COUNTY OF OSCEOLA  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  

Veterans Services Adhoc Committee  

MINUTES  
Tuesday, June 30, 2015  

Meeting Called to Order by Chairperson Emig at 10:33 a.m.  

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

**Member Absent:** None.  

**Public Comments:** Wayne Stevens asked questions on services and the job position. Joanne Lemieux, Project Starburst, asked questions and mentioned services her program provides for both Mecosta and Osceola counties. Renee Haley spoke about the program in Clare County and ideas she thought would benefit Osceola County.  

**Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:** Chairman Emig thought it would be best to add Renee Haley, Director, Clare County Veterans Services to the agenda to allow more time for her to share information with the Committee.  

**Agenda Approval:** Motion by Commissioner Jack Nehmer, supported by Dan Massy to approve the agenda as amended. Motion was unanimously approved.  

**Committee Member Comments:** None.  

**Renee Haley, Director Veteran’s Services and Staffing:** Ms. Haley provided information on the differences and functions of a Service Officer and a County Counselor. She serves in both roles for Clare County. Service Officers assist the veterans, but are not accredited for filing claims. They don’t have access to a lot of the information after a claim is filed. Veterans Officers/County Counselors do a whole lot more. She spoke about the various available programs and how Clare County operates. She sees veterans from other counties. She is a member of the Michigan and National Associations for Veterans Officers. There are certifications and accreditation options available to employees. Ms. Haley spoke about her staffing, programs, operations of a Veterans’ Trust Committee, Soldiers and Sailors Committee, accreditation, processing claims utilizing the State’s software program, local funding claims processes and advocating for the veterans. A brief discussion was held on a House Bill that was introduced to regionalize some services for veterans. This would be a loss of local control.  

Discussion was held on possible funding options the County would have to cover the expenditures of a veteran’s position and having an employee or contracted service. Discussion was held on what the County would look for in a counselor. The members felt it would be very important that this position be filled with someone who is a veteran.  

Scott Schryer mentioned the work being done currently with veterans through our Commission on Aging department. Having a counselor position with the County would also assist his programs.
Discussion was held on claims and how they are processed as well as meetings of the committees. The Veterans Trust and Soldiers and Sailors meetings to review claims are not open meetings as confidential veterans and claims information is shared. They don’t fall under the Opens Meetings Act.

Additional discussion was held on the grant from the State of Michigan. At this time the members still feel the grant should not be accepted from the State.

Additional discussion was held on creating a position and potential work hours. If part-time and depending on funding appropriated from the Board, the employee could work up to 29 hours a week. It was felt the position needs to obtain the accreditation status necessary to file claims and advocate for the veterans. The position would be a department level position, classified similarly like other appointed department heads and would fall under the supervision of the County Coordinator. The Committee feels the position, as in Clare County, would be received well if it was called a Director. The interview process for a position was briefly discussed. The following recommendation was made:

**Recommended by Paul Griffith, supported by Commissioner Jack Nehmer to create a part-time County position of Osceola County Veterans’ Services Director. Recommendation was unanimously supported.**

Susan Vander Pol was asked to work on a job description for the position. Renee will send her a copy of the one she follows in Clare County, as well as we have information available from Mecosta County. Scott Schryer and Sara Youngs offered to help review the job description draft.

**Committee Member Comments:** None.

**Extended Public Comments:**

Dave Blanchard shared thoughts on what he felt were important functions of a veterans’ position.

Mr. Stevens asked Mr. Griffith if the spot at Michigan Works would also be available for the veterans groups (such as VFW) to come in and meet with veterans. Mr. Griffith will look into this.

Motion by Scott Schryer, supported by Commissioner Jack Nehmer to adjourn at 12:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Susan M. Vander Pol
Osceola County Coordinator