



901 S. 11th Street, Springfield, IL 62703 | Phone (217) 753-6680 | www.vacsangamon.org



Superintendent: pending | Chairman: Shawn Miller | Vice Chairman: Bill Mowder | Secretary: Rose Connolly | Provost: Jay Hoffman

I. Call to order the Veterans Assistance Commission was publicly held at American Legion Post 32 on April 17, 2024 by president, Shawn Miller. The proceedings were held in accordance with Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/) with notices emailed to voting members and public notice given via social media (Facebook) and the VAC website (vacsangamon.org).

- a) The Call to Order was made by VAC Chairman, Shawn Miller at 7PM
- b) The Salute of the Colors was given by VAC Vice Chairman, Jay Hoffman.
- c) The Pledge of Allegiance was directed by VAC Provost, Jay Hoffman.
- d) The Roll Call was taken by acting VAC Secretary, Tim Kennedy.
- e) The Quorum was confirmed by acting VAC Secretary, Tim Kennedy.

II. Attendees

Voting members in attendance and not in attendance:

Organization	Member's Name	Role	Email	present
American Legion #32	William Mowder	Delegate	mowderbill@yahoo.com	x
Springfield	Cynthia Robbins	Alternate	jacwr08@yahoo.com	x
American Legion #274	Gael Kent	Delegate	ilamleg.post274@gmail.com	absent
Rochester		Alternate		

American Legion #277	John Dautel	Delegate	lucky_59@comcast.net	x
Auburn	Anthony Bellin	Alternate	adb3579@gmail.com	x
American Legion #278	Paul Bell	Delegate		absent
Divernon	James Ayers	Alternate		absent
American Legion #759	Rose Connolly	Delegate	rose.rose@gmail.com	excused
Chatham	Les Morgan	Alternate	asarge@peoplepc.com	X Also Iris Kkirschner
American Legion #809	Michael Johnson	Delegate	michaelj_40160@yahoo.com	
	Delmar Flournoy	Alternate	flourneydelmer@gmail.com	x
AmVets #94	Larry Miller	Delegate	lrmsvm@comcast480	x
	Tammy Harmony	Alternate	faraway84@hotmail.com	x
Catholic War Vets #1916	Timothy Kennedy	Delegate	mrdd65@comcast.net	x
	Dale Smith	Alternate	shelby71@sbcglobal.net	
Italian America War Veterans	Mike Palazzolo	Delegate		absent
		Alternate		
Marine Corp League	Dan Davis	Delegate	mcl5thdistrict@gmail.com	x
	Sue Gibbons	Alternate	sgibb1@uis.edu	
Military Order of the Purple Heart	Dan Wellman	Delegate	d.wellmann@sbcglobal.net	x
		Alternate		
Navy Club Ship #32	Phil Brown	Delegate	pwbsg752@gmail.com	

	Michael Alwood	Alternate	subnuker@gmail.com	
VFW #755	Joshua Seed	Delegate	jseed22@yahoo.com	x
	Dale Abbott	Alternate	dale3413591@gmail.com	
VFW #4763	Kimberly Yantis	Delegate	kimberlyfuiten@yahoo.com	
Chatham	Jayson Hoffman	Alternate	jay_713@hotmail.com	x
VFW #10302	Michael Woodcox	Delegate	mwoodcox48@gmail.com	x
	Larry Carter	Alternate		
VFW #11463	James Duban	Delegate	jbuban@aol.com	x
Rochester	Kyle Blumhorst	Alternate	kyleblumhorst@yahoo.com	

Guest attendees included: [Jan Kuhl](#), [Dwayne Fox](#), [Tim Krell](#) [county board office].

An Affirmation was set forth to ensure we accounted for guests and those that wanted to speak with a sign in and rules to speak to the board. The Affirmation was approved by all delegates.

