



VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF LAKE COUNTY EXECUTIVE BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting start time and location

- 9:29 AM
- VACLCL, Gurnee

Members Present

- Nick Konz, Andrew Tangen, John DeReu, Tom Marciciak, Allan Ayers, Paul Baumunk, Paul Hettich, Marie Honeywell, George Gandara

Members of the Public

- None present

Motion to Approve Previous Minutes

- Motion made to approve the Minutes from November made by Delegate Baumunk
- Motion seconded by Delegate Hettich
- Motion passed

NFP Expense Report

- Currently \$49,428.59 in NFP account for November 2023
 - Deposits totaling \$30.00. \$3,000.00 paid for a Antioch VFW to assist with Veteran's roof repair in Antioch, there will be another \$1,000.00 check written to get some appliances for Veteran in need
- Motion made to approve Expense Report by Delegate DeReu
- Motion seconded by Delegate Hettich
- Motion passed

President's Remarks

- Appreciates all Delegates' time and efforts to the Commission. Merry Christmas to all

Superintendents Report

- Superintendent Update on Trips
 - October trip in Washington, DC-Part of NACO/NACVSO trip to support the CVSO Act which gives Federal Funding and Grants
 - The Guard and Plus Acts were topics. It was evident with my interaction with the House Veterans Affairs Committee staff and the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee staff there is a big issue with Claim Sharks. The two bills: Guard VA



Benefits Act-reinstitute criminal penalties that were taken out of the Federal statutes and the Plus Act-allow the Claim Sharks to operate without penalties and they may reward law breakers to charge up to \$12,500.00 per claim

- NACVSO leadership reached out to all our VSO partners to create a joint statement in fighting this Act. Unfortunately, the staff of the American Legion took the position that membership revenue is down so why not charge Veterans claims work and support the Plus Act
 - In November, we went back to Washington, DC to fight this Act, Vietnam Veterans of America, NACVSO, VFW, NOVA, DAV, NVLSP, Senator Tester from Montana, and Congressman Mark Dakano from California held a press conference at the VFW National Memorial Building which was a successful event. It is believed that this bill maybe stopped from going through
 - There is a concern due to the four corners (Democrat and Republican of the House and Senate) come together at years end to submit a package to slip in and push through the PLUS Act
 - The American Legion National Committee rescinded two resolutions that passed at the National Convention supporting the GUARD Act and urging Congress to go after Claim Sharks. They have rewritten two new resolutions to support the PLUS Act. This has given the Claim Sharks a big political win with the support of the legion. More to follow
- End of year numbers/accomplishments
 - Best year in 100 years
 - 18.6 million in new benefits
 - Close to \$90,000 in Financial Assistance
 - Staff Update/Organization chart
 - We have a new organization chart
 - Allan Lacson moved to VSOIC, Ali Nelson and KC Hawkins were hired as VSOICs
 - KC Hawkins will start at the end of January
 - We are advertising for six positions, 2-VSOIC-filled, 1-paralegal, 1-administrative assistant, and 2-VSOs
 - Position advertising will end January 8, 2024. Interviews to start in March
 - Year End-15 staff members
 - FHCC offices update
 - White board installation tickets for dry erase boards submitted
 - No staffing changes currently, due to getting staff on board and trained
 - VACLK and Lake County Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)
 - Left off the November meeting, will be added to the March meeting and sent out via email



- Land Purchase Closing Update
 - We own the Crab Shack and Outback lots. We are talking to Gurnee Fire and Police as training sites with the vacant building
 - Closing November 21, 2023, on Outback lot and November 28, 2023, on Crab Shack lot
- New VBM and Laws, Rules and Regulation books received and disseminated to Staff
- Two additional signs added at Hawthorn Mall
- Lake Villa, Lindenhurst, Round Lake Chamber of Commerce Advertisement
 - We have been contacted to advertise with this Chamber of Commerce at a cost of \$695.00 and one time per year
 - Motion to approve \$695.00 advertisement Lake Villa, Lindenhurst, Round Lake Chamber of Commerce from the NFP made by Delegate Baumunk
 - Motion seconded by Delegate Hettich
 - Motion passed
- VA Veteran Suicide Report for 2023 released
 - 13% increase over last year
 - VA is not tracking deaths of alcohol, motor vehicle, motorcycle, falling out of a tree or cliff, jumping off a building that equate to 34 to 44 deaths per day
 - VAC, Allen Lynch Foundation, General Mukoyama Foundation, 100 Pretty Purses creating a summit together
 - If the coroner does not report post traumatic, the numbers are not accurate in the VA numbers
- Motion to accept the Superintendent Report made by Delegate Honeywell
- Motion seconded by Delegate Hettich
- Motion passed

Unfinished Business

- Delegate Honeywell – Mental Health First Aid Course, Veteran’s Court, Narcan training

New Business

- Nothing to report

Report by Officers

- President Konz – Attended Wreaths Across America and saw a few delegates there.
 - 3,200 wreaths were placed on graves at Fort Sheridan
 - Approximately 400 people attended
 - 50 wreaths were dropped off at Great Lakes
 - Attended General Mukoyama book signing
 - Manager of the Buick dealership is offering veteran discounts



- Delegate Baumunk – Have a photo to keep privately on the website for the new hires-it was advised that we have pictures of new hires on the website
- Delegate Honeywell – VFW District 5-December 9 we packed 250 boxes to give gifts to hospitalized Veterans called Operation Christmas Cheer, delivered 200 to Lovell, 35 to Hines, and I delivered 15 Thrive of Lake County
 - Antioch Post 4551 will host an award ceremony on January 6, 2024, announcing district scholarship winners, who will go to Springfield, and they will be chosen in February 2024, if you want to attend, I can help getting tickets
- Delegate Hettich – Army Reserves Scholarship Program allows any soldier to join the reserves for eight years and they can pay up to \$212,000 for college and last year awarded zero and with twenty-six interviews
 - Defense Department-US Army TicTok are complaining about food and pay
 - Pearl Harbor attended and not represented very well by all branches
 - Commander of the Army pushed the information on suicide to all
 - Vet's home estimates \$12,796.00. \$3,000.00 paid by VAC NFP, \$3000.00 paid by Al Lynch Foundation, and \$3,796.00 paid by Antioch VFW. There is an extra \$8,000.00 which will be figured out in the spring. Home Depot has a program that awards \$10,000.00 to organizations which could be a resource for the funds
- Delegate Gandara – Pow Wow at Great Lakes to give thanks to students, recruits and instructors. 100 people attended
 - Coat Drive was successful and distributed 375 coats to Lake, McHenry, and Cook Counties
 - Funerals attended – Honor Guard attended eight funerals since July 2023
 - Toys for Tots – successful event
- Delegate Ayers – Newsletter please send one photo of events attended and get it to me by the 25th of each month

Motion to adjourn

- Motion to adjourn made by Delegate Baumunk
- Motion to adjourn seconded by Delegate Hettich
- Motion passed
- Meeting adjourned at 10:35am

Next Executive Board Meeting will be held on January 17, 2024, at the VACLIC Office in Gurnee, IL