

## Council on Veterans Programs

Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2024 | 11:00am

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

### **Council Members Present:**

Paul F. Fisk	American Legion Dept. of WI
Michelle Matuszak*	American Red Cross
Dale Wiegand	AMVETS
Colin Moten	County Veteran Service Officers Assn.
Kim Queen	Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.
Phillip Landgraf	Marine Corps League
Roger Fetterly	Military Officers Assoc. of America
William Lobeck	Military Order of the Purple Heart
William Sims	Nat'l Association for Black Veterans, Inc.
Scott Griffith	Paralyzed Veterans of America
Nellie De Baker	Polish Legion of American Veterans
Michael Ayers*	The Retired Enlisted Association
Carolyn Morgan	United Women Veterans
Michael Furgal	VFW Department of Wisconsin
Vern Larson	Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
George Banda	Wisconsin American GI Forum
David Zien	WI Assoc. of Concerned Veteran Org.

### **Others Present (not inclusive):**

Jason Maloney – BOVA  
Pat Beggs – BOVA  
Jordan Tilleson – VFW  
James Johnson – American Legion  
Al Labelle – DAV

### **WDVA Staff Present:**

Joseph Hoey, Asst. Deputy Secretary  
Dawn LaFond, Executive Assistant  
Shannon Miller, Public Affairs  
Mindy Allen, OLC  
Jodi Barnett, Women's Veteran Coordinator

### **Absent:**

William Sims                      Nat'l Association for Black Veterans, Inc.

Chair Larry Hill called the meeting to Order at 11:00am. Roll call was taken, 18 members in attendance, of which two (2)\* were in attendance for a short time; a quorum was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes from October 12, 2023 were reviewed:

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

Minutes from December 14, 2023 were reviewed:

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

Assistant Deputy Secretary Joseph Hoey provided a legislative update to the Council, 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.

Selection for length of terms of office for organizations was randomly selected with Nellie De Baker by "pulling from a hat" method, with terms initially being one-, two- and three-year selections:

- One-year term for 2024-2025, then 2025-2028
  - American Red Cross
  - AMVETS
  - Military Officers Association of America

- National Association for Black Veterans
- Polish Legion of American Veterans
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organization
- Two-year term for 2024-2026, then 2026-2029
  - American Legion
  - County Veterans Service Officers Association
  - Disabled American Veterans
  - Jewish War Veterans
  - Marine Corps League
  - United Women Veterans
  - VFW of Wisconsin
  - Wisconsin American GI Forum
- Three-year term for 2024-2027, then 2027-2030
  - Military Order of the Purple Heart
  - Paralyzed Veterans of America
  - Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans
- The three following organizations do not have anyone appointed and will automatically appoint a representative for three-year terms for 2024-2027, then 2027-2030
  - UW Systems
  - Technical Colleges
  - WAICU

Member reports from American Legion, AMVETS, County Veteran Service Officers Association, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Polish Legion of American Veterans, VFW Department of Wisconsin, Vietnam Veterans of America, Wisconsin American GI Forum, Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organization, and Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans were provided.

Public Comments:

- Al Labelle (DAV) reported that he attended the Women’s Journey to Mental Illness Conference in Washington, DC which included attendance from an expert panel, congressional staff, representatives from VSOs and media.
  - ACTION: Al to send link to Chairman Hill

COVP By-Laws were reviewed and approved:

- MOTION: Nellie De Baker made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Mike “Gunner” Furgal; by-laws were unanimously approved.

Future Agenda Items:

- June will include a tour of King Moses Hall
- September will hold motions for Chair/Vice Chair/Secretary

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 Paul Fisk, second by Vern Larson and carried on a vote to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Hill, Vice Chair