

Council on Veterans Programs

Meeting Minutes – June 19, 2025 | 10:30am

In-Person at Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls with a Virtual Option

Council Members Present:

Paul F. Fisk	American Legion Dept. of WI
Michelle Matuszak	American Red Cross
Colin Moten	County Veteran Service Officers Assn.
Phillip Landgraf	Marine Corps League
Don Korte, Jr.	Military Officers Assoc. of America
William Sims	National Association for Black Veterans
Scott Griffith	Paralyzed Veterans of America
Nellie De Baker	Polish Legion of American Veterans
Michael Ayers	The Retired Enlisted Association
Jackie Leon	Technical Colleges
Michael Furgal	VFW Department of Wisconsin
Thomas Banner	Vietnam Veterans of America
George Banda	Wisconsin American GI Forum
Michael Panaro	Wisconsin University System
David Zien	WI Assoc. of Concerned Veteran Org.

Absent:

Dale Wiegand	AMVETS
Kim Queen	Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.
William Lobeck	Military Order of the Purple Heart
Matthew Schroeder	WAICU
William Hustad	Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans

Inactive:

United Women Veterans

Others Present (not inclusive):

Jordan Tilleson (VFW)
Terry Shepardson (CF Resident)
Ralph Palmer (CF Resident)
Jeff Lemieux (VFW Post 305)
Chris Cornelius (BOVA/VFW Post 7784)
Terry Doxtator

WDVA Staff Present:

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

Chair Paul Fisk called the meeting to Order at 10:32am. Roll call was taken, 16 members in attendance; a quorum was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes from March 13, 2025 were reviewed:

- MOTION: Phil Landgraf made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Don Korte; minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Staff Assistant Dawn LaFond provided an Administrative Update.

- Appointment/reappointment letters and oaths were sent to Commanders/Presidents in May for the upcoming 07.01.2025-06.30.2028 terms.
- COVP Biennial Reports will be sent within the next few weeks with a request to have the information complete by 09.15.2025 as they are due at the end of September 2025 to the Veterans Legislative Clerks.
- 2025 Public Records and Ethnics training will be provided by WDVA Chief Legal Counsel to those attending the 09.18.2025 meeting. If you miss the meeting, it will be your responsibility to complete the training by the mid-November 2025 due date.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Joseph Hoey provided updates to the Council covering the following topics:

- Senator Jacques bill to expand veterans benefits for Hmong/Lao has passed the full Senate and is out of Committee in the Assembly. Hopefully it will pass and be signed into law soon.
- Legislation to provide matching funds up to \$9M for the War Memorial Center in Milwaukee has been introduced.
- Reported on the status of Governor Evers' FY2025-FY2027 Budget as of June 19th – noting that negotiations were ongoing and subject to change.
 - ACTION: COVP members can individually contact their local Legislators informing them of their priorities for funding for veterans in the upcoming budget.
 - ACTION: Joey to send a budget update after the Budget is passed and signed by the Governor.

Member reports from American Legion, American Red Cross, County Veteran Service Officers Association, Disabled American Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Officers Association of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Polish Legion of American Veterans, The Retired Enlisted Association, University of Wisconsin Systems, VFW Department of Wisconsin, Vietnam Veterans of America, Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organization, and Wisconsin American GI Forum.

- Upcoming events and requests to support, and action items:
 - American Legion | State Convention
 - 07.16.2025-07.20.2025 at Hyatt Regency, Green Bay
 - Military Officers Association of America
 - 07.28.2025 Fundraising | Oneida Golf and Country Club
 - Military Officer's Club of NE Wisconsin (MOC of NEW), the local chapter of MOAA, will be hosting the 12th annual Fred White Memorial Benefit Golf Outing. Annually, this event raises \$75,000+ to be distributed to local 501c3 organizations who support veterans.
 - UW Systems
 - ACTION: Encourage BOVA to reach out to the UW Board of Regents concerning honoring Wisconsin Veterans in taking a portion of Camp Randall Park.
 - Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organization
 - 07.12.2025 Fundraising | Chippewa Falls

- 09.16.2025 Fundraising
 - Gun raffle which will aid in the purchase of 4'x4' screens at Chippewa Falls Veterans Home, Camp Victory and VA Facility
- Vietnam Veterans of America
 - As a veteran's organization that was chartered by Congress, changes will be coming and with number of Vietnam Veterans decreasing, funding will be limited and will be known as the "Vietnam Veterans of America Legacy Society" on national, state and local levels.
 - ACTION: Joey to work with legislative partners to update state statutes to replace VVA with the new organization on the list of COVP member organizations.
- Military Birthdays
 - Cake cutting celebrations in the Rotunda of the State Capitol in recognition of the 250th Anniversary of the three branches of the Military formed in 1775:
 - 10.13.2025 at 12pm-1pm | Navy
 - 11.10.2025 at 12pm-1pm | Marines

Public Comments:

- None

Future Agenda Items:

- Add as standing agenda item: Education on benefits and services available to veterans
 - Heat for Heroes
- Updates from Representative Penterman
- Election of Officers
- ACTION: Provide any future items to Dawn LaFond at dawn.lafond1@dva.wisconsin.gov by 07.31.2025

Next Meetings:

- September 18, 2025 – Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Madison
- December 2025 – TBD

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Nellie DeBaker, second by Don Korte and carried on a vote to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 11:57am.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Fisk, Chair