

WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON VETERANS' PROGRAMS
Bylaws and Rules of Procedure

ARTICLE I: PRINCIPAL OFFICE

- 1.00** The principal office of the Wisconsin Council on Veterans Programs (hereafter called "COVP") shall be in the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (hereafter called "WDVA") office.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COVP

- 2.01** "Members" shall be appointed representatives from the following organizations (1- each) [[Wis Stat s. 15.497](#)]:

1. American Ex-Prisoners of War
2. Wisconsin American GI Forum
3. American Legion
4. American Red Cross
5. Veterans of World War II (AMVETS)
6. Army and Navy Union of the United States of America
7. Blinded Veterans Association of Wisconsin
8. Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A.
9. Wisconsin County Veterans Services Officers
10. Disabled American Veterans
11. Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.
12. Marine Corps League
13. Wisconsin Council of the Military Offices Association of America
14. Military Order of the Purple Heart
15. National Association of Black Veterans, Inc.
16. Navy Club of the U.S.A.
17. Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America
18. Polish Legion of American Veterans
19. The Retired Enlisted Association
20. United Women Veterans, Inc.
21. U.S. Submarine Veterans of WWII
22. Veterans of Foreign Wars
23. Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.
24. Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
25. Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organizations
26. Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Inc.

- 2.02 Powers:** The powers of the COVP shall be vested in a majority of a quorum of the COVP voting at any regular or special meeting.

- 2.03 Quorum:** A quorum shall consist of 50% +1 of the Members duly appointed and sworn at the time of the meeting [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(4\)](#)].

- 2.04 Terms:** The individual Member's appointment shall expire July 1st of each year [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(1\)\(a\)](#)].

- 2.05 Oath of Office:** COVP Members shall take an oath of office prior to assuming the duties of office [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(8\)](#)].

- 2.06 Resignation:** A Member of the COVP may resign at any time by filing a written resignation with their appointing organization authority, which as soon as practical will advise COVP and Department of the resignation and new appointment.
- 2.07 Expenses:** Each Organization's appointed Representative (Member) on the COVP shall be reimbursed by the Department for actual and necessary expenses with appropriately approved voucher [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(6\)](#)].
- 2.08 Administrative Support:** The Department shall provide designated administrative and legal support to the COVP Officers and Members, in the discretion of the Department Secretary [[Wis Stat s. 15.03](#)].

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS & ELECTIONS

- 3.01 Election and Term of Office:** Annually, at the first meeting after July 1st, Members who have been appointed and qualified shall elect persons to fill the following offices from among the Members: Chair, Vice-Chair and Council Secretary [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(2\)](#)]. Officers assume office immediately upon election. No member shall hold more than one office at one time, and the term shall expire July 1st of each year [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(1\)\(a\)](#)].
- 3.02 Removal from office:** Any Officer may be removed from office by a vote of the COVP provided proper notice is given under Article IV below. Such removal shall not remove the Member from the COVP as a representative of the appointing organization.
- 3.03 Council Chair Duties:** Council Chair shall preside over scheduled meetings, establish the agenda in coordination with the Board Chair and Department Secretary and report to the WDVA Board and Department. The Chair may make appearances and/or reports (or delegate to others) as directed by COVP. Chair may be a member or ex officio Member of COVP sub-committees.
- 3.04 Council Vice-Chair Duties:** Council Vice-Chair shall perform duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair and assume duties delegated by the Chair and/or Council.
- 3.05 Council Secretary Duties:** Council Secretary with the assistance of Department Staff as listed above in 2.08 above, shall keep a record of COVP business and perform other duties as directed by the Chair and/or Council.
- 3.06 Special Elections:** COVP may elect Officers to fill any office vacancy at any regular or special meeting provided prior notice has been given under Article IV [s. 4.03] below.

ARTICLE IV: MEETING AND MINUTES

- 4.01 Open Meeting and Open Record Laws:** All COVP meetings and committee meetings will comply with the open meetings laws and the Attorney General's Compliance Guide on Open Meetings and Public Records. The COVP Records Custodian shall be the same person who is appointed from time to time by the Department Secretary to be the Department of Veterans Affairs Records Custodian. [Wis Stat s. 19.33(5)].
- 4.02 Meetings:** The Council will meet at least annually. Additionally, the COVP will meet at the call of the Chair, by a majority of the appointed and sworn Members or the call of the Department Secretary [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(3\)](#)].
- 4.03 Special Meetings:** Special meetings may be called under Section 4.01 above by the Chair with the concurrence of the Department Secretary, the COVP Vice-Chair and COVP Secretary.
- 4.04 Notices:** Meeting notices will be published in compliance with Section 4.01 above and on the Council Web page. Notices shall be published in compliance with Wisconsin open meetings laws.
- 4.05 Agenda:** The agenda is prepared by the COVP Chair. Any member may request an agenda item. Included on the regular agenda, near the end of the meeting, will be a place for any Member to request an agenda item for the next meeting. The Secretary of the Department shall have the right to add items to the agenda relevant to the COVP.
- 4.06 Form of Agenda:** At the beginning of the agenda will be a statement "*The Council may hear briefing, hold discussion and take action on any item on the agenda.*"
- 4.07 Quorum:** The presence of a majority of the Members as defined in 2.02 above is required to conduct business [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(4\)](#)].
- 4.08 Action of the Quorum:** A majority of the quorum may act upon any matter properly within the jurisdiction of the COVP. A roll call vote may be requested by any Member. Election ballots are secret as provided in 3.01(a) above [[Wis Stat s. 15.09\(4\)](#)].
- 4.09 Conduct of the meeting:** The meeting will be coordinated by the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair; in the absence of both, the COVP Secretary; in the absence of all three, Council may elect a chair for the meeting. The meetings will be conducted in accordance with these Bylaws and the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised.
- 4.10 Public Input:** Public input shall be permitted at every meeting. The placement and time allowed will be established by the Chair.
- 4.11 Meeting Minutes:** The preparation of the minutes will be completed according to 2.08 above. The Draft Minutes (with a "Draft" watermark) will be distributed prior to the next meeting to all Members and any other who request them.

- 4.12 Staff Attendance at COVP Meetings:** Members may request the attendance of any WDVA staff member through the Chair who will make the request of and coordinate with the Department Secretary.
- 4.13 Exclusion:** No member may be excluded from legally convened COVP meetings.
- 4.14 Recording of the Meeting:** COVP will make reasonable effort to accommodate any person desiring to record, film or photograph a Council meeting as long as it does not interfere with the conduct of the meeting.

ARTICLE V: COVP AD HOC COMMITTEES

- 5.01 Special Purpose Committees:** COVP may designate special committees for special purposes. The committees will be appointed for a particular task and designated "COVP-AHC- (purpose e.g. legislative)"
- 5.02 Odd Number:** Committee will be comprised of an odd number of Council Members. The COVP Chair may be a voting member or ex officio of the committee.
- 5.03 Dismissal:** Following the Committee's final report the Committee will be dismissed.
- 5.04 Open Meetings Compliance:** COVP-AHC committees will follow the rules delineated in Article IV above for the complete Council.
- 5.05 Committee Quorum:** A quorum shall be a majority of the appointed members to the committee.

ARTICLE VI: ADVISING DEPARTMENT SECRETARY AND WDVA BOARD

- 6.01 Role of the COVP:** The COVP shall advise the board and the department on solutions and policy alternatives relating to the problems of veterans [[Wis Stat ss. 45.03\(3\)\(a\)](#) and [15.01\(4\)](#)].
- 6.02 Policy Incubator for the Board of Veterans Affairs and WDVA:** On behalf of the COVP, the Chair (or designate) shall report to the board and the department on the previous Council meeting at each regular Board meeting.
- 6.03 COVP Members to solicit Policy Initiatives from the respective VSO:** The COVP encourages the submission of resolutions generated by the various Veteran Service Organizations through their Member.

ARTICLE VII: REPORTS, STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.01 Actions on Policy Recommendations:** COVP may review, approve, or make recommendations based upon reports and studies offered by various VSOs.

- 7.02 Preparation and submission of Biennial Report:** The COVP and Department jointly or separately shall submit a report regarding the Council to the Chief Clerk of each House of the Legislature for distribution to the Legislature by September 30 of each odd numbered year. The report shall include a general summary of the activities and membership over the past 2 years and each organization on the council. The Council Secretary, in coordination with the Department Staff, shall ensure preparation and proper distribution of the report [[Wis Stat s. 45.03\(3\)\(b\)](#)].

ARTICLE VIII: PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

- 8.01 General:** All official documents, including the current Bylaws, will be available on the COVP public web page.
- 8.02 Accessibility:** Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the special needs of the public who make their needs known at a reasonable time in advance of the event.
- 8.03 COVP reference on WDVA Website:** The COVP Members shall be listed on the Council web site.
- 8.04 Records:** Records will be maintained in accordance with State Law [[Wis Stat s. 19.33\(5\)](#)].

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

- 9.01 Modifications:** These Bylaws may be amended, modified or repealed by the COVP in accordance with the notice and quorum requirements listed in Article IV above.

ARTICLE X: MISCELLANEOUS

- 10.01 Inconsistencies and additional provisions:** In the event that the Bylaws, or any provisions herein contained should in any manner be contrary or in violation of the provisions of the statutes of the State of Wisconsin or the United States of America, the statute will prevail.
- 10.02 Severability:** Unless otherwise expressly provided, if any one or more of the provisions of any action of the COVP should be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be contrary to law, then such provision or provisions shall be deemed and construed to be severable from the remaining provisions therein contained and shall in no way affect the validity of the other provisions of such action.
- 10.03 Headings:** Any headings preceding the text of the several articles and sections of the Bylaws and any headings or portion thereof of any action of the Council shall be solely for the convenience of reference and shall not constitute a part of such article, section, or action, nor shall they affect its meaning, construction, or effect.