

**POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY
COMMISSION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

Monday August 10, 2026 @ 3:00

MPR Room Pottawattamie County Veteran Service Office

MINUTES

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call - Holly Collins, Chairwoman; David Hazlewood, Secretary; Mick Gutttau, Member; Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member; Steven Houston, Member; Andrew Dewey, Ex-Officio Member. Peggy Becker, Administrator; Sam Pettit, Caseworker II; Jake Townsend, Caseworker I; Rebekah Adair, Administrative Assistant/Outreach Coordinator. Absent- Mick Madden, Member; Kara Behrens, Caseworker I.
- Additions/Corrections - An addition under Unfinished Business: Russ Buzalko, Member, SWOT report.
- BOS Updates - Brian Shea, Supervisor, reports that the county has a new budget director and a new employee in the Auditor's office.
- Commissioner Updates - Russ Buzalko, Member, has been working on the office numbers with a caseworker and the office Administrator. The SWOT analysis is complete. The office numbers report will be completed at a later date. David Hazlewood, Secretary, reports that he is still receiving positive feedback on The Wall That Heals event that was held over Memorial Day weekend.

OLD BUSINESS

- Approval of minutes for July regular monthly meeting 2026: Motion to approve minutes for July regular monthly meeting made by Mick Gutttau, Member. Motion seconded by Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member. Aye 5, Nay 0. Motion carries.
- **Routine Office Reports**
 - Budget 2026-2027: Should be 8.33% Currently @ 8.82%
 - Facilities Update
 - ❖ MPR Room: Routine Usage by VFW, County Departments and Community Agencies
 - BOS Approval for VFW Car Show obtained on July 21, 2026, COI forwarded to Safety Coordinator Garfield Coleman, B&G notified for clearing the parking lot on Friday 8/21/2026. Car Show will be held on Saturday August 22 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Caseworker Jake Townsend will be present during these hours.
 - ❖ VBOC Boots to Business has asked to begin using our MPR room for training/meetings during normal business hours so no application is necessary.
 - Website Usage: Rebekah Adair, Administrative Assistant/Outreach Coordinator, reported that website usage is slightly decreased but still double the numbers seen throughout 2025. Facebook and X continue to gain followers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- DM Homestead Exemption Update: Instruction received from the Assessors/Information received from Iowa Department of Revenue
 - ❖ 2026-NCO-Webinar-Series-Property-Tax.pptx
 - ❖ Property Tax Webinar - NCO Webinar Series - July 22, 2026
 - ❖ Homestead Tax Credit and Exemption | Department of Revenue
- Veterans Day @ the State Fair Update: Association submitted for those wishing to attend. At this point no-one from the office wishes to attend.
- Ambassador of Peace Metal (Korean War) Ceremony Update: Rebekah Adair, Administrative Assistant/Outreach Coordinator, is working with the other counties in our district to gather medal applications. Our office will host a medal ceremony for veterans and their families in November.
- Flag Retirement Ceremony Update: Cancelled for Ambassador of Peace Metal Ceremony
- Mobile Unit Update: April, we saw 13 (Walnut/Treynor) people in July we saw 32 (Neola/Oakland). Carter Lake alone in the year 2025 we saw 17 people, from April to July 2026 we've seen 16.
- SWOT Analysis - Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member, presented the SWOT analysis for the office. Data was collected from office staff and commissioners on office strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, covering both internal and external benefits and risks.

NEW BUSINESS

- FY26 In Review BOS Office Update: Peggy Becker, Administrator, has sent the review to the Board of Supervisors.
- State Audit began Monday July 27th @ 3:00 pm: Last request for documentation was Wednesday August 5, 2026
- Veteran's Transitional Housing: Peggy Becker, Administrator, reported that New Visions is creating housing for homeless veterans in Council Bluffs. Our office has not been contacted for collaboration on this project. The commission encouraged our office to reach out to New Visions to learn more about the project and see how we can assist.
- Conservation Outreach Proposal: Peggy Becker, Administrator, has been working with Conservation to create a parks discount for veterans. The program will need to be approved by the Conservation Board.
- Staffing Needs: Peggy Becker, Administrator, reports a need to hire a part-time Caseworker. There is money in the budget to cover the new salary. Motion to move forward with hiring for a new part-time Caseworker made by David Hazelwood, Secretary. Motion seconded by Mick Gutttau, Member. Aye 5. Nay 0. Motion carries.

ADJOURN OPEN SESSION - Open session adjourned at 4:04 pm.

CLOSED SESSION AS ALLOWED PER CODE OF IOWA CHAPTER 21.5, 1(A) August ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

Motion to enter closed session made by Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member. Motion seconded by Mick Gutttau, Member. Aye 5, No 0. Motion carries.
Entered Closed Session at 4:06 pm.

1 Request for Assistance

ADJOURN CLOSED SESSION - Motion to adjourn closed session made by Mick Gutttau, Member. Motion seconded by Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member. Aye 5, Nay 0. Motion carries.

OPEN SESSION - Session opened at 4:15 pm.

ADJOURN MEETING: Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.

NEXT MEETING: September 14, 2026