COUNTY OF OSCEOLA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Veterans Services Adhoc Committee

AGENDA

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

10:30 a.m.

Board of Commissioners Room
2nd Floor
Osceola County Courthouse
301 West Upton Avenue
Reed City, Michigan 49677

1. Meeting Called to Order by Chairman.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda – Approval of the Agenda.


4. Committee Member Comments.

5. Approval of the Minutes of June 9, 2015.

6. Old Business.
   a. Discuss Current and Future Veteran’s Services and Staffing for Osceola County.


8. Committee Member Comments.

9. Extended Public Comments (Six Minute Limit).

10. Adjournment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Committee welcomes public comment. We appreciate your attendance and look forward to hearing any concerns you may have. We request that the following rules of procedure be followed: At the beginning and at the end of each Committee meeting, there is time to receive public comment from the audience. If you wish to address the Committee, we ask that you stand, give your name and present your concern. If you wish to speak while the Committee is addressing a specific issue, you are asked to make arrangements ahead of time with the Committee Chairperson. No comments or questions will be taken at any other time.

If you should require special assistance in order to attend the meeting, please notify the County Coordinator at (231) 832-6196, twenty-four (24) hours before the posted meeting time, for arrangements to be made.
COUNTY OF OSCEOLA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Veterans Services Adhoc Committee

MINUTES
Tuesday, June 9, 2015

Meeting Called to Order by Chairperson Emig at 10:32 a.m.

**Members Present:** Commissioner Larry Emig, Commissioner Jack Nehmer, Scott Schryer – C.O.A. Director, Sara Youngs – Chief Deputy County Clerk, Dan Massy – Community Developer, Paul Griffith – Michigan Works SWC and Susan Vander Pol – County Coordinator.

**Member Absent:** Russ Nehmer (excused)

**Public:** Mike Wyman-Michigan Works SWC.

**Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:** None.

**Agenda Approval:** Motion by Commissioner Jack Nehmer, supported by Scott Schryer, to approve the agenda. Motion was unanimously approved.

**Public Comments:** Mr. Wyman was in attendance with Mr. Griffith and he is familiar with some of the programs for veterans currently offered.

**Committee Member Comments:** Commissioner Emig gave an overview of the purpose of the Adhoc Committee.

**Veteran’s Services and Staffing:** Commissioner Emig provided some history of what the Board of Commissioners has been discussing in providing services to the veterans in Osceola County. The County currently has a Soldiers and Sailors Board, Veteran’s Trust Fund and provides burial and marker benefits.

Susan Vander Pol shared information regarding the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency requirements to receive the one-time $20,000 grant. An individual would need to be hired (Veterans Service Officer) or contracted who is accredited or will be accredited before September 15, 2015 and intent to have a permanent Department of Veterans Affairs provided. There would be 3 to 5 veterans appointed to oversee the department and Veterans Service Officer. Discussion was held on challenges that would be faced in completing this before September 15th, as well as oversight of the Veterans Services Officer and program if it is not under the Board of Commissioners.

Paul Griffith shared information on programs and staffing he is aware of that other counties are providing, as well as services the Michigan Works location could provide for an individual at their Reed City location.
Veterans Services Adhoc Committee
June 9, 2015
Page 2

Information was provided by other committee members on their knowledge of programs offered for veterans and what other counties or veterans offices are doing. Sara Youngs mentioned it would be beneficial if the County were able to find a person who would perform the functions of a navigator to assist the veterans in finding programs and help with the coordination and paperwork involved to obtain benefits.

Additional discussion was held on whether it would be in the County’s best interest to accept the $20,000 grant or because of restrictions, establish their own office, staff and programs. The following recommendation was made:

**Recommended by Commissioner Nehmer, supported by Scott Schryer, to not accept the State of Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency one-time grant of $20,000. Recommendation was unanimously supported.**

Susan was asked to obtain job descriptions or independent contractor agreements from other counties, find out if the State will be providing other training for accreditation and staffing levels (full-or part-time) the surrounding counties have.

Additional discussion was held on having an employee versus a contracted service for the Veterans Officer position as well as potential hours worked.

The Committee set the day of Tuesday, June 30th at 10:30 a.m. for their next meeting.

**Committee Member Comments:** None.

**Extended Public Comments:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Nehmer, supported by Scott Schryer, to adjourn at 11:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Susan M. Vander Pol
Osceola County Coordinator
Oceana County

Department of Veteran's Affairs

Employment Opportunity

County Veteran's Service Officer.

OUR MISSION: "TO CARE FOR HIM WHO SHALL HAVE BORNE THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW, AND HIS ORPHAN" – BY SERVING AND HONORING THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE AMERICA'S VETERANS. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A PART OF A TEAM PROVIDING COMPASSIONATE CARE TO VETERANS?

