

WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON VETERANS PROGRAMS

By Laws and Rules of Procedure

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Article I: Principal Office

- 1.00 The Principal office of the Wisconsin Council on Veterans Programs (here after called COVP) shall be in the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) office.

Article II: Members and Representatives on the COVP

- 2.01 Wis Stat s.15.497 provides that "Members" shall be appointed representatives from the following organizations (1- each):

- American Ex-Prisoners of War
- American GI Forum
- American Legion
- American Red Cross
- AMVETS
- Army Navy Union
- Blind Veterans Association
- Catholic War Veterans
- County Veterans Service Officer Assn.
- Disabled American Veterans
- Jewish War Veterans
- Marine Corps League
- Military Officers Association of America
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- National Association fro Black Veterans
- Navy Club
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Polish Legion of American Veterans
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- United Women Veterans
- U.S. Submarine Veterans of WWII
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Vietnam Veterans Against the War
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organization
- Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans

- 2.02 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 A quorum shall consist 50% + 1 of the Members duly appointed and sworn at the time of the meeting.
- 2.04 The individual Member appointment shall expire June 30 of each year.

- 2.05 Wis Stat s.15.09 requires COVP Members to take an oath of office prior to assuming the duties of office.
- 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: Under Wis Stat s. 15.09(6), each Organization's appointed Representative (Member) on the COVP shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expense with appropriately approved voucher.
- 2.08 Department assistance has historically been provided in the form of designated administrative and legal staff to the COVP officers and members, at the direction of the Department Secretary, as provided in 19.33(5).

Article III: Officers & Elections

- 3.01 Election and Term of Office: Under Wis Stat s.15.09, annually at the first meeting after July 1, Members who have been appointed and qualified shall elect persons to fill the following offices from among the Members of the COVP: Chair, Vice Chair and Council Secretary. No member shall hold more than one office at one time, and the term shall expire June 30 of each year.
 - (a) Election shall be by secret ballot
 - (b) Secretary shall be responsible for counting the ballots.
 - (c) Officers shall assume office immediately upon election.
- 3.02 Removal from office: Any officer may be removed from office by a vote of the COVP under Article IV. Such removal shall not remove the Member from the COVP as a representative of the appointing organization.
- 3.03 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 the COVP. Chair may be a member or ex officio member of COVP sub committees.
- 3.04 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, with the assistance of Department Staff as listed in 2.08, 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.

Article IV: Meetings 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 Open Records.
- 4.02 Under Wis Stat. s 15.09 the Council will meet at least annually. Additionally, the COVP will meet at the call of the Council Chair, by a majority of the appointed and sworn Members or the call of Department Secretary.
- 4.03 Special Meetings may be called under Section 4.01 by the Chair with the concurrence of the Vice Chair and COVP Secretary.
- 4.04 Meeting notices will be published in compliance with Section 4.01 above and on the Council Web page.
- 4.05 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.
- 4.06 At the beginning of the Agenda will be a statement *"The Council may hear briefings, hold discussion and take action on any item on this agenda."*
- 4.07 Quorum: Under Wis Stat s. 15.09 the presence of a majority of the COVP Members as defined in 2.02 above is required to conduct business.
- 4.08 Under Wis Stat s 15.09 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).
- 4.09 Conduct of Meetings will be 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 shall be allowed at every meeting. The placement and time allowed will be established by the Chair.
- 4.11 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 particular WDVA staff member through the Chair who will make the request of and coordinate with the Department Secretary.

- 4.13 No Member may be excluded from legally convened COVP meetings.
- 4.14 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 COVP may designate special committees for specific purposes. The committees will be appointed for a particular task and designated “COVP-AHC- (purpose e.g. legislative)”
- 5.02 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 Following the Committee’s final report the Committee will be dismissed.
- 5.04 AHC committees will follow the rules delineated in Article IV for the complete Council.
- 5.05 A Quorum shall be a majority of the appointed members.

Article VI – Advising Department Secretary and WDVA Board

- 6.01 The council on veterans programs created under s. 15.497 shall advise the board and the department on solutions and policy alternatives relating to the problems of veterans [45.03(3)(a)].
- 6.02 On behalf of the COVP, the Chair (or designate) shall report to the Board and Department on the previous Council meeting at each regular Board meeting.
- 6.03 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 COVP may review, approve, or make recommendations based upon reports and studies offered by various VSOs.
- 7.02 Preparation and submission of Biennial Report: Under Wis Stat s. 45.03(3)(b), 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 of the Council and of each organization with a Member on the Council. The Council Secretary in coordination with Department Staff shall insure preparation and proper distribution of the report.

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 Veterans who make their needs known at a reasonable time in advance of the requested event.
- 8.03 The COVP Members shall be listed on the Council web page.
- 8.04 Records will be maintained in accordance with State Law.

Article IX – Amendments

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

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 a competent jurisdiction to be contrary to law, than 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 Any headings preceding the text of the several articles and sections of the Bylaws and any heading 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.