



Department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee

Saturday, October 10, 2020

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Cook at Department Headquarters. Salute to the colors. The invocation was given by Gary Ickes (D- 10). The pledge of allegiance was led by Chairman Cook (D-6). Chairman Cook took the minutes.

Roll Call:

Dist. 1 Patrick Grzybowski- Absent, Dist. 2 Charles Craynon- Absent, Dist. 3 Joe Law, Dist. 4 Robert Ray Absent, Dist. 5 Darell Bishop- Excused, Dist. 6 David K. Cook Sr., Dist. 7 Kenneth Crawford- Excused, Dist. 8 Tina Walker, Dist. 9 William Keller- Absent, Dist. 10 Gary Ickes, Dist. 11 John Robinson, Dist. 12 John Tepper, Dist. 13 Leroy Brinkhoff and Dist. 14 Bob Carson. The guest was Jermaine Ferguson and William Genochio.

Greetings:

Department Commander Roger Friend thanked all for their participation on this Department committee.

Review of Minutes for the July 11, 2020 meeting:

After review, a motion was made by Leroy Brinkhoff (D-13) and seconded by Robert Carson (D-14) to except as printed. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIED

Chairman Opening Remarks:

Chairman Cook thanks all for attending and to please be patient as we were holding this for the first time with some in attendance in person, and some members are attending the meeting online.

District Reports:

Each District presents a report on the VA&R activates within their respective Districts.

Old Business: None

New Business

Department Service Office Update

Genochio gave the Department Service Office update. He had photos of the current staff at Cleveland. Since the Covid hit, the RO is closed, you need an appointment to see a department service officer. Email is the best way to contact a department service officer. With the legacy type of appeals phasing out, so will the DRO, as under the new system, will no longer be needed.

Genochio requested feedback from the Committee regarding the solicitation membership and donations to help staff Department Service Officers. Department would send out a solicitation letter to each claimant after their claim was rated. A version targeting veterans who are already a member of the American Legion requests a donation to the VA&R program. The other version would be sent to a nonmember and ask if they would like to join the American Legion and donate to the VA&R program. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Ickes (D -10) and seconded by Carson (D-14) to create a draft of the letter to the member. The verbiage would then come back to this Committee for approval of it before any letters would go out to the veteran. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIED

A motion was made by Carson (D-14) and seconded by Ickes (D -10) to create a draft of the letter to the nonmember. The verbiage would then come back to this Committee for approval of it before any letters would go out to the nonmember. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIED

Post-Service Officer School

Genochio went over Post Service Officer Training scheduled on November 7, 2020, at Department HQ. We have 37 participants registered. Every participant will receive a Post Service Officer Manual. The manual will be updated as needed when a change in Law etc. just that page will be updated and given out at the next class to keep them current. The Committee discussed the possibly holding training earlier in the year, so newly elected/Appointed PSO's will be trained early in their term. William, Jermaine, and the Chairman will see what the earliest time would be possible and report back to the Committee.

VA&R Impact Report

Jermaine went over the Impact Summary. This report comes from the CPR's sent in. Chairman Cook asked that we encourage all posts to get their CPR's submitted on time, be completely filled out, and accurate. The CPR is the only way those on the Capitol Hill know what we are doing and why it's crucial. The deadline was extended, but we still had approx. 21 Posts that even missed the deadline, so the report does not show all the American Legion does for Veterans and their families. After discussion, it was asked if burial detail and funeral honors could also be added to this report. Jermaine will check on this.

Gifts for Yanks Program

Jermaine went over info on gifts for the coming year. He also stated that the Committee would explore methods of improving our fundraising efforts. More to come later from the Gifts committee will be brought to this Committee. Jermaine noted that again, do to Covid, may not pass out the gifts, as usual, will see. The Committee reviewed the 2021 budget.

VA Voluntary Services

The Committee was provided with a roster of VAVS representatives and deputies. The Committee was informed that we need to find a suitable representative for Chillicothe VAMC.

Veteran's Treatment Court Program

The sub-committee has not met yet due to timing and then the COVID but will move forward this year to draft program guidelines. Jermaine needs to schedule a meeting for the sub-committee and send out letters and questionnaires for the Veterans Courts. We have \$28,000.00 in the program fund at this time.

Commanders Visits

The Committee discussed alternatives regarding the Commanders' annual visits to the Ohio Veterans Homes and VA Medical Centers. Due to COVID, it may not be possible to do them. Could have Department contact each facility to see where each stand is, and If things slow down, possibly still work them in in the spring. We will look at more at the next Committee meeting.

Veterans Suicide Prevention Efforts

Jermaine went over some information on this. There is a site on the Nationale web site, where the National Commander is asking for support for SB 4657/ HR 2898 on buddy checks. You can sign on to get updates from your locale reps on this website. It's called the Voters Voice.

Veterans Employment and Education

The VE&E Committee will meet on Saturday, November 14, at 10 am via online. We encourage every Post to identify veteran-owned businesses in their area.

Legislative Update

The Committee was updated regarding the pending passage of the S. 785 bill regarding Veterans Mental Health. The Committee has a summary sheet for their review.

TFA

Jermaine again reviewed this program with the Committee. Applications are on the Department web site.

VA&R Program Awards

Jermaine went over the different awards both the Department and national has and the guidelines for both. Discussion on needing to push more to get nominations in for them. Also, for the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy, the deadline is July 31. We have the CPR's and Post sheets; we need to push for better reporting and get them into Department on time, so the information can be used to complete the application. After the discussion, Carson (D-14) made a motion and seconded by Brinkhoff (D-13) to accept both nominations for the Department VA Award and the 2020 Health Care Provider of the Year Award, to be presented at the upcoming Mid-Winter Conference. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIED

Now is the time to be looking for someone to nominate for the current membership year, to be awarded at this year's Department Convention.

Resolutions

The Committee did not consider any draft resolution.

Salute to the Colors was rendered. The meeting adjourned at 12:06 pm.
Minutes submitted by David K. Cook Sr.; Department VA&R Chairman