

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY  
COMMISSION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS  
MPR Room  
Special MEETING

March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
5:00 pm

## **AGENDA**

*Meeting called to order by Chairman Jacobs.*

Pledge of Allegiance

*Roll Call – Commissioners, Phil Jacobs, Ellen Fritz, Bob Jorgensen, Jesse Shea, Skyler Dooley; staff, Darlene McMartin, Pam Wilke and Lori Swisher; Supervisors, Tim Wichman and Scott Belt; County Employee Jan Lemrick/Director, Human Resources. Donna Barr, Senator Grassley’s office, Guests that signed in; Ed Kerns, Al Ruby, Cindy Ruby, Brad Powell, Ben Wiese, Nick Jedlicka, Penny Jedlicka, Jenny Lidgett, James Wayman, Dick Ryba and Russ Slate.*

**The purpose of the meeting was brought to the table was for the purpose of discussion and decision on Director/Administrator position to be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for approval. Per Iowa Code 35B.6.**

**Phil Jacobs opened the meeting for public comments stating that they would be limited to 5 minutes.**

**Staff Lori Swisher wished to address the board, She started with thanking Darlene for her leadership and emphasis on education to provid the tools to do our job and mostly for her open door policy.**

**We are welcoming whoever will be the new hire and looking forward to seeing what the next adventure will be.**

**To those who will be making this decision I hope you sole search for the best fit for the office and how it runs. Rumors, speculation and statement that have left the current staff feeling uneasy. Approximately 1 ½ years ago the past president of NACVSO was approached at a NACO conference to see if he would be interested in coming and training the director and new staff at our office.**

**My husband Steve has been a part of the National Guard for 42 years. He has been approached numerous times by fellow guardsman on Darlene’s retirement date and when I would be retiring and as of a few weeks ago if I was applying for Darlene’s job. We have received many office calls and inquiries on these same items. We have had people come into the office off the street and want to apply for our jobs (this was happening long before Darlene’s job was posted). None of the current staff meets the rule of 88 in order for us to obtain full retirement. We do not plan on retiring. We are human being trying to live life the best we can, 2 of us have upcoming weddings and losing our jobs would cause a hardship. Again and repeatedly we have been told theses are rumors and untrue statement. I love my job and being able to work with veterans and their families. We are a very good team, but we have also been told that young blood is needed. But don’t rule us out we’re not quite ready for “the home” just yet.**

**Director Darlene McMartin, addressed the Commissioners stating that she has worked for the county as the director for the past 27. ½ almost 28 years she presented the Commission with the job description that had been posted and approved by HR and stressed the requirements of the position on the Federal level above what the counties requirements might be. She stressed that we all enjoy working with veterans regardless of age and stature in life, homeless, incarcerated, nursing home and also the widows.**

**Look at the job description, the education the training necessary to do the job. If they already have the skillsets and training all the better that is what we would like and need to start the job, no one will come into the job with all the skillsets to do the job, you will learn every day, I still learn every day what it takes to do the job. This is a career not just a job.**

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Public comment was made as to following the job description to use to make the best selection for the position. Comments were made that the staff isn't going to lose their jobs. The process to select and the process to terminate if they wouldn't do their job for just cause.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that the Commissioners are the selecting body to choose the director at the prior meeting the Commission was deadlocked two for and two against.

Public comments were made as to concerns as to how the selection of the applicants was made. Four individuals were chosen to be interviewed.

Discussion was held by the Commissioner Bob Jorgensen stated that passion, career, love, best all in the interest of the veterans of Pottawattamie County, those words will guide my vote.

Ellen Fritz wanting to focus on the staff that stated that what is important to me is someone who has the experience, education of how the county VA office works, skills training, that is what the veterans need, we are not hear for a popularity contest we are here to support the veterans and the community. I will be supporting my decision.

Sklyer Dooley stated that it seems we are in the same spot we were the other day, we need to figure out how to move forward, not to look to the past. We need to figure out how to fill this position. I see 3 options,

1. Approve the selection of Nick Jedlika and vote to send his name forward to the Board of Supervisors
2. What until Darlene is gone on July 1st and with a new board member they could choose the new person and that person would then choose the selection that was fair
3. Vote 2 to 2 again and then the Supervisors could vote to eliminate commissioner since we aren't doing our job.

We have no way to break the tie. I do not support any type of movement other that

Jesse Shea – questioned the process decided on 4 Commission members, board of Supervisors and HR Director as the interview team. The agreement made at the end of the interview process was not what Ellen Fritz questioned the interviewing process. Why HR had a vote, comments made by others on the interviewing team that had nothing to do with the job description. Ellen and Bob stated that they made their thoughts known that they did not approve of the selection that was made.

To move forward legally and fair.

Ellen Fritz We need to get the right person if that is what it takes to help the veteran community.

A selection was made at the interview process.

Most discussion was made about the interview process as to being basis from the Commissioners and the supervisors.

Votes are not changing.

Bob Jorgensen suggested that if the commission would pick another name from the applicants other than the one that has been recommended I will vote for either of them. Dooley stated that all 4 would be qualified.

Dooley stated that he didn't think we could legally choose anyone other than the one recommended. I don't know if what we can do to avoid lawsuit. We have to move forward with that name.

Public discussion was made.

Motion by Dooley, Second by Shea to accept Nick Jedlicka, motion denied by Fritz and Jorgensen.

Further discussion was held by public, as to qualification necessary to the job not use the good old boy system to choose the position. Fear that the right person will not be picked for the job.

Tim Wichman, explained the process for the interviews, and stated that the one Mr. Dooley and Shea chose is in the room. Nick Jedlicka introduced himself to the group and stated that I feel I am being

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**treated unfairly, he says he has been researching this position for over a year since I have not been working. I did call Justin Schultz to get information as to the job and did go to the state and another County VA office to review the office, for rules and other things not in code.**

**Discussion from public was made.**

**Chairman Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.**