

**Board on Veterans Affairs**  
**Meeting Minutes – October 23, 2025 at 1:00pm**  
Virtual Meeting

**Council Members Present:**

Pat Beggs	District 1
Christopher Hanson, <i>Chair</i>	District 3
Yolanda Medina	District 5
John Morgen	District 6
Chris Cornelius, <i>Secretary</i>	District 8
Laura Colbert	Member at Large

**Others Present (not inclusive):**

Paul Fisk – American Legion/COVP Chair
Peter Schlecht, UW Madison
Cindy Torstveit, UW Madison
Jason King, UW Madison
Crystal Potts, UW Madison

**Absent:**

Robert Hesselbein	District 2
Tonnetta Carter	District 4

**WDVA Staff Present:**

Joseph Hoey, Asst. Deputy Secretary
Dawn LaFond, Executive Assistant
Mindy Allen, Administrative Rules Coord.

**Vacant:**

District 7

Chair Chris Hanson called the meeting to Order at 1:00pm. Roll call was taken, six (6) members in attendance; a quorum was present

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited

Introduction of attendees was given:

- John Morgen, new BOVA District 6 Member
- University of Wisconsin Athletics Department: Crystal Potts, Jason King, Peter Schlecht and Cindy Torstveit

Minutes from June 19, 2025 meeting were reviewed:

- MOTION: Pat Beggs made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Laura Colbert; minutes were unanimously approved

Executive Staff Assistant Dawn LaFond provided an Administrative Update

- Reminder for those who have not completed Ethics and Public Records Training that this is due 11.15.2025.
  - ACTION: Dawn to work with Chad Koplien to provide an additional option to attend another virtual training.

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

- Discussed the closure of two (2) of WDVA's Veterans Housing Recovery Program (VHRP) sites, necessitated by the Republican controlled legislature's failure to provide the funding in the state budget to keep all three sites open. Noted the partisan back and forth reported in the press and reminded Board members that the vote to put the money back in the budget was bipartisan in the Senate.
- Discussed Senate Bill 411, Senator Jacque's proposal that would lower the threshold for the Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit, fund the UW Missing-in-Action Recovery and Identification Project, and provide \$1.9M for VHRP.
- Reported that the Department is working with the Milwaukee War Memorial Center to facilitate the awarding of the \$5M grant included in the biennial budget.
- Reported that the Department has already awarded the \$2.5M grant to the Veterans Community Tiny Homes for Homeless Veterans Project. Secretary Bond joined the Governor at a groundbreaking event on 10.13.2025 at 6767 North 60<sup>th</sup> Street in Milwaukee.
- Discussed the Veterans Museum and lawsuit and the recently issued Temporary Injunction that will allow the Museum to stay in its current location until the lawsuit is resolved. A bid just went out for an Architectural/Engineering firm to begin the design process which will take approximately two years.

WDVA Administrative Rules Coordinator Mindy Allen gave an update on proposed changes:

- Administrative Rules Chapters VA 8 (CVSO Grants) and VA 15 (TVSO Grants)
  - provided details on the goal of simplifying rules and removing burdensome requirements not found in state statutes.
    - MOTION: Yolanda Medina made a motion to approve the changes to VA 8 and VA 15, second by John Morgen; motion approved unanimously.
    - ACTION: Dawn LaFond to draft letter for Chris Hanson's signature and will forward the final letter to Mindy Allen for distribution to the Legislative Clearinghouse.

#### UW Camp Randall Update

- Members of the UW Camp Randall team provided a PowerPoint presentation with an update on their plan from the last visit on 06.20.2024.
  - Provided information on Focus group which included input from the Veterans Museum and key Veteran Service Organizations who worked with UW on the storytelling, memorabilia and veteran components of the public plaza.
  - Discussed landscaping and removal of one (1) tree with no significant historical value.
  - Discussed placement and condition of flagpoles in the park and in the new Athletic Facility. UW is looking into replacement/upgrade of flagpoles in the park.
  - Discussed two (2) studies in process including relocating and consolidating ROTC Program and Student Veteran Services. Determining whether programs will remain in their current location at the Red Gym or moved to other locations on campus.

- Gave an update on previously approved plan for upgrades to the Engineering Building affecting Camp Randall Arch. This project is expected to start in Summer 2028 and may settle the mystery about a time capsule being hidden inside the arch.
  - ACTION: UW will inform WDVA and/or Museum if a time capsule is found.

COVP Chair Report was provided by Paul Fisk

BOVA Chair Report was provided by Chair Chris Hanson, District 3

- Federal government on furlough and Chris has been mostly attending local region veterans' group meetings as well as Rep Van Orden's Committee
- Update on Future Leaders of the Military where applications used to be around 30, and last time reported it was six (6), but now there are 12 applications and interviews will be conducted this weekend.
- Ft. McCoy Garrison Commander recently was reinstated.
- Worked on the scoring of Nonprofit Grants (NPG) and Entrepreneurial Grants (EPG). All BOVA members are encouraged to work on the scoring, but it is not required.

Board Member District Reports provided by:

- Patt Beggs – District 1
- Yolanda Medina – District 5
- John Morgen – District 6
- Chris Cornelius – District 8
- Laura Colbert – Member at Large

Upcoming events, requests to support and other information:

- 11.01.2026 @6pm, Green Bay Austin Straubel International Airport | Save the Date: 2025 Stars & Stripes Wisconsin Honor Flight *Return of Flight Champions*
- 11.04.2025 @8:30am-12:00pm, Green Bay Johnsonville Tailgate Village | Brave Program Seminar for Veterans
- 11.08.2025 @8:00am-6:00pm, Green Bay K1 Convention Center & Fox River Trail | 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Veteran Suicide Awareness March
- 11.08.2025 @11:00am, Green Bay Yachting Club | 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Veterans Day Commemoration
- 11.11.2025 @8:00am, Green Bay Duck Creek VFW Post 7534 | Veterans Day Breakfast
- 11.11.2025 @8:00am-5:00pm, Hortonville Otter Creek Dental | Veterans' Free Dental Day
- 11.11.2025, Mission BBQ | Veterans get a free sandwich
- 11.11.2025 @10:00am-11:00am, Green Bay Neville Public Museum | Veterans Day Ceremony
- 11.12.2025 @12:00pm-4:00pm, Green Bay Historic Riverside Ballroom | Brown County Job Fair
- 11.15.2025 @2:00pm-5:00pm, Green Bay Townline Pub & Grill | Meat Raffle

## Public Comments

- None

## Future agenda items:

- Topics to be incorporated with COVP
  - WDVA Division of Benefits, Grants Division
  - WDVA Division of Benefits, Veterans Outreach Program (VORP)/Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP)

## Next Meetings:

- December 18, 2025 – Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, 2135 Rimrock Road, Madison
- March, June, September and December 2026 – TBD

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Laura Colbert, second by Pat Beggs and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Hanson, Chair