

Board on Veterans Affairs

Meeting Minutes – December 14, 2023 | 1:00pm

In-Person at Wisconsin Veterans Museum with a Virtual Option

Council Members Present:

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|--------------------|-----------------|
| Pat Beggs | District 1 |
| William Schrum | District 2 |
| Christopher Hanson | District 3 |
| Tonnetta Carter | District 4 |
| Vern Larson | District 5 |
| Mark Mathwig | District 6 |
| Jason Maloney | District 7 |
| Chris Cornelius | District 8 |
| Robert Hesselbein | Member at Large |

Others Present (not inclusive):

Joe Rasmussen – UW
Jordan Tilleson – VFW
Karl Stuvengen – American Legion

WDVA Staff Present:

Joseph Hoey, Asst. Deputy Secretary
Dawn LaFond, Executive Assistant
Shannon Miller, Public Affairs
Mindy Allen, OLC
Jeremy Lyon – DVB Division Administrator
Colleen Flaherty – Comm Director
Kevin Hampton, Museum
Melissa Doud, Tribal Liaison

Chair Jason Maloney called the meeting to Order at 1:00pm. Roll call was taken, 8 members in attendance, a quorum was present (Chris Cornelius attended the last ~15 minutes).

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Introduction of other in-person attendees was given:

- WDVA Staff: Joey Hoey, Dawn LaFond, Colleen Flaherty, Shannon Miller and Melissa Doud
 - New DVB Division Administrator: Jeremy Lyon
- Other attendees: Joe Rasmussen, Jordan Tilleson, Karl Stuvengen

Minutes from October 12, 2023 were reviewed:

- MOTION: Vern Larson made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Mark Mathwig; minutes were unanimously approved.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Hoey provided an agency update to the Board:

- First round of grants awarded to recipients for the ARPA-Ancillary Mental Health and ARPA-Veterans Emergency Services totaling \$474,000,000:
 - Kenosha Human Development Services
 - Next 18, Inc.
 - Stein Counseling & Consulting Services, Ltd.
 - The Family Resource Center
 - The Wellness CoOP, Inc.
 - Trauma Life Consulting, LLC
 - Washington County Wisconsin
- The second round of all three ARPA Mental Health grants (Community-Based Organization, Ancillary and Emergency Services) have been announced and are open. Application period closes 01.11.2024.
- Annual Entrepreneurship and Non-Profit Grant recipients notified and will be publicly announced soon.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Joseph Hoey provided a legislative update to the Board:

- [SB251/AB231](#) removing inactive groups from statutes establishing membership of COVP and adding three (3) reps from student organizations was signed into law.
- [SB 416/AB 424](#) removing requirement that CVSO applicants take a civil service test in order to receive WDVA CVSO Grant has passed the Senate. The Assembly is expected to take up and pass the bill soon.
- [SB 546/AB 580](#) allowing admission of spouses to DVA nursing homes if veteran is not already admitted. Currently, state law requires veteran to be a resident before spouse can be admitted. Bill has a chance to pass this session.
- [SB383/AB385](#) allowing Hmong soldiers who fought in Laos in support of U.S. forces to indicate his or her veteran status on a Wisconsin operator's license or identification card. Bill has a chance to pass this session.
- [SB102/AB102](#) reducing the eligibility threshold to claim the veterans and surviving spouses property tax credit from 100% to 70%. Looks unlikely to become law this session.
- [SB 8/ AB 26](#) funding for UW Missing In Action Recovery And Identification Project. Introduced but not passed in previous sessions. Supporters believe it will pass this session. Both Senate and Assembly Committees voted unanimously in support of the bill.
- [SB 633/ AB 678](#) designating and marking I 90 from the Minnesota-Wisconsin state line in La Crosse County to the intersection of I 90 and I 94 in Monroe County as the Ho-Chunk World War II Code Talkers Memorial Highway. Supporters hope it will pass this session.
- [SB 249/ AB 243](#) designating and marking the entire route of STH 80 as the Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial Highway was signed into law.

WDVA Website Update provided by Colleen Flaherty:

- WDVA website is in the process of being revamped which will be more of a useful tool and intuitive.
- Options for both mobile and computer will allow for a better experience with all features accessible.
- Infrastructure will be simplified as well as visually compelling.
- Information would likely include proposed legislation.
- ACTION: BOVA will have its own webpage on the site and WDVA will seek feedback and approval, along with testing to be completed by each organization, including spouses and dependents, most likely in April 2024.

Melissa Doud, WDVA Tribal Liaison, provided an update on 2023 Tribal Consultation:

- Identified the progress and relationship building between Secretary-designee Bond and the Tribes where he visited every Tribe in 2023 as well as the November 2023 Tribal Consultation. During his visits he was taught how to offer tobacco.
 - Jason Maloney, Pat Beggs and Chris Cornelius attended the Tribal Consultation. Maloney encouraged other members to attend future Tribal Consultations.
 - Jason Maloney informed that during World War II, had other cultural or ethnic groups in the United States volunteered at the high rate Native Americans volunteered for service, a draft would not have been necessary.
- A \$50,000 Mental Health Grant was recently awarded to Lac du Flambeau.
- ACTION: A map was provided showing where each tribe was located where COVP Members in respective areas are encouraged to visit with the TVSOs, attend events in their respective areas and attend the annual Tribal Consultations.

Jason Maloney provided the Chair Report:

- Legislative influence is needed from BOVA Members and while in Madison, BOVA should visit the Capitol to meet with Representatives, Senators, Councils, etc.
 - ACTION: BOVA Legislative Committee to convene with Bob Hesselbein to lead
- Update on his meeting with UW-Madison regarding Camp Randall Athletic Facility Project which could impact the Camp Randall Veterans Memorial Park.
- Maloney encouraged members to view the recent presentation on a deep dive into Wisconsin veteran statistics that is available online.
- Request for input on content of Department's RFP for the Master Plan Study for the Wisconsin Veteran Homes.
 - ACTION: BOVA Members to provide to Jason Maloney by 12.18.2023 who will forward compilation to Secretary-designee Bond by 01.01.2024.

Board Member District Reports provided:

- Patt Beggs – District 1
- William Schrum – District 2
- Chris Hanson – District 3
 - ACTION: Bob Hesselbein and Chris Hanson to work together on service academies.
- Tonnetta Carter – District 4
 - ACTION: Tonnetta Carter and Jason Maloney to discuss BOVA and Tonnetta’s day job and how to make the two synergize together.
- Vern Larson – District 5
- Mark Mathwig – District 6
- Jason Maloney – District 7
- Chris Cornelius – District 8
- Assistant Deputy Secretary Joseph Hoey provided answers to questions from the October 2023 meeting with respect to the membership reports.

Potential Future agenda items:

- Election of Officers (March)
- WDVA Grant program requirements
- WDVA Outreach Initiatives
- Legislative Committee Report

Public Comment:

- Shannon Miller requested BOVA Members see her with respect to ordering business cards, name tags and apparel.

Next Meetings:

- March 14, 2024: WDVA Central Offices, 2135 Rimrock Road in Madison, WI
- June 20, 2024: King Veterans Home, N2665 County Road QQ, King, WI
- September 19, 2024: TBD
- December 19, 2024: TBD

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Vern Larson, seconded by Bob Hesselbein and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 2:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Maloney, Chair