Meeting Minutes
COUNCIL ON VETERANS PROGRAMS

Meeting Agenda

- Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026
- Time: 11:00am to 12:30pm
- Location: Union Grove Veterans Home, 21425 Spring Street, Union Grove, WI with a virtual option

Members

- Chair | Paul Fisk, American Legion (2026-2029) (Present)
- Vice Chair | Mike Furgal, VFW Dept of Wisconsin (2026-2029) (Absent)
- Secretary | Nellie De Baker, Polish Legion of American Veterans (2025-2028) (Present)
- Dale Wiegand, AMVETS (2026-2029) (Present)
- Colin Moten, County and Tribal Veterans Service Assn (2026-2029) (Absent)
- Larry Hill, Disabled American Veterans (2026-2029) (Absent)
- Kim Queen, Jewish War Veterans (2026-2029) (Present)
- Phillip Landgraf, Marine Corps League (2026-2029) (Present)
- Don Korte, Jr., Military Officers Association of America (2025-2028) (Present)
- William Lobeck, Military Order of the Purple Heart (2024-2027) (Absent)
- William Sims, National Association for Black Veterans (2025-2028) (Present)
- Christina Baurichter, Paralyzed Veterans of America (2024-2027) (Present)
- Jackie Leon, Technical Colleges (2024-2027) (Present)
- Michael Ayers, The Retired Enlisted Association (2025-2028) (Present)
- Michael Panaro III, UW Systems (2024-2027) (Absent)
- Thomas Banner, Vietnam Veterans of America (2025-2028) (Present)
- Matthew Schroeder, WAICU (2024-2027) (Present)
- George Banda, WI GI Forum (2026-2029) (Present)
- David Zien, WACVO (2025-2028) (Present)
- William Hustad, Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans (2024-2027) (Absent)

Inactive Organizations

- American Red Cross
- United Women Veterans

WDVA Staff Present

- Joseph Hoey, Assistant Deputy Secretary
- Dawn LaFond, Executive Staff Assistant
- Ben Spargur, IT

Others Present (not inclusive)

- Damon Dorsey (NABV)
- Richard Daseke (MOPH)
- Patti Banner
- John Morgen (BOVA District 6)
- Yolanda Medina (BOVA District 5)

Meeting Purpose

Please take notice that the Council on Veterans Program will conduct a council meeting and may hear briefings, hold discussion, or act on any item on this agenda. The public is invited to participate.

Agenda Items

Chair Paul Fisk called the meeting to Order at 11:06am. Roll call was taken, 15 members in attendance; a quorum was present

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited

Introduction of other attendees was given:

- Christina Baurichter, new PVA COVP Member
- Richard Daseke, Military order of the Purple Heart, who is covering for Bill Lobeck in his absence

Minutes from March 26, 2026 were reviewed:

- MOTION: Kim Queen made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Dale Wiegand; minutes were unanimously approved

Executive Staff Assistant Dawn LaFond provided an Administrative Update:

- Thank you to COVP members who are attending in person:
    - Lunch following the meeting
    - Meet with leadership
    - Tour of the home, including the new kitchen

    - Opportunity to engage in member activities
- All appointment and oath paperwork has been received for 2026-2029 COVP members whose terms expire 06.30.2026
- WDVA hosting a Mental Health First Aid Course available to veterans, servicemembers and their families:
    - ACTION: Pass on information to those who qualify
    - Dates:
        - June 25-26, 2026
        - July 30-31, 2026
        - August 13-14, 2026
        - August 27-28, 2026

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

- November 2026 elections will have all Assembly Members and half of Senate running for reelection. This is a great opportunity for COVP and veterans to reach out to those running for office to learn their positions and be influential in building support for a number of initiatives that have not yet been enacted
    - Lowering the threshold for claiming the Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit
    - Funding for the UW Missing in Action Recovery and Identification Project
    - Additional funding for services for Homeless veterans
    - New Wisconsin Veterans Museum
- ACTION: Joey Hoey to send resources to COVP on best ways to be effective when contacting those up running for office

- Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee Update. 6 of these specialized panels of lawmakers and citizen experts that investigate specific policy issues with the goal of developing and recommending legislation for the next legislative session will be meeting this fall, one of which is focused on Veteran Benefits. They will review the benefits state law currently provides to veterans and determine whether the term “veteran” should be redefined to provide a more uniform use of the term throughout the statutes.
- ACTION: Joey Hoey to send information on how to track the meetings and progress of the Study Committee.

- Mining Proceeds Proposal Update. Joey Hoey provided an update with respect to legislative proposals that former State Senator Dave Zien introduced over the years directing that profits from the sale of excess state property be used for veterans. These bills could be used as a template for future legislation including specifying that a portion of any state revenue derived from Mining operations be deposited in the Veterans Trust Fund.

- Wisconsin Veterans Museum. The Legislature gave WDVA $6 million and we recently hired HGA and Gallagher – world class firms who have designed museums and cultural centers across the country – who will have preliminary drawings available in 6-7 months. The lawsuit with the current landlord is still ongoing in Waushara County with the next step being a court ordered mediation in July 2026.

Council Member Reports provided by:

- American Legion Department of Wisconsin
- AMVETS
- Jewish War Veterans of the USA
- Marine Corps League
- Military Officers Association of America
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- National Association for Black Veterans
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
    - ACTION: Christina Baurichter, PVA, to look into veterans who were denied benefits, specifically relating to those who may not have had a condition after one year of discharge/separation
- Polish Legion of American Veterans
- Technical Colleges
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- WAICU
- Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organization
- Wisconsin American GI Forum

Upcoming events and requests to support:

- 07.16.2026-07.19.2026 | Wisconsin American Legion State Convention at the Hilton Appleton Paper Valley
- 09.12.2026 | Polish League of America Veterans meeting
- 09.19.2026 | The Retired Enlisted Association membership meeting in Providence, RI

Public Comments

- John Morgan, BOVA District 6 | John was recently named Executive Director of the National Guard Association
    - Great opportunity for VSOs to work together with respect to expanding veterans benefits

- Yolanda Medina, BOVA District 5 | Mexican Fiesta on 08.21.2026-08.23.2026 at Henry W. Maier Festival Park, Milwaukee (Summerfest Grounds) *https://www.mexicanfiesta.org/admission-information/*
    - If anyone is interested in a booth, contact Yolanda at *medinay@uwm.edu*

Future agenda items:

- September 2026: Election of Officers
- September 2026: Update to Camp Randall Veterans Project
- TBD: Heat for Heroes
- TBD: Fisher House in Middleton
    - ACTION: Joey Hoey to contact Fisher House for more information
- TBD: Wisconsin Department of Tourism update on activities, along with potential improvements to promote veteran sites, events and activities.

Upcoming Meetings:

- September 17, 2026 – UW Camp Randall
- December 2026 – Wisconsin Veterans Museum
- March 2026 – TBD
- June 2027 – Tentative at King

Moton to adjourn the meeting was moved by Kim Queen, second by Dale Wiegand and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Fisk, Chair