

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

Thursday, January 28, 2019 @ 8:00 AM

BOARD MEETING

Minutes

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / MOMENT OF SILENCE / CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present: John Block, Robert "Art" Eisner, Bill Fowle, Ron Hofmeister, Neal Horning, Rachel Sherman, Mollie Sourek

Staff: Michael Roof, Erin Whitney

Absent: Leelanau County Representative Alan Aldrich, County Commissioner Gordie LaPointe

Guests: County Administrator Nate Alger, Becky Bigelow from Reining Liberty Ranch, Deputy County Administrator Chris Forsythe, Veterans Coalition President John Lefler

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE

Alger and Forsythe attending meeting to make themselves available for questions VA committee may have. Eisner asked what the board of commissioners' expectations are of the VA committee. Alger responded that the board expects communication about progress, the services provided, and any needs the committee has. He stated Commissioner LaPointe had questions/reservations about the veterans' millage that he has been able to answer/alleviate. Eisner asked if LaPointe had passed along Eisner's committee updates to the board of commissioners: that the office has gone from a 3-4 week wait to same day appointments, transparency has greatly increased, and that Roof has located grants for office that provide additional funding. Alger said he did not believe so but would take information to board. Eisner

requested assistance with getting space for a mobile Vet Center at Cherry Festival to provide services to veterans, to which Alger and Hofmeister both said they would try to assist. Hofmeister stated that before the millage the county office wasn't actively promoted, and that Roof has greatly increased presence in community and substantially improved services provided and community reputation. This was confirmed by Bigelow and Block. Lefler stated that the new VA clinic will hopefully be open to the public at the beginning of 2020.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes from January 24, 2019 – Fowle
Seconded – Hofmeister
Approved unanimously

FINANCIAL REPORTS

No questions/discussion
Motion to approve financial reports– Hofmeister
Seconded – Horning
Approved unanimously

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Roof reported that the Leelanau County office visits are down, only 7 clients in the month of January. He stated the office is to take possession of the Durango truck soon, has four bids, and will take vehicle to get exact quotes. He reminded committee that grant for Veterans Court isn't monetary but is for September 2019 training. Roof stated he is the Veterans' Mentor Coordinator, as Carol Stocking accepted the role/responsibility of Veterans' Court Coordinator. Justice for Vets is still waiting on list of team members from Stocking. Roof stated he added the "VSO Report" to the Director's Report to provide greater detail on VSO work performed, and Michigan Veterans Trust