

Jasper County Commission of Veterans Affairs
Administrator Alyssa Wilson
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Phone 1-641-792-7993

Commissioners: Fred Chabot, Marta Ford, Jerry Nelson, Ed Spangenburg, and Susan Springer

8 May 2024

Minutes

On 8 May 2024, at 1510 hours, Commission Chairperson Jerry Nelson called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Jasper County Veterans Affairs Commission to order. The commissioners in attendance were: Fred Chabot, Marta Ford, Jerry Nelson, and Ed Spangenburg. Commissioner Susan Springer was absent. Administrator Alyssa Wilson and 30 veterans and veteran representatives also attended the meeting. The names of the guest veterans in attendance were not recorded.

Approve Minutes:

Marta Ford made a motion and Ed Spangenburg seconded to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled Commission meeting held on 10 April 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business:

1. Korean War Veterans Dinner:

It was the consensus of the Commission that there was a good turn-out for the Korean War Veterans Dinner held on Monday, 6 May 2024. The Commission paid for the cost of the dinner.

2. Kellogg and Prairie City Outreach Events:

The Kellogg outreach event will be held on Thursday, 16 May 2024, at 1800 hours, at the Kellogg American Legion Hall. The Commission will furnish pizza and non-alcoholic beverages. The status of an outreach event in Prairie City is unknown at this time.

3. Iowa Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day:

There are no changes from the event plans detailed in the minutes of the 10 April 2024 Veterans Affairs Commission meeting.

4. NACVSO School: 13-17 May 2024:

The Commission acknowledged that the Jasper County Veterans Affairs Office will be closed so that Administrator Wilson is able to attend this meeting virtually from her office. Discussion ensued regarding Administrator Wilson's request to attend virtually from her home. Working virtually from home is not currently permitted by Jasper County personnel policy. The Commission's decision during the 14 February 2024 regular meeting that she attend virtually from her office was discussed and not changed.

New Business:

1. April 2024 Administrator's Activity Report:

Commissioners reviewed the April 2024 Administrator's Activity Report.

2. April 2024 Expenses, Allocation, Donation, ESFP Report:

Commissioners reviewed the April 2024 set of reports. Marta Ford made a motion and Fred Chabot seconded for Administrator Wilson to coordinate with the IT staff the purchase of a new laptop for the

office utilizing funds from the State Allocation Fund prior to 30 June 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Memorial Day Ceremony and Letter From Mr. Keith Thorpe:

Mr. Thorpe reviewed the history of the Veterans Affairs Commission involvement in preparing a list of deceased Jasper County veterans each year for reading aloud at the applicable ceremony. This began in 2014 when the volunteer who previously compiled the list stopped. Mr. Thorpe estimated that it takes approximately eight hours per month to compile the list. The task is very arduous and frustrating because of the number of sources that must be referenced and the failure of certain nursing homes to follow through on appropriate notifications to Veterans Affairs offices. He recommended that a volunteer be sought to take over this task from Mr. Thorpe or that the reading of names be stopped after the 2025 Memorial Day ceremony. Mr. Thorpe has compiled the list for the 2024 ceremony and will do the same for the 2025 ceremony. Feedback from the veterans in attendance was overwhelmingly in favor of continuing to read a list of names and that all deceased veterans who called Jasper County home should be included. The Commission will mount an effort to find a follow-on volunteer to compile the names each year.

4. Home Visit Guidelines:

Discussion ensued regarding Administrator Wilson's safety when making a home visit alone to assist a veteran with application for VA benefits. Administrator Wilson emphasized that she makes such a visit only when the veteran is non-ambulatory and has no access to transportation. The consensus of the Commission was that in order to ensure Administrator Wilson's safety, she will contact the Jasper County Dispatch non-emergency number upon her departure from her office for such a visit. The notification shall include her departure time from her office and the veteran's address. Likewise, Administrator Wilson will notify Jasper County Dispatch when she has safely departed from the veteran's home. Since the Commission was not certain this practice will be acceptable to the Jasper County Sheriff, Administrator Wilson will discuss same with the sheriff and report back to the Commission. Marta Ford recommended that any such procedure be included in the Commission's draft bylaws to be discussed at the 12 June 2024 Commission meeting.

5. Work Log:

Chairperson Nelson explained to the veterans in attendance that there is a number of county employee work hours authorized by the Iowa Administrative Code for each county's Veterans Affairs Commission administrator and/or veteran service officer. He also highlighted the fact that the number of hours worked by that person in excess of that authorized is funded by the applicable county government. Currently, Jasper County funds 40 hours of Administrator Wilson's work time each week and 100% of the Shared Benefits Coordinator's (Josh Price) work time. Veterans in attendance spoke favorably of the masterful work done by Administrator Wilson to secure federal VA benefits for Jasper County veterans. They also strongly encouraged to get Josh Price, the Shared Benefits Coordinator, certified to have full access to veteran records as soon as possible.

6. Walk-in Scheduling:

There was discussion regarding past unsuccessful attempts to control when veterans simply walk into the Veterans Affairs office without an appointment to seek assistance. The consensus was to not repeat such a mistake and, instead, encourage these veterans to schedule a future appointment. Administrator Wilson will continue the practice of having a paper tablet readily available in the outer office for such scheduling.

7. Commissioner Terms Expiring June 2024:

Time constraints prevented discussion on this topic.

Announcements: None
Public Input: As stated above

Confirm next meeting: Wednesday, 12 June 2024, 1500 hrs., at the Jasper County Office Building.
At 1730 hours, Fred Chabot made a motion and Ed Spangenburg seconded to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

/s/Ferdinand J. Chabot, Secretary