

VA Commissioners Monthly Meeting Minutes for August 21, 2023

Mike Gibbs, VA commissioner, called the monthly VA Commissioners meeting to order at the Human Services Building on August 21, 2023 at 5:10PM. The pledge of allegiance was recited. Those in attendance were: Mike Gibbs, Daryl Heldt per phone, Roger Plath per phone, Steve Cunningham, and Darlene Doerder. No guests were present.

Minutes of the July 17, 2023 and July 2023 financials were electronically provided to all commissioners. Roger made the motion to approve the July 17, 2023 minutes and Daryl seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mike made the motion to approve the July 2023 financials. Daryl seconded the motion to approve financials. Motion carried. Financials were signed by all.

Director's Report/ Old Business:

Steve reviewed the Report of Activities Allocation Program for Veterans FY 23 that was submitted to Melissa Miller on Monday, July 31, 2023. This is the detailed 481 report of how the \$10,000 Boone county money provided by the state legislature was spent. All money was spent on outreach, supplies, and equipment. See attached report.

A VA application log is being successfully utilized to follow up on file claims, initialized (claim started), keeps current on status of claim, and has caught VA mistakes prior to being adjudicated.

Steve has been researching possible resources and he would like to utilize a data base in the future for our veterans.

Steve shared that the VA office and staff have been busy, busy, busy. Between July 28- August 2, 2023 there were 61 new voice mails. The 61 number does not include all of the calls that were answered without going to voice mail. Steve would like to add a 10 hour per week staff member next year. Alice does a great job of following up on voice mails, she lightens Steve's load and speeds up the call back time.

Many thanks to the Boone VFW and American Legion that donated 15 \$25 Fareway cards and 15 \$25 Casey's cards to the local VA office for distribution to Veterans in need. It is a great resource to have available. The Veterans on the receiving end have been very appreciative.

Steve submitted an expanded service claim for a veteran for tinnitus and hearing loss. His claim increased his percentage to 70% and increased his monthly benefits. Steve finds that he has to coach his veterans to own up to actual ailments, such as hearing loss, migraines, PTSD, mental health issues, memory loss. Veterans have a tendency to minimize their health issues and thus not receive the full benefits that they should be getting. Boone county is having veterans come to Boone to file claims. Boone Veterans are sharing their success stories with other veterans and the result is an increase of applications from other counties.

Steve shared that the VA staff is catching situations before the 90 days are up thanks to the VBMS tool. VBMS has been a great asset and tool in the tool box for claims.

We do not have the license plates yet for the VA medical van. Working with Lauren Novak, Boone County Treasurer, to get handicap tags for the VA van. It would make parking and hopefully walking distance much shorter for the disabled veterans that are being transported.

No updates on the joint military building.

October 31, 2023 has been selected as the date for the Fall VA Fair. The day of the week has been changed to a Tuesday in hopes that the BOS and other elected officials would be able to attend.

The commissioners would like to see the joint military building be a location source and drawing card to get a VA CBOC (Community Based Outreach Center) located in Boone. Mike will be in contact with Fred Greiner regarding the joint military building and a CBOC center. At his quarterly meetings with the BOS, Steve will share what the commissioners and local staff are doing to draw the CBOC to

Boone. Steve will ask the BOS for their support of the CBOC and whatever outreach they can do to facilitate Boone as a viable location.

New Business: None

Open Forum:

Daryl- " I like what Steve is doing for the Veterans. The number of voice mails indicates how busy Steve is. "

Mike-" Keep going Steve, follow up is good. The system is working."

Roger- " Steve is very thorough, which takes a lot of time. One of Steve's attributes is patience, patience for follow thru and successful claims. "

Daryl made the motion to adjourn, Roger seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:50PM.

Next meeting is Monday, September 18, 2023 at 10:00AM at the Human Services Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Doerder