

**GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
2650 LaFranier Rd, Traverse City, MI 49686  
Public Services Building

**Thursday, January 25, 2018 @ 8:00 AM**

**Minutes**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Chairman James Wegener	VIA PHONE	_____
Vice Chair Jakob Rossi	__X__	_____
Secretary John Block	__X__	_____
LaVern Broughton	__X__	_____
Neal Horning	__X__	_____
Robert Johnson	__X__	_____
Robert Eisner	__X__	_____
Ron Hofmeister	__X__	_____
<b>Benize County Representative</b>		
Bob Roelofs	__X__	_____
<b>Leelanau County Representative</b>		
Mark Watkins	_____	__X__

**Staff**

Michael Roof, Director  
Erin Whitney, Case Manager

**Guests**

John Milks, Paul Cedar, Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition President John Lefler

**CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE**

Block requested clarification of agenda, provided by Roof. MOPH Lelito requested status of issue with scholarship issued by MOPH to Abbie Merz, as they have not received a response from VA committee. Rossi replied that the office will write apology. Rossi introduced new Director, Michael Roof, to new committeemen.

## **ADDITIONS / DELETIONS / CHANGES TO AGENDA**

No changes

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

1. Board Chairman  
Nominations –Robert Eisner, James Wegener  
Vote totals – Eisner, 4, Wegener, 3
2. Vice Chairman  
Nominations –Jake Rossi, Ron Hofmeister  
Vote Totals –Hofmeister, 4, Rossi, 3

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Minutes from December 21, 2017  
Motion to approve –Horning  
Seconded – Hofmeister  
Approved unanimously

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. VA Committee Bylaws  
Motion to discuss bylaws – Horning  
Seconded – Eisner  
Broughton questioned Article 3, Section 4, members removed “without cause.” Roof clarified that the removal follows rules made by county commissioners. Rossi stated that under proposed bylaws, committeemen can miss up to three meetings. Johnson suggested requiring a physical quorum, and Roof clarified that committeemen can call in and vote like they are present.  
Motion to approve bylaws – Horning  
Seconded – Eisner  
Approved unanimously
2. Staff Plan  
Roof proposed update on staffing plan to not fill open office manager or part time case worker positions. County has posted open office specialist position. Roof to meet with interim county administrator today to discuss formally changing staffing plan. Roelofs stated that Benzie County had not been receiving the services outlined in their contract

with Grand Traverse County, as the case manager assigned to Benzie County did not take emergency relief applications but issued gas cards for clients to go to Grand Traverse County office for those programs. Roof assured committee that an adequate level of services will be provided going forward, and stated that with the unexpected staffing shortage it may take a little time but services will improve. Roof stated his plan to send office staff member Chris Dailey to accreditation training in June rather than March due to cost and current staffing shortage. Roelofs expressed concern about potential liability of having Dailey cover Leelanau County office on Tuesdays. Lefler offered to pay the difference in cost to send Dailey to the earlier training. Roof stated there is no liability with Dailey covering that office as no claims will be filed through non-accredited staff. He said the outlying county offices will be more organized and the contracts will be followed as closely as possible.

Motion to approve staffing plan changes – Rossi

Seconded – Eisner

Approved unanimously

3. Soldiers and Sailors Relief Approvals

Roof stated that office lacks procedures for Soldiers and Sailors Relief program and requested authorization to approve a specific amount, to be determined by VA committee, without having to consult committeemen. He said he is working on policies based on those of other county offices.

Motion to give director authorization of up to \$750.00 without committeemen – Rossi

Seconded – Horning

Approved unanimously

4. Office Equipment / Software

Roof informed committee that the recently purchased printer in office needs upgrading for efficiency. The county IT department provided two estimates, of which Roof suggested the Canon at \$5,020.24, which includes maintenance. The office will get approximately \$900 back for the current machine because it is still fairly new. Roof proposed purchasing a laptop for the front office counter so that staff members can help clients at the counter, when appropriate, rather than walking back and forth from their offices. He also proposed the office switch to using the state version of VetraSpec, the internal system, to follow the majority of other county offices in Michigan. It would save \$2,500.00 per year and allow office to transfer records as needed from other county offices. Roof also updated committee on contract former director Lerchen started with ProWeb Marketing to design a logo and website for the office. Roof met with their representative, who provided a logo, included in this meeting's packet. Rossi suggested enhancing the county's VA website, and Roof is going to contact county IT department.

Motion to purchase laptop and copier and switch software to state version – Hofmeister

Seconded – Rossi

Approved unanimously

5. Budget Amendments

Roof proposed corrections to budget as follows:

\$2,200.00 from "Salaries" to "Travel"

\$2,200.00 from "Salaries" to "Conventions"

\$600.00 from "Salaries" to "Training"

\$3,000.00 from "Payment in Lieu" to "Per diem"

\$10,597.00 from "Salaries" to "Department head," as listed in contract

6. Office Relocation

Roof informed the committee that there is money for the construction associated with relocating the office to another part of the building under "Contract services," and that he is meeting with the interim county administrator today to discuss.

Motion to proceed with office relocation – Horning

Seconded – Hofmeister

Approved unanimously

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Roof stated the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund report and the budget report are included for the edification of the committee. Rossi suggested it also include the allocated amount and percent used to date, which Roof said would be included in future reports. Roelofs questioned the difference between the approved millage amount and the amount of money listed in budget, and Johnson stated that the remaining, unlisted amount stays within the VA budget in a general fund. Roelofs asked what the current wait time for an appointment is, and Roof reported that to get an appointment with case manager Whitney the wait is approximately three weeks, for director Roof it is approximately one week.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Block suggested committee members submit a one page resume to provide some background on themselves for fellow committeemen. Johnson suggested Chris Forsythe conduct Open Meetings Act training for VA committee. MOPH Lelito again requested specific action from committee. Roof volunteered to draft an apology letter for the board and submit it to the chairman for signature/approval.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1. Office Activity Report

Roof stated he has changed the office letterhead, removing a federal logo. The Michigan Veterans Trust Fund is going to provide the office with a quarterly report on assistance provided by Grand Traverse County office. Roof informed committee he intends to take the office staff to the national training in Reno, NV from 06/03/2018-06/08/2018. He also said he has an "open door" policy for any concerns they may have, and that he is

meeting with Benzie and Leelanau county administrations on 02/14 to discuss the current contracts.

Motion to approve director's report – Hofmeister

Seconded – Block

Approved unanimously

**ADJOURNMENT**

10:02 AM.

DRAFT