



Veteran Assistance Commission of Will County

Kristina McNichol – Superintendent
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12 Oct 2021

VAC Executive Meeting 7:00 AM

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor’s recent disaster proclamation, the number of COVID-19 cases in Will County and the CDC guidelines regarding COVID-19, the President of the Veterans Assistance Commission has determined that in-person meetings are not practical nor prudent. Therefore, all meetings for the Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County shall be held via video and/or audio until further notice.

The public is invited to comment or pose a questions by email at vacwc@willcountyillinois.com. At the For Good of the Commission/Public Comments portion of the meeting, the emails will be read into the record. Please email vacwc@willcountyillinois.com for a link to attend the meeting via ZOOM.

- I. Call to Order:
 - A. Pledge of Allegiance
 - B. Opening Prayer: John Kestle
- II. Roll Call of Attendees: Secretary Williams

VAC Commission		
Attendee Name	Title	Status
Jack Picciolo	President	P
Nicholas Barry	Vice President	A
Denise Williams	Secretary	P
Amanda Koch	Sgt-At-Arms	P
Jim Singler	Chaplain	P
Tom Mlynek	Member	P
Janet Blue	Member	P
Steve Benicke	Member	P
Vic Martinka	Past Chairman	P
John Kestle	Past Chairman	P
John York	Past Chairman	A
Wayne Horne	Past Chairman	A

- III. Introduction of Guests and/or First Time Attendees: New – Quincy McCall, Director ALNC; William Sutton, SVO AL Post #13; Guests-Geriann Weisbrook, MMN; Nick Reiher, Farmer’s Weekly; Joe Martin, VAC Peer Support Specialist; Brandy Mullins, VAC Outreach Services; Julie Sanders, VAC Intern; Gregory Wiza, VAC Sr. VSO; Valerie Tawrel, VAC Homeless Community Collaborative Manger; Jennifer Roach, Plainfield AL; Jen Solum, Asst. Superintendent VAC; Amy Georgakopoulos, VAC VSO.
- IV. Comments from Quincy McCall moved up in agenda per Picciolo-Director since Oct 2017; listed most common questions - eligibility requirements to be buried at ALNC; pre-need eligibility paperwork goes to St. Louis, states 90-120 days; adult dependents must be declared prior to burial of veteran/spouse to be buried at ALNC; veterans buried at private cemetery entitled to marker, headstone, military honors at burial; 64K total internments at ALNC,

averaging 350-400 per month currently; in September, 60% were cremains; next unaccompanied honor ceremony is

WAA will probably be held off site like last year, still awaiting guidance; Phase 3 construction expected to be completed mid 2023, is 30+ acres at north end of the cemetery, including new Memorial Wall for remains never recovered; Phase 4 to being 2025, another 30+ acres, should accommodate for 15-20 years;

ALNC acquired Ft. Sheridan Army Post Cemetery in December 2019, adding 2000+ inground cremation sites, project near completion; Millennium Project to regrade, raise all headstones, to be complete 2022; Wood National Cemetery in Milwaukee also under the aegis of ALNC

Looking for volunteers for the public info center and admin center

Questions

Williams-when will public water access be restored? McCall-either in Phase 3 or Phase 4

Roach-What is your email, phone? McCall- Quincy.Whitehead@va.gov, ph-815-423-9958

McCall exited meeting

V. Minutes of Previous Meeting (12 Sept @ 7:00 AM)

A. Motion: Question from Mlynek-the mission of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation; McNichol-re:veteran caregivers;

Motion Past Chairman Kestel; Second, SGT-At-Arms Koch; Unanimous

VI. Superintendents Report:

A. Award Log: McNichol-added 104 new clients, down from August, incl. 1 week out of office; \$87.6 million in award benefits since 2016; average adjudication time is 30-35 days

B. Project 150 Report: McNichol-closed down Project 165, CARES funding; Tawrel reported continues Project 150 work; 3 male veterans at Quality Inn, all have housing plans, awaiting space; trying to keep some rooms open for female head-of-household veterans, working to get male veterans into other GDP programs due to shortage of emergency shelter spaces; Martin stated no new entries into Project 150 due to Holiday, going back to the area today

VII. New Business

A. Will County Veterans Day Ceremony moved to New Lenox Commons

McNichol advised ceremony moved from Will County Courthouse to New Lenox Commons; will co-occur with Portrait of a Soldier and the Moving Wall; Veterans Day ceremony will be at 11:00am, Gov. Quinn will appear at 12:30pm; located just off Rte 30 in New Lenox;

Koch advised New Lenox Legion still looking for volunteers for 4 hours shifts for the Moving Wall

B. VAC Intro: State Rep. Natalie Manly, Update from Springfield

McNichol – Rep. Manly, staff not present

C. Report IACVAC Conference; Attachments

McNichols-note slide 7 from PowerPoint, programs VAC's should run, WCVAC runs all of the listed programs; States WCVAC has won the most caselaw of all VAC's, recommended Board Members review the documents, very informative; Tawrel, Martin, Muller received certificate for Mental Health First Aid for attending training

VIII. Old Business

A. 1300 Copperfield (New Building)

McNichol advised capital improvements will winterize, states current lease to expire May 2022, new building moving forward slowly; gym equipment on hold, awaiting move-in date

B. DCEO Grant – Award letter attached.

McNichol advised was DCOE grant was intended for new building, is an appropriations grant, can and will use in current building; WCVAC only VAC in the state to receive such grants

C. Elisabeth Dole Foundation; Hidden Heroes Recognition

McNichol advised resolution to be read into Will County Board meetings, highlighting what VAC does/will do for veteran caregivers, start today 9:00am, County Board meeting

IX. For Good of the Commission/Public Comment

A. November Meeting Date?

Tuesday, November 9th, 7:00am

B. Every Tuesday – VAC at Orland Park Vet Center

VAC Wiza staffs every week

C. Every Thursday – Together We Stand, Peer Support Group – Flyer Attached

Flyers attached, also one at Hope Manor monthly

D. 10/21/2021 (Third Thursday) VAC @ Peotone American Legion

Papineau staffs every week;

E. 10/23/2021 12-3PM Peotone American Legion – Flyer Attached

a) Lunch & Learn Veteran Spouses, Moms, Caregivers: You know your vet best.

F. PFC Andrew Meari Road Naming Dedication @ Noon. Followed by Celebration at American Legion Marne Post 13

G. 11/3/2021 Joliet Public Library, Black Rd Branch: Veteran Benefits 101 7-8PM

McNichols advised RSVP on Library Website

H. The Moving Wall; New Lenox Post 1977 11/10/2021-11/14/2021 – Flyer attached

I. Jennifer Roach-Plainfield American Legion has movie day every Wednesday; November will be an invite all veterans; Reiher will include in Farmer's Weekly as a standing event

J. William Sutton-December will have Christmas Party, will advise dates, asking for donations/gifts for children; Weisbrook advised MMN will donate \$1k of toys

K. Reminder to send any events to Nick Reiher to be included in Farmer's Weekly-needs TWO WEEKS lead time for publication; free to VSO's

L. McNichol advised when Unaccompanied Burials are sponsored by an organization, the limits for attendees are removed; contact ALNC, Jack Picciolo, Kristi McNichol; Blue asked what is involved, Picciolo advised the sponsoring group supplies a speaker for remarks, works with Honor Guard, no other requirements

X. Motion to Adjourn: Member Mylnek; Seconded Member Blue; Unanimous Meeting Adjourned @ 805AM.

VAC Executive Committee Meeting

11/09/2021 @ 7AM

VIA Zoom

R/S

Denise Williams, VACWC Secretary