III. Approval of minutes

The previous quarter's minutes from Jan 17, 2024 were read by Tim Kennedy (NOTE THE MINUTES ARE NOT posted publicly (www.vacsangamon.org) due to the website change from myvac.org to vacsangamon.org). A correction of a last name of an attendee "Krell" and Dan Davis was not present at the Jan meeting marked incorrectly. Hard copies were distributed to those present. [Minutes were approved as corrected by Bill Mowder and Tim Kennedy.](#)

Jay provided an affirmation before the meeting proceeds about addressing the board and comment time limits and written notice in advance of the meeting to be on the agenda. Speakers area allowed handouts and audiovisual support material. Disruptive behavior is prohibited. Rules are effective at this meeting with one disagreement to the rules by a guest in attendance. Public comments at the end of the agenda. All speakers are to address the

board. Public can sign up to speak on the day of the quarterly meeting. Tim Krell is part of this board as a member of the seat but not a vote.

IV. Superintendent Report

(14:15 - 20:13)

The Superintendents Quarterly Report was covered by Superintendent Asti Dawson. Assistant Superintendent interviews conducted.

Quarterly report was discussed in comparison with the previous quarter.

She has partnered with Peoria, Logan and Macon County Veterans Assistance Commissions.

Outreach: Salvation Army, UIS, IDVA, military veterans resource director, Sangamon county probation court and veterans treatment court, Champagne substance abuse department. VFW 755, 10302 and Amvets 94 have participated at those meetings. Peoria VAC quarterly meeting attended. Camp Butler meeting is scheduled for some background information. The DAV van was going to be removed and has been restored to a shared working relationship.

Buildings and Grounds with Sangamon county

Financial assistance statistics to veterans were passed out. Special cases to help those within time limit needs.

Volunteer drivers recruitment is ongoing. Currently we have 2 drivers.

VSO accreditation status for the staff plan was laid out.

Motion of Supt report as read approved. Hard copies were distributed to those present and publicly posted (vacsagamon.org). Motion to accept the report was moved and approved by Bill Mowder and Tim Kennedy.

V. New business

A Committee was chosen to interview the Assistant Superintendent applicants consisting of Jay Hoffman (committee chair), Bill Mowder, Dan Davis, and Mike Woodcox (alternate).

NOTE: it was determined later that a committee was not needed according to our by-laws.

Reach out committee was formed in accordance with our by-laws: Josh Seed and Larry Miller.

Reach out committee: Units that have not been attending according to the Veterans Assistance Act (MVAA). ITAM and the Rochester American Legion units have not been attending.

Letter to Landlord - Jan 18, 2024 a memo was signed by Jeff VanZuden terminating the lease. Landlord said in a letter that he is due rental fees. On Nov 13, 2023, Joel Bennet ASA of Sangamon County memo told VAC a lease was signed without following Sangamon County

directions and they need to talk about it immediately. Landlord is seeking monetary value from the VAC after they broke the lease. It was motioned and approved to discuss with our lawyer about this situation and follow his direction.

Discussion funding:

On April 16, 2024 a letter was sent to Sangamon County requesting them to provide funding to the VAC for the minimum .02% entitled in the Military Veterans Assistance Act. VAC Chairman received a letter from Sangamon County that officially stated there is no valid reason for the increase. Sangamon County's letter also mentioned they are willing to talk with our attorney, but mentioned the county would not pay the cost of an attorney. Shawn asked for a motion to formally hire an attorney from our general fund currently available. Rates were \$275 per hour and up.

According to the MVAA the VAC should be its own entity, and our board shouldn't have to ask for funding from the county unless we spend more than .02% of the levies. County still wants to determine our funding based on what they believe our needs are. According to the act, the superintendent can make declarations of needs. So far, Lake, Cook, Peoria and Grundy counties have had to get a lawyer to get through this funding. Motion on the floor by Josh Seed and seconded by Tim Kennedy. Motion made for a FOIA request where funding is the process and hire our representative, Josh Herman. Motion passed. Shawn will take care of FOIA requests. Pursue FOIA attorney general find out where our funding is in the process and hire Mr Herman. Motion carried.

(1:02 -1:04)

Conflict of interest defined at the board level or special committees. You are a veteran, and your post commander has assigned you to the VAC and thus eligible to be on a committee. We don't care where you work.

