairman	Military Order of the World Wars	X
Lou Myers	Reserve Officers' Association	X
Steve Fixler	Veterans Assistance Commission	X
Vince Long	Veterans of Foreign Wars	X
Roy Dolgos	Vietnam Veterans of America	X
Ariel Shivers-McGrew	IDVA Director	X
Bob Tyler	MOAA	X

New Members: Anthony Ortiz, Quinn Triplett, Rep. Lance Yednock

Guests: Janet Long, Rex Berry

Call to Order 10:30am

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions:

IDVA Staff:

Linda Chapa LaVia, Acting Director

Mark Patterson, Acting Legislative Liaison

Len Winnicki, Senior Home Administrator

Crystal Womack, Programs Manager

Gwen Diehl, Homes Manager

Approval of June 12th, 2019 minutes

Motion to approve the Amended Minutes by Bill Wolff

Mike Peck seconded motion

Minutes approved

Myron Kirby:

Thank you for the opening prayer Acting Director Chapa LaVia. We Thank You all for attending as I know you all have a busy schedule.

Director's Remarks:

I am very humbled to be standing here with you today as the Acting Director of IDVA.

I want to reflect on a couple of things, my heart and focus is on reconstructing our VSO's. As opposed to working in silos, I would like to work together with everyone throughout the state. Bringing in as much money as possible every day to our veterans and really serving them as opposed to just pushing the paper through. We are working on how to transform the state of Illinois from last in benefits to the middle and eventually the top. Working together hand in hand will get us there. Any ideas or suggestions that you have on helping us get there is appreciated. You have my commitment as the Acting Director that we will be working together.

Roy Dolgos: At one time we did file the paperwork to open up a female veterans home which is known as the Prince home.

Director: Good morning everyone. I would like to welcome our newest members to the team. One of our major charges is legislation, we have sent out a survey to see what the top priorities are for yourself and your organizations. We plan to build our legislative curriculum off of the input. There are 2 major projects that I am trying to work on,

Chicago is number 1 based on the amount of homeless combat veterans. I will be working closely with the mayor and major organizations in the area to see if we can starting making a dent in the population. If anyone has contacts for Rockford and what they do there, I would like to talk to you about that. If you are onboard with the progress please feel free to email me later. The other item that is closely tied with this is suicide and mental illness. These are the 2 big items that I would like to tackle as a group.

Another major item that has come down the pike is that we would like this committee to be the lead regarding a summit to be held in 2021 on anything that touches a veteran in our state. We are looking for ideas of how we are going to accomplish this. Secretary White is onboard with us to help with video conferencing throughout the state so all veterans can be part of it. We are looking to compile a list of every veteran organization into a catalog so each person can use it. We are looking to have a group of people gathered by the end of November to start working.

Good news, we are interviewing for home administrator for the Chicago Veterans Home. We plan to look at the residents in our current homes and see if anyone is interested in relocating to the Chicago home. As of yesterday we did have one case of legionella that hit the Manteno home. Len will cover this later in the meeting. The gentleman was not constantly on our campus so the orgin or exposure is unkown. We have tested our water and have negative results.

I appreciate everyone of you, and if there is anything that you need my help or assistance on please do not hesitate to reach out.

Stanley Olenjack:

Director, I have a question regarding where we are on the lottery tickets?

Director:

Mr. Kirby, we will meet with the Director from lottery to touch base. Connie Watson has joined us to help answer some questions.

Connie Watson:

The lottery has brought in so far this year 1.25 in revenue. The new Veterans ticket is not scheduled to be released until November 5, 2019.

Rep. Swanson:

Another topic is as we do the homeless veterans events I just want to point out how important it is to try and get the veteran compensation. Even a 10%-20% claim will help them.

Director:

We have over 1,000 veterans that are incarcerated with dishonorable discharges. We need to look at what benefits that they are able to receive once they are out of the system. This could be a pilot program that we begin.

Chairman's Report

Myron Kirby:

I have no reporting out for this meeting. With that said we will move along to the next report.

Veterans' Homes Coordinator Gwen Diehl:

We continue to have active water management teams and conduct water testing as needed.

As you may be aware, the State has had only minimal construction funding available in the past few years, so the Capital Bills (SB 0262) introduced this year has been welcomed by the Agencies. In addition to funding re-appropriations for existing projects, the Department of Veterans' Affairs has received several significant new projects at the Illinois Veterans' Homes.

Ongoing Capital Projects

Illinois Veterans' Home at Anna

- Replace Nurse Call System
- General Building Repairs and Improvements – NEW



• Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago

- 200 Bed NHC Building
Substantial Completion is expected in December/January. Following Substantial Completion, the Department has a number of tasks to be completed:
 - Order, accept delivery of and inventory moveable equipment and install it.
 - Inspections by IDPH and USDVA
 - Recruit and hire staff; provide staff orientation
 - Admit veterans

Water safety measure have been design into the mechanical and plumbing systems to ensure we are proactive in dealing with potential problems.

We have had over 131,000 man-hours on the job with only 2 first aid incidents.
The project is 67% complete by the billing that has been submitted/approved

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at LaSalle**
 - Replace Wander Guard and Fire Alarm System (Original Building)
 - Replace Original Generator, Chiller and Mechanical Systems
 - Renovate Original portion of the Home (East and West Wings)

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno**
 - EMERGENCY Automatic Flush Valves and Mixing Valves
 - Replace Air Handling Units in residential buildings
 - Replace Roofing Systems
 - Replace Water Mains on campus
 - Central Kitchen Renovation
 - Renovate Restrooms

- **Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy**
 - Phase 1 - Replace Roofing Anderson & Somerville
 - Phase 2 - Renovate Porches at Anderson & Somerville
 - ~~Water Monitoring/Flushing System and Water System Upgrades~~ Substantially Complete 5-08-2019
 - Acquire and renovate building at 720 Sycamore Street
 - Building dedicated to CPL Lester Hammond, Medal of Honor Recipient
 - Construction was completed and residents moved to Hammond Hall
 - Construct Domestic Water Loop
 - Moving forward in conjunction with the design of the new buildings
 - Construct New Nursing Home and Domiciliary
 - Bridging Documents to be completed October 2019.
 - Project to be advertised for Architect/Engineer and Contractor Teams
Substantial Completion anticipated in December 2023
 - Evaluate Water System (VA Tech and Tim Keane)
 - Abate Asbestos in Seven Buildings Prior to Demolition (Elmore, Fletcher, Guesthouse, Kent, Truck Maintenance and Vehicle Garage, and some utility tunnel demolition.)

Home's report by Len Winnicki:

Veterans' Advisory Council Meeting – September 11, 2019

Census and Waiting List Overview

(as of 9/4/19)

Home	Total Census	Skilled Care	DOM	Short Waiting List				Long Waiting List			
				Skill	SNU	Peace	DOM	Skill	SNU	Peace	DOM
Anna	54	46	8	27	-	45	6	26	-	4	13
La Salle	170	170	-	24	8	33	-	6	0	0	-
Manteno	259	259	-	24	5	77	-	21	2	0	-
Quincy	363	316	47	10	2	7	0	0	0	0	0
Prince	13	-	13	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	859	791	68	85	15	162	8	53	2	4	13

Current Program Initiatives

- Chicago Home construction continues. Approximate timeline as of this date:
 - December 2019 – Substantial Completion
 - November 2019 – Begin review of applications and start Waiting List for admission.
 - April 2020 - Admissions to start.
 - December 2020 – Full census.

NOTE: All of the above dates are subject to revision depending on circumstances.

- Chicago “Interest Lists” Update.
 - We have had (3) calls from non-resident Veterans asking to receive an application packet once we begin the admission process.
 - We have received requests from (13) current residents to transfer to the Chicago home once it opens.
 - Several Chicago area Veterans’ organizations have requested general information on the Home.
- We hope to have the Administrator for the Chicago Home on board early-to-mid October.

Len Winnicki:

The bed count has changed due to homes having to close buildings as well as when we stay at 90% capacity the federal VA will pay for the beds when the veteran is in the hospital.

The Chicago home is planned to be handed over on December 2, 2019. Hires will begin July 1, 2019. We hope to start admissions in the spring of 2020.

Each home reports to a VISN which is a Federal VA entity. Mental health is a priority for each of the homes. Quincy will be starting a pilot program in the future to allow us to expand.

Legislative Report:

Mark Patterson:

Good morning. Based on our last meeting there were questions about filling out a witness slip. I have provided directions to do so in your packets. There are a few notes explaining other details as well.

I have also included a list of the current bills since our last meeting. This packet will provide current details.

Rep. Swanson:

An update on HB 2088 which is the Cold War License Plate. The Governor has signed the bill. We believe they will be available the 1st of January.

Director Chapa LaVia:

As well, all IDVA vehicles have a crisis line bumper sticker. How can we go about getting these added to all state vehicles? Rep Swanson is this something you can look into?

Mike Peck:

Motion made to have all VSO's support SB 110 and SB 1255.

Motion seconded by Greg Curran
Motion carried

Myron Kirby:

The American Legion has petitioned congress to change our charter to include dates that were excluded before. (December 7, 1941 to today)

This has passed fully.

Old Business:

Myron Kirby:

State fair update:

Crystal Womack:

Both fairs were a success. I would like to say "Thank You" to all the organizations for the support. DuQuoin doubled their attendance this year.

Myron Kirby:

Medal of Honor Highway. Mark P. will be sharing information with Rep. Swanson to work on legislation for US 20.

Next topic, Annual report

Mike Peck:

As the Vice Chairman I would like to form a committee to begin working on the past 2 years that need to be completed. I would like to chair this and provide you with a draft. I will be asking Steve Fixler, Roy Dolgos and Vince Long to help with this.

New Business:

Myron Kirby:

The December meeting will be held at a TBA location in order for us to allow our spouse/significant other or guest to attend. This will be a dutch treat luncheon and will provide details at a later date.

General Discussion:

Sept. 19th 9:00-11:00am meeting with DuPage County/VAC/Hines – Prevention of Veteran Suicide

The Gulf War Memorial act was passed 15 years ago. This the last piece of property in Oak Ridge Cemetery. MOAA will offer a \$5000 prize for the best design.

We are looking at a circular memorial with benches to include the locations with a Lady Liberty. (There is an issue of who owns what and where at Oak Ridge/Lou Myers).

Lou Myers has been appointed as chairman of the above committee for project completion.

For the Good of the Veterans:

Sept 17 the Women's Veterans Roundtable will take place in Springfield. (9am-2pm)

Sept 14-21 at Lincoln Park Zoo; the entire week is dedicated to suicide awareness. Different organizations will come together to create a resource fair.

Serving Those Who Served will take place in November during Veteran's Day week (11/2-11/11). We (IDVA) will have a website link to list all projects. Please share with your organizations.

Logan County VAC is partnering with the County Health Department and SIU school of medicine to provide dental care to veterans as well as mental health counseling. Goodwill has also partnered to provide housing.

Retire the Colors:

Next Meeting Date: December 11th, 2019 – TBD

Adjourn: Myron Kirby, Chairman