The Veterans’ Service Officer (VSO) is the primary intake officer for all claims filed with the US Department Veterans’ Affairs (VA) and with the county veteran’s relief program. The VSO advises and assists claimants who are applying for compensation and pension benefits from the VA, as well as other services such as Medical, GI Bill, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The successful candidate will represent the claimant at all VA appeals hearings, to include the U. S. Court of Veteran’s Appeals. The successful candidate will also assist the claimant(s) with securing community assistance if available. The successful candidate will maintain a comprehensive records system, attend meetings of the OCDVA Board Meetings, and represent the Department at community affairs functions, and handle the day-to-day affairs of the Department.

The successful candidate will be expected to attend and successfully complete VSO Certification Training in Reno, NV in June, 2013.

All interested candidates should submit their cover letter, resume, and college transcripts by sending them to: OCDVA Board, PO Box 709, Hart, MI 49430-0709. Deadline for all applications is March 16, 2013.

Please Note: This position has a position sensitivity level of public trust-high risk. Selections made under this announcement are conditioned upon favorable adjudication of a background investigation (bi)

A full announcement is available in the Department office.

EEO
MECOSTA COUNTY

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

General Summary

Under the direction of the County Administrator, coordinates the provision of assistance to veterans, their survivors and dependents in applying for various veterans benefits. Assesses, develops, and processes claims for benefits from the Veterans Administration and the State of Michigan for veterans and their families. Administers the Veterans Trust Fund, the Veterans Relief Fund and the County Burial Fund. Interviews and assists veterans and their dependents regarding benefits and other issues.

Essential Functions

1. Plans, develops and implements policies and procedures to guide departmental operations and to assist veterans and their dependents obtain benefits they are entitled to under various local, state, and federal laws and programs.

2. Regularly interviews and assists veterans, their survivors and dependents secure benefits under programs providing assistance to veterans such as: service connected disability, disability pension, survivors pension, death benefits, education, medical/psychological benefits, to include advocating proper treatment.

3. Regularly assists in preparing claims and supporting documents, researches and assembles evidence and otherwise documents claims applications. Ensures veterans have discharge papers and other necessary documentation.

4. Reviews medical records in order to advise veterans whether disability will be recognized by the Veterans Administration and works with client to gather medical evidence to support claims. Explains the requirement of the Veterans Administration. Advises on the need for medical professionals to provide clear opinions to be used in claims for disability compensation and health benefits.

5. Reviews Veterans Administration’s claim decisions in order to ensure that the veteran, surviving spouse or dependant were awarded proper benefits as established by current legislation. Prepares and directs the preparation of appeals. Researches for precedents, medical evidence and laws to support the appeal.

6. Oversees and operates the County Veterans Burial Fund to provide an allowance for the burials of eligible wartime veterans and dependents and for installation of a grave marker. Authorizes payment service requirements and asset limitations are met.

7. Oversees and operates the County branch of the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund and the County Veterans Relief Fund. Assists veterans and dependents by providing for

Veterans Service Officer.doc(4/05/07)
MECOSTA COUNTY

housing, food, utilities, prescriptions, transportation and other needs. Conducts intake interviews with applicants for emergency grant assistance. Serves as authorized agent for the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund. Maintains and monitors the records for these funds.

8. Interviews veterans with medical, psychological and alcohol/drug problems and advises on the availability of treatment and hospitalization, and works in coordination with various agencies to arrange admissions, transportation, and custody in emergency situations.

9. Analyzes and interprets new and pending legislation pertaining to veterans. Prepares reactions or gathers information as necessary to respond to such legislation. Provides technical expertise on veteran's benefits and entitlements to the Board of Commissioners and other county veteran organizations.

10. Stays abreast of services available through community agencies and refers veterans to those agencies as appropriate. Coordinates efforts with other human service agencies. Makes referrals to DHS, CMH and other service providers.

11. Establishes and maintains current department reference library of federal, state, and local veterans laws, codes, manuals, and judicial decisions.

12. Attends federal, state and county conferences and seminars in order to stay current and informed on veteran issues, including new legislation and changes in eligibility requirements. Maintains liaison with other community agencies and veteran organizations.

Other Functions

1. None listed.

An employee in this position may be called upon to do any or all of the above tasks. (These examples do not include all of the tasks which the employees may be expected to perform.)

Employment Qualifications

Education: Prefer some college level coursework in psychology, social work, counseling, or related area of social services.
MECOSTA COUNTY

Experience: Experience providing familiarity with researching, developing, documenting and investigating claims. Prefer experience in an agency dealing with veterans issues.

Other Requirements:

The qualifications listed above are intended to represent the minimum skills and experience levels associated with performing the duties and responsibilities contained in this job description. The qualifications should not be viewed as expressing absolute employment or promotional standards, but as general guidelines that should be considered along with other job-related selection or promotional criteria.

Physical Requirements: [This job requires the ability to perform the essential functions contained in this description. These include, but are not limited to, the following requirements. Reasonable accommodations will be made for otherwise qualified applicants unable to fulfill one or more of these requirements]:

Ability to access office files.
Ability to enter and retrieve information from computer.
Driving to various sites to conduct visits.

Working Conditions:

Typically works in office conditions but travels to make visits, attend meetings and perform other job functions.
Exposure to individuals with various emotional/mental problems.

Fair Labor Standards Act Status: Hourly (Non-Exempt)

Mecosta County is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer