

Board on Veterans Affairs

Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2024, 1:00pm

In-Person at Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs with a Virtual Option

Council Members Present:

Pat Beggs	District 1
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):

Al Labelle – DAV
Todd Milewski – Wisconsin State Journal
Larry Hill – DAV/COVP Chair

WDVA Staff Present:

Joseph Hoey, Asst. Deputy Secretary
Dawn LaFond, Executive Assistant

Absent:

William Schrum District 2

Chair Jason Maloney called the meeting to Order at 1:05pm. Roll call was taken, 7 members in attendance, a quorum was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Introduction of other in-person attendees was given:

- WDVA Staff: Joey Hoey and Dawn LaFond
- Other attendees: Al Labelle, Larry Hill and Todd Milewski

Minutes from December 14, 2023 were reviewed:

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

Assistant Deputy Secretary Joseph Hoey provided a legislative update to the Board, including these highlights as of 3/14/2024:

Passed and signed into Law -

- [SB251/AB231](#) (2023 WI ACT 70) removing inactive groups from statutes establishing membership of COVP and adding three (3) reps from student organizations.
- [SB 249/ AB 243](#) (2023 WI ACT 69) designating and marking the entire route of STH 80 as the Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial Highway.

- [SB 895/AB 921- Amendment 1](#) (2023 WI ACT 102) removing BOVA authority to approve construction on grounds off Camp Randall Memorial for purposes of the new Athletic Facility.

Passed and waiting to be sent to the Governor -

- [SB 416/ AB 424](#) removing requirement that CVSO applicants take a civil service test in order to receive WDVA CVSO Grant.
- [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.
- [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.
- [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.
- [SB 521/ AB 558](#) identification of the Mount Horeb Veterans Memorial on state highway maps.
- [AB 1079](#) employment of direct-care employees by veterans homes, eligibility for burial in veterans cemeteries, and elements of sexual assault under the Wisconsin Code of Military Justice. Passed Assembly.
- [SB 416/ AB 624](#) increased funding for the Wisconsin Department of the American Legion for the operation of the Camp American Legion.

Passed one House of the Legislature but not enacted -

[SB102/ AB102](#) reducing the eligibility threshold to claim the veterans and surviving spouses' property tax credit from 100% to 70%. Assembly adopted an amendment that means-tests the credit and limits credit for newly eligible to single taxpayers with taxable income of \$100,000 or less and married persons whose taxable income is \$150,000 or less.

Larry Hill provided the COVP Chair Report.

Board Member District Reports provided by

- Patt Beggs – District 1
- Chris Hanson – District 3
- Tonnetta Carter – District 4
- Vern Larson – District 5
- Mark Mathwig – District 6
- Jason Maloney – District 7
- Bob Hesselbein – Member at Large

Public Comments:

- Al Labelle (DAV) reported that he researched Camp Randall Memorial Park and its historical content.

Legislative Committee Report:

- Bob Hesselbein recuses himself as Chair and Pat Beggs has accepted as Chair of Committee
- Goal is to liaison with COVP to ensure positive outcomes in the Legislature, which includes working with WDVA and the GOV and successfully advocating for veterans in the state.

Election of Officers:

- Chair
 - MOTION: Vern Larson made a motion to nominate Chris Hanson; motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- Vice Chair
 - MOTION: Vern Larson made a motion to nominate Jason Maloney; motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- Secretary
 - MOTION: Jason Maloney made a motion to re-nominate Vern Larson; motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Future agenda items:

- Invite liaison to COVP meeting from Legislative Committee
- June will include a tour of Moses Hall

Next Meetings:

- June 20, 2024: Wisconsin Veterans Museum, 30 West Mifflin Street, Madison, WI
- September 19, 2024: TBD
- December 19, 2024: TBD

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Vern Larson, second by Pat Beggs and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:06pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Maloney, Chair