VI. Unfinished business

(1:04 - 1:08)

Cynthia Robbins reported on a committee she chaired from Dec 5, 2023 of which we looked at a complaint against a VSO at the VAC. No direct action was needed since that VSO was no longer with the commission. The complainant rescinded his complaint due to personnel changes that no longer are pertinent to this complaint per letter. Committee discussed how to keep this from happening again. To develop a mission statement and develop a personnel handbook to include a code of conduct. Regular case reviews of personal files is necessary to check for things that shouldn't be there. Shawn Miller thanked the committee.

(1:08- 1:12)

Ashti discusses the survey and is open to hear whatever you have to say.

(1:12 - 1:23)

Public Comments Jan and Duane

Duane Fox was given the floor for 15 minutes based on the agenda by Chairman Shawn Miller. Duane had an issue with the reason stated in the termination letter. The reason given was “conduct and demeanor is unbecoming of a VAC as unethical fairness equality and professional performance” and questioned that as a valid reason. He was Terminated Jan 29 after 3 and a half years without blemish. He did not feel the reason had significant substance for termination based on stats and runner up as VSO of the year. He argued that he was fired by Ashti who was not on the payroll. Willingness to work with the newly appointed superintendent was brought up. Jeff was also terminated the same day.

He argued that Dane signed a lease on Oct 23, 2023, just two weeks after the new by laws. A committee member said Duane went behind a potential bosses' back (Ashti) saying he wouldn't work for her during a closed meeting on 24 Jan with asst state attorney, Brian McFadden and Charlie Stratton creating an adversarial work environment.

He let them know VAC agreements with a draft grievance against the board for the selection. Duane admitted he felt anger and left the meeting quietly when he heard of her selection. Word had gotten back to members of the commission. Question the hiring committee.

(1:26 thru 1:40:50)

Jan was given the floor for 15 minutes. Her husband had Parkinson's from Agent Orange. She supported Duane for his respect to her husband and she passed out his business card. She had written a letter of recommendation for Duane for the superintendent position. She was in tears to hear when Duane was let go. She was upset about being referred to an out-of-town VSO because the young man answering the phone did not have the training. She stated that she had made phone calls and planned to make more complaint calls regarding her handling of her husband's case. She wants the commission to apologize to the three let go. Her husband was the son of a WW2 major. Tom was an only child. Shawn thanked her for her husband's service and father-in-law's service and the commission was listening and assured her that her comments would be in our minutes.

Tim Krell said he was a 23 year member of the Springfield fire department, life long veteran of AMVETS 94, was in The Army as a Sgt, and his brother Dale wounded with a purple heart. Dale was wounded a month before being killed. He has had experience as a chair on a county committee. He hopes we get things resolved money-wise and spend it wisely.

VII. Announcements (For the Good of the Commission)

A. 36th Annual Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial Vigil - May 3-5, 2024 - May 3 Dinner
American Legion Post 32 - May 4 11am, Opening Ceremonies Oak Ridge Cemetery - May 5 6pm

- VFW 10302 Hors d'oeuvres and Entertainment - May 5 11 am Closing Ceremonies Oak Ridge Cemetery
- B. April 20 12:30 pm - 17th Annual Hippy Run - Sign up 11:30am VFW 10302
- C. May 4 Day of Service VFW - Chatham VFW Food Drive
- D. May 14 - Land of Lincoln Honor Flight
- E. May 17 - Armed Forces Day Quincy Home BBQ
- F. July 2 - Military Appreciation Day Springfield Lucky Horseshoes
- G. September 28 - 8am - Spaulding Veterans Memorial Golf Fundraiser

VIII. Closing of Affairs

- a) The Retiring of the Colors was conducted by Provost Marshall, Jay Hoffman.
- b) The next Public VAC Meeting was pronounced by acting VAC Secretary, Tim Kennedy July 17, 2024, will be held at VFW Post 4763. October 16, 2024, meeting will be at VFW 755.
- c) The Meeting Adjournment was made by VAC Chairman, Shawn at 8:58 PM.

Recorded and given by,

Tim Kennedy

Tim Kennedy, Acting Secretary of the VAC

Date of approval