

Illinois Veterans Advisory Council – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 9, 2020– 10:00am

Illinois Department of Affairs

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	X
Senator Toi Hutchinson	President of Senate	
Senator Sue Rezin	Minority Leader of Senate	X
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	
Megan Everett	IDVA Director	X
Quinn Triplett	IDVA Director	
Command Sgt. Maj. Dena Ballowe	National Guard	
Tom Banning	Attorney General	X
Greg Curran	IL Secretary of State	X
Jorge Bermudez	IL Department of Securities	X
Myron Kirby, Chairman	The American Legion	X
Keith Wetherell	AMVETS	X
Peggy Arick	Blue Star Mothers of America	
Pat Noel	Catholic War Veterans	X
Dr. Jerry Field	Jewish War Veterans	X
Joe Schaler	Military Order of the Purple Heart	X
Michael Peck, Vice Chairman	Military Order of the World Wars	X
Lou Myers	Reserve Officers' Association	X
Steve Fixler	IACVAC	X
Vince Long	Veterans of Foreign Wars	X
Roy Dolgos	Vietnam Veterans of America	X
Ariel Shivers-McGrew	IDVA Director	
Bob Tyler	MOAA	X
Bill Browne	Cook County VAC	

New Members:

Guests: Janet Long

Call to Order 10:30am

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions:

IDVA Staff:

Linda Chapa LaVia, Director

Len Winnicki, Senior Home Administrator

Crystal Womack, Programs Manager

Gwen Diehl, Homes Manager

Anthony Vaughn, Acting Assistant Director

Amy Brenan, Legislative Liaison

T'Kira Wilkerson – Chicago Homes Administrator

Jenny Franklin – Director Chapa LaVia's Assistant

Mark Patterson – Programs Manager

Approval of June 17th, 2020 minutes

Motion to approve the Minutes by Vince Long

Al Reynolds seconded motion

Minutes approved with amendment to Gwen Diehl attending June meeting

Chairman:

We do have a new member to welcome to IVAC. Peggy Arick with Blue Star Mother's will be joining us.

We will now hear from the Director of IDVA for an update.

Director Chapa LaVia:

Thank you everyone for being present on the phone call today. I would like to go over 2 areas which are very concerning to all of us which is visitation and admitting. I will go over visitation first. The State Department of Public Health has issued guidelines for long term care facilities. These guidelines can be found on the IDPH website. Currently none of our facilities are accepting individuals off the street at this time. Because of the pandemic we are very restrictive on who is allowed to come into any of our buildings. Please do not show up unannounced as you will not be allowed in. We are not trying to keep you out, we are trying to keep our heroes safe. Once we do get to a place where the administration is ready to do the ribbon cutting, we will have a visitation and you will receive an invitation to come. We will have showings before we admit.

The construction crew is almost completely clear of the Chicago home and we are starting to order the equipment at this time. We are excited to be at this last phase.

In short there are phases based on facility if they have had a positive case which includes both residents and employees. The timeframe for visitation will depend on the timeframe of the last positive case in that facility. These are somewhat linked to the region phases. If the region itself is in a phase 2 then the facility is not able to be moved to a phase 3. We are required to follow the region phases. However if a facility has a positive, no matter what phase the region is in, the facility moves to phase 1. There is a process for moving back to phase 2, 3 etc.

LaSalle and Anna are poised to move into phase 2, Quincy and Manteno have a current outbreak and will have to remain in phase 1 for a minimum of 14 days and will have to 2 weeks of tests in a row of all negatives before they can request to move into phase 2. Under phase 1 the facility is only allowed to do video visitation, they are restricted in how they conduct dining and other activities on site. Once in phase 2 visitation is only allowed outside and under strict no touch provisions. We have protective booths for them to use. Phase 3 is 28 days of no positives and allows for inside visitation under the same strict provision. If a resident is actively passing on hospice, a limited passionate care visitation is allowed. We have had a family member stay in full PPE and we have had other family members decline as well. When one of our heroes is actively expiring whether of natural causes or stemming from COVID we do have family members surround them.

On the admitting side, IDPH guidelines does not address admitting. We feel it is not safe to do so until each particular facility is in phase 3. We do have protocol to follow when we reach that point. This will require testing prior to entrance and a 14 day quarantine and only video visitations for that person. We continue to evaluate these protocols. Our staff has provided nothing but extreme professionalism as this is taking a mental health toll on everyone.

We are held to a high standard as we should be and we are testing every other week. Our senior staff is doing everything we can to keep our veterans safe and happy. I could not be prouder working for this organization than I am.

I want to thank each and everyone of your for your concerns. Our staff and veterans appreciate the compassion showed by all. I want to thank each and everyone of you from the bottom of my heart.

Question:

Stanley Olenjack:

Are you saying there is no admitting at all?

Director Chapa LaVia:

Correct. We were getting ready to start the process in Quincy and they had a positive test. Once we get to phase 3 we will start admittance.

Chairman's Report

Myron Kirby:

With no further questions for Director Chapa LaVia we will move forward.

Director I would like to thank you for the kind words.

This is the next to last meeting for me, as in December we will hold elections for the Chairman position. It has been a great term and I appreciate working with you.

Veterans' Homes Coordinator Gwen Diehl:

The Department of Veterans' Affairs continues to provide the safety environment for our veterans in accordance with the directives of the Illinois Department of Public Health, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the best practice recommendations of industry standards.

Coronavirus Response

In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, admissions and visitations at the Veterans' Homes were stopped. Additionally, the Capital Development Board assisted the Department of Veterans' Affairs to create Negative Pressure Isolation Rooms at each Veterans' Home. This allows us to maintain the safety of our residents and staff in the event a resident becomes exposed to or tests positive for Coronavirus.

Home	Rooms Converted	Single Occupancy	With Double Occupancy
Anna	7	7	9
LaSalle	24	24	42
Manteno	80	80	144
Quincy	26	26	50
TOTAL		137	245

At the Veterans' Home in Anna, two single occupancy rooms inside the facility were converted and a mobile office trailer was brought in and converted to provide five of the beds.

Water Quality Testing

The Department continues to continue to conduct water testing at each Home as necessary.

Capital Projects

The Homes' non-emergency Capital Projects were suspended at the Veterans' Homes were suspended to reduce the potential for exposing our residents to the Coronavirus. Funded projects are as follows and will resume as soon as practicable.

- Replace Nurse Call System – the system was ordered and will be installed when contractors are allowed to return to the facility.
- General Building Repairs and Improvements – Design development will continue when contractors can return to the facility.

Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago

- Construction is substantially complete, and the contractors are completing their Punch Lists.
- Administrator, T'Kira Wilkerson is on the job and we are continuing staff hiring.
- Moveable equipment is being ordered and installed as it arrives.
- The state of Illinois has an Art in Architecture program and the pieces have been installed at each end of the bridges and will serve as wayfinding for visitors and residents.



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

Illinois Veterans' Home at LaSalle

- Replace Wander Guard and Nurse Call System (Original Building)
- Replace Original Generator, Chiller and Mechanical Systems

- Renovate Original Portion of Facility (East & West Wings and Center Core) - Project has been placed on hold pending an update of project scope, which is out of date due to the time the project has spent waiting on the list.

Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno

- EMERGENCY Automatic Flush Valves and Mixing Valves - The Emergency Automatic Flush Valves and Mixing Valves has continued to evolve as undiscovered conditions are discovered and we want to ensure the utmost safety standards are attained through the project. Project will include a water filtration plant in the south wing of Prince Building.
- Replace Air Handling Units in R-3 and R-4 residential buildings
- Replace Flat Roof - Roofing Systems
- Replace Water Mains on Campus
- Central Kitchen Renovation
- Renovate Residents' Restrooms
- Replace Shingle Roofing System and Gutter System
- Install 750KW Generator to support the negative pressure rooms in R-2
- Replace Air Handling Units in R-1, R-2, Prince, S-1, S-2, A-1 and A-2

Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy –

- Construct Domestic Water Loop (Moving forward to facilitate the footprint of the new buildings)
- Construct New Nursing Home and Domiciliary (less Asbestos Remediation)
 - Design-Build Team submittals were Reviewed by the A/E Selection Committee and three firms shortlisted on 1/08/2020. Three firms were selected interview.
 - One firm voluntarily dropped out of the consideration.
 - Design-Build Teams were interviewed on 7/07/2020.
 - CDB Board Approval at the August 2020 Meeting.

Veterans United constructors

General #1	Alberici Constructors, Inc.
General #2	River City Construction, LLC
Architect of Record #1	HDR Architecture, Inc.
Architect #2	Guidon Design, Inc.
Architect #3	IDG Architects, Inc.
Civil Engineer	Collins Engineers, Inc.
MEP / Structural Engineer #1	IMEG
Structural Engineer #2	Rubinos & Mesia Engineers, Inc.
Technology #1	Virtual Energy Solutions
Technology #2	T.I.E. Consulting, LLC (WBE)
Fire Protection	The PIPCO Companies
Plumbing / Heating /Ventilating	Henson & Robinson
Plumbing #2	Sparrow Plumbing
Electrical #1	Brown Electric Construction Co.
Electrical #2	Guarantee Electrical Construction Company

- Contract pending with CDB.
- Substantial Completion is still anticipated o/a December 31, 2023
- Asbestos abatement completed in seven buildings scheduled for early demolition which will make way for the footprint of the new building

- Restore and Expand Sunset Cemetery – Only had one bidder and bid was high; project was deferred to next Fiscal Year and will request additional funds. (National Cemetery Administration provides 100% reimbursement of eligible construction costs)
- Roofing Replacement for Ehle Laundry and the Tradesmen Buildings approved; A.E selection to be presented to the CDB Board 11/10/2020 for approval.

Working with IDVA Grants Manager to submit projects to USDVA for 65% reimbursement through the State Home Construction Grants Program. Funding returned to the State is deposited in the Veteran Contributory Trust Fund and can be utilized to further capital projects in the Veterans’ Homes.

Currently Preparing the 2022 Capital Projects request for CDB/GOMB

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Census – As previously stated, admissions to the Veterans’ Homes were halted in March 2020; census continues to reduce due to normal attrition.

Home	Skilled Capacity	Skilled Census	Dom Capacity	Dom Census	Waiting List
Anna	49	38	7	5	34
LaSalle	184	137	-	-	29
Manteno	294	177	-	-	76
Quincy	382	261	88	44	49

Question / Roy Dolgos:

Did we get a federal increase for our patients due to COVID?

Gwen:

I am not aware of any increase.

Question / Stanley Olenjack:

Who will be talking about the new Chicago home?

Gwen:

T’Kira will be updating regarding the Chicago home.

Amy Brenan:

To answer an earlier questions, IDVA did request additional funds in our budget to cover PPE that was accounted for pre-COVID. Thankfully that did go through. Those funds are state funds and not federal funds.

Anthony Vaughn:

To answer your question Roy, we have not received any additional per diem funding at this time.

Chairman:

Any other questions? Hearing none we will move onto the other homes.

T’Kira Wilkerson:

Good morning everyone. I am the administrator for the new Chicago home. We are excited to share that the home is now in the final stages. We are working diligently to finalize the delivery of furniture as well as contracts for services and care. We are currently working on the key hires for the building so that when we do have the opportunity for admissions we have the appropriate team in place to care for our veterans.

Any questions I can answer?

Questions:

Stanley Olenjack:

What is the estimated opening date?

T’Kira:

Our goal is to target before the end of the year. However we are still all operating under the same admissions policy that the director spoke of earlier.

Stanley Olenjack:

I have never seen anything take so long. By the time the home opens up, it will be out of date.

T’Kira:

I am sorry about your disappointment. I can tell you that in my time here we have been working diligently so the opening will happen sooner rather than later.

Thank you for your feedback.

Chairman:

Any other questions?

I for one have seen the home take some time, but the best thing is that it is about completed and the veterans in Illinois will have a place in the Chicago area to call home. When you deal with funding times are different.

Are there any other reports or updates on homes? Hearing none, we will move forward.

Legislative Report:

Amy Brennan:

Thank you for inviting me to participate in the call today. I am the new legislative liaison at the Department of Veterans' Affairs and I'm very excited to be here.

Due to covid, the typical legislative session that happens in January started out normal and shut down like everything else due to covid. We are following legislation, however they went back to Springfield back in mid May. Main focus has been on the budget alone.

We are ready to go forward regarding the resolution to create the Medal of Honor Highway which goes along highway 20. The memo has been submitted to the Governor's office. We are hoping to present during the veto session in November. There is a possibility that this will be cancelled due to covid as well.

Old Business:

Myron Kirby:

Fiscal Year 2020 annual report has been approved for filing. I would like to thank Mike Peck and Crystal Womack for their work on the documents.

Mike Peck made a motion to submit the 2020 annual report for filing
Lou Myers seconded.
Vote: Approved

Veteran Cash update. Are you on the call Connie Watson?

Crystal Womack:

Connie is not on the call but did provide me with information:

FY 20 – 4th quarter review was held on August 26th and there was a total award of \$241,730.

Stanley Olenjack:

What is the plan for the new lottery ticket

Crystal Womack:

I do not have the exact details but I will check with Connie.

*The new ticket was released on 11/7/2020. It is called Winter Double Match and is a \$2.00 ticket.

New Business:

Myron Kirby:

Is there any new business to be discussed?

I have one thing. The next meeting in December will be the nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman. I would like to appoint a nominating committee to be chaired by Greg Curran. He can add additional members as he sees necessary.

Greg Curran: I would be happy to do that for you Chairman.

General Discussion:

Steve Fixler:

Last July 16th the DuPage Veteran Service Suicide Prevention Coalition conducted our quarterly meetings. We had 65 participants. We trained 63 new members to help prevent veteran suicide. I believe 17 or 18 from IDVA showed up for the training.

We are still actively training.

Pat Noel:

Can you clarify if the positive test in Quincy was a staff member or resident?

Anthony Vaughn:

I can answer as to the first test being a staff followed by several residents positive.

For the Good of the Veterans:

Retire the Colors:

Next Meeting Date: December 9, 2020 – WebEx

Adjourn: Myron Kirby, Chairman