

Waushara County Veteran's Service Committee
June 14, 2010
Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Waushara County Veterans' Service Committee was held at 8:15 AM on June 14, 2010, at the North Annex Building, Room 121, 230 W. Park Street, Wautoma, WI.

Call to Order

Call to order, by Chairman Downie @ 8:15AM.

Roll Call

Members Present: William Downie , Norman Weiss, Larry Timm

Members absent/Excused: None

Others Present: William Rosenau, Waushara County Veterans Service Officer and Dawn DeBraul, Administrative Assistant

Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Norman 2nd by Larry to approve the agenda as presented. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion by Norman 2nd by Larry to approve the April 14, 2010 Meeting Minutes. Motion approved.

Public Input

There was none.

Report by CVSO on VA and WDVA Veterans Programs

Federal:

CVSO attended the National Convention in Minneapolis, MN last week.

In reaction to public response of the back log for VA claims, the Director of Claims and Pension introduced a new 38 point pilot program proposed to move things along faster and by allowing other entities to help lessen the VA load. Some of the programs brought to light at this meeting were:

- 1) **Contract Development Support.** The VA will consider allowing private medical facilities to do compensation and pension exams, instead of the veteran having to go to the VA for examination, they would now accept Dr. statements and medical evidence not produced by VA medical facilities as evidence of a claim.
- 2) **Rules Based Pension.** Currently a great deal of time is spent on annual income and medical expense statements sent to the Pension center so that the veteran or spouse can receive a pension from the VA. In the future, the VA will have an online computer program where the veteran or spouse can enter the information and the computer will weigh the information against the "rules of pension". The information will be accepted or denied based on the input.

- 3) **Fully Developed Claims:** This program was introduced last year. The Milwaukee Regional Office was one of three offices nationwide to use this trial program which proved to be successful. This program will now be implemented nationwide. A claim that is filed has an identifying cover letter stating all material necessary to make a claim has been placed in the application and it is ready for rating.

There are other new implementations that were suggested, also.

Arlington Cemetery Director John C. Metzler Jr. will be allowed to retire from his 19 year position at Arlington Cemetery under a cloud of accusations regarding burials for remains that were not documented, or put in the wrong grave site. Investigations in 3 of the over 70 sections turned up many indiscretions and errors. Short of exhuming and DNA testing of remains, there is no way to know which grave sites are correctly identified.

As of July 1, 2010 VA Co-payments will go up to \$9.00 from \$8.00 for medications.

The VA is writing up "Gulf War" veteran presumptives. Currently the presumptive is undiagnosed illnesses. The exposures that have led to the requirement for a presumptive list are a combination of burn pit exposure, oral prophylactics, and chemical exposure. There are currently presumptives in place for Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange. If a veteran is diagnosed with one of these presumptives there is an assumption that the veteran contracted that illness/disease from exposure to toxins and compensation is paid.

On the presumptive list for Agent Orange exposure, three new presumptives added will be written into the Federal Register within the next two months (four months overdue) Hairy cell Leukemia, Ischemic Heart disease, and Parkinson's Disease. Veterans will start being compensated after the new list has been written and changed to reflect these conditions.

Substitution-part of the law. Another change to the VA is if a veteran dies before his claim for compensation has been completed, the pending claim will be allowed to be completed. Currently if the veteran dies the claim dies, and the spouse has to start back to the beginning on the claim.

State:

The Director of Union Grove Veterans Home has been terminated. An ongoing investigation led to the release of the director. In a personnel turnover at King some employees were replaced also. Both care facilities will see the costs going up potentially this year.

WDVA is out of money for the fiscal year. The new fiscal year starts in July 2010. Then there should be money in the Needy Veterans Grant for veterans to apply for assistance for medical or dental help. The grant must be approved before the veteran seeks treatment.

Jim Young, a Wisconsin CVSO was elected as President for the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

CVSO met the new admissions director at King Veterans Home. She has some great ideas for advertising King to veterans in the state.

With the 38 initiatives, walk in claims at Regional Offices has been another idea suggested for veterans. Milwaukee currently does this, as they do not have a County Service Officer. The vet would need to come in with their file. There would not be a decision on the claim. The CVSOs do not foresee this replacing the County Veterans Service Officers throughout the state.

Local:

National Accreditation was achieved by CVSO while at the National Convention in Minneapolis, MN. This will allow him access to speak to Veterans Service Officers at the State level.

CVSO mentioned that he was glad his assistant is back from a recent medical leave.

CVSO is working on a new look for the news letter. This will be a three column style and breaking out Federal, local and state news.

CVSO has tried to send the Argus weekly articles from the Federal level, which affect veterans in our area.

This office paid for a booth at the County Fair being held 8/19 through 8/21. We will be looking for volunteers to "man" the booth.

We have currently spent \$1337.15 of the needy veterans' fund for far this year. We are trying to utilize other funding through alternative resources. Operation round up by Adams Columbia has been a wonderful resource so far for our veterans.

CVSO talked about a veteran we helped through this office with grants, commission funds, Veterans Assistance Program with Richard Harris who has been a great advocate for our veterans. Through these programs we were able to get the veteran glasses, transportation, dentures, and he was able to get himself a good paying position. We feel he is a success story. There are many veterans' we try to help that don't advocate for themselves like this veteran did.

The CVSO then opened the floor for any questions the committee might have.

He was asked if King Veterans home was full. No it is not, but the dementia unit is always on a waiting list because they draw from their population inside before allowing outside of their population into the dementia unit.

He was asked if Green Bay has a new CBOC (Community Based Outpatient Clinic). He was not aware of one there, but Wisconsin Rapids did move their clinic to a larger location at the Grand Ave Mall. Answer: *A new veterans' clinic is on its way to Green Bay. Construction will begin on the new site on University Avenue in the fall of 2010. The clinic will not only serve 15,000 veterans, it will also bring an additional 200 jobs to the area. No word yet on when the clinic will open.*

Administrative Assistant thanked the CVSO for the extraordinary job he did in her absence. He was a new hire when she left and self taught himself many aspects of the job.

Old Business:

Norman asked about changing rooms. We would like to switch the file room and CVSO office.

Currently anytime the CVSO is in with someone the Assistant is unable to access veterans' hard files, and the Tech support people are not able to scan documents. We have the public scanner to try and scan veterans' records, and this same scanner/computer is used to upload "online" information weekly. CVSO has spoken to several department heads involved with the move and will write up the final proposal to present to the proper committees.

New Business:

None

Adjournment:

Motion by Norman 2nd by Larry to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 A. M.

Committee members William Downie, Norman Weiss and Larry Timm were in attendance to the end of the meeting.

NEXT MEETING: August 2nd, 2010 AT 8:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Dawn DeBaal, Administrative Assistant

William J. Downie, Chairperson
Veterans; Service Committee