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

Monday September 14, 2026 @ **2:30 pm**

MPR Room Pottawattamie County Veteran Service Office

***Minutes***

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call: David Hazlewood, Secretary; Mick Guttau, Member; Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member; Steven Houston, Member; Andrew Dewey, Ex-Officio Member; Mick Madden, Ex-Officio Member. Peggy Becker, Administrator; Sam Pettit, Caseworker II; Jake Townsend, Caseworker I; Kara Behrens, Caseworker I; Rebekah Adair, Adminstrative Assistant/Outreach Coordinator. Absent: Holly Collins, Chairwoman.
- Additions/Corrections - Under "Unfinished Business", Peggy Becker, Administrator, added the topic "Office Safety".
- BOS Updates - Brian Shea, Supervisor, reported that the state of the county is coming up.
- Commissioner Updates - Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member, reminded the commission that the Veterans Treatment Court is still looking for new mentors.
- Guest Speaker/Natalie Bekish with the VA Ne/Western IA S.A.V.E. Training & Kalen Broeker
  Compact Act Care Coordinator re the VA's COMPACT Act (Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act of 2020)

***OLD BUSINESS***

- Approval of minutes August 2026 Regular Monthly Meeting: Motion to approve made by Mick Guttau, Member. Motion seconded by Steven Houston, Member. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries.
- Approval of Assistance given for August 2026: Motion to approve made by Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member. Motion seconded by Mick Guttau, Member. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries.
- ***Routine Office Reports***
  - Budget 2026-2027: Should be 17% Currently @ 17%
    - ❖ Budget Affects for New Hire/Correlates with topic under New Business Office Rooms Reorganization for New Hire
    - ❖ Donations Line Review/Correlates with topic under Unfinished Business Changeable Letter Sign &Topic under New Business Office Reorganization - Peggy Becker, Administrator, reported that there is not enough money in the budget this fiscal year to move forward with the purchase of a changeable letter sign.
    - ❖ State Allocation Funds: Memorandum of Instruction/biggest change is the year-end report is now due on June 30, 2027, instead of July 30, 2027/To Date Allocation Checks have not yet been released by IDVA.
  - Facilities Update
    - ❖ MPR Room: Routine Usage by VFW, County Departments and Community Agencies
      Review of VFW Car show Jake Townsend attended
  - Website Usage: Rebekah Adair, Administrative Assistant/Outreach Coordinator, reported that the department's Facebook page continues to gain followers and page visits are up 151%. The department website metrics have increased and are still above 2024 numbers.

***UNFINISHED BUSINESS***

- IDVA (State) Fall School Training Update: No Fall CVSO training, Commissioner Training Tuesday October 13th, 2026, or Monday April 12, 2027. IACVS (Association) No Fall School CVSO Training will instead offer Winter School in January 2027 to coincide with Veterans Day on the Hill.
- Staffing Needs Update: Request reviewed with HR and was presented and approved by the BOS on Tuesday August 25, 2026. Job posting went out on Wednesday 8/26 with a closing date of 9/06/2026. The Hiring Committee consists of Commission Member Russ Buzalko, Office Administrator Peggy Becker and Office Personnel Caseworker II Sam Pettit.
- CVSO Workload Study Report: Russ Buzalko
- Ambassador of Peace Medal Update: Ceremony tentatively scheduled for Tue Nov 3 from 4:30 to 7:30 Multiple Venues were reviewed/visited, it was determined the best to suit the event would be the Grand Venue on Veteran's Memorial Highway. Motion to approve $1,000 budget for the Korean Medal of Peace ceremony made by Steven Houston, Member. Motion seconded by Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries.
- New Visions Transitional Housing Update: Brandy Waller is to come and provide a presentation @ the October Commission Meeting.
- Changeable Letter Sign Update: After receiving several quotes it has been determined that this project is more than likely out of our range for our office at least for this year. Several quotes were received but most required us to go out to other vendors to complete the project; concrete, electrical, permits etc etc. We received one quote that was all inclusive and it was more than $30k.
- Relocation Application - Peggy Becker, Administrator, presented a recent application for the veteran relocation grant. Motion to approve the application made by Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member. Motion seconded by David Hazlewood, Secretary. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries.

***NEW BUSINESS***

- Office rooms reorganization for new hire - Peggy Becker, Administrator, reported that the department workroom will be converted into an office for the new caseworker.
- Disbursement of Interest from Foundation Fund: Primary use, Veterans Resource Festival/Advertising/Mobile Unit needs.
  - ❖ Pending Projects: Digital Billboard Advertising for Resource Festival/FB Posting Boosts. Motion to approve funding for digital billboard advertising and Facebook posting boosts made by Mick Guttau, Member. Motion seconded by Steven Houston, Member. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries.
    - Steps for entry into the back of the Mobile Unit: Pending
      Climate Control Unit/Install for Mobile Unit: Inquiries being made
      Placing brackets on front and rear bumper of Mobile Unit to mount flags and/or removable letter sign
- Review/Approval for securing same DJ of Resource Festival for same cost same DJ $1,595.00. Motion to approve payment for the DJ at the 2027 Veterans Resource Festival made by Steven Houston, Member. Motion seconded by Dr. Russell Buzalko, Member. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries.
- How can our office help with local Veteran homelessness - The commission and Office Administrator, Peggy Becker, agreed that the office will continue to collaborate with external agencies to explore ways in which the VSO can support homeless veterans. Commissioners mentioned possibly collaborating with Council Bluffs Police on the programs they have in place for the homeless.
- Safety Concerns - Peggy Becker, Administrator, voiced safety concerns for the office stemming from recent events in the area. The commission recommended consulting the sheriff and police department on security measures the office could put into practice.

**Public Comment (3 min limit) - Brad Powell with the American Legion reported that there had been a security issue at their facility. Also, the post will have their soft opening of the refurbished building prior to their grand opening for the community.**

***ADJOURN OPEN SESSION***
***CLOSED SESSION AS ALLOWED PER CODE OF IOWA CHAPTER 21.5, 1(A) September ASSISTANCE REQUESTS***

*0 Requests for Assistance*

***ADJOURN MEETING:*** Motion to adjourn made by Mick Guttau, Member. Motion seconded by David Hazlewood, Secretary. Aye 4, Nay 0. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 4:08 pm.
***NEXT MEETING***: October 12, 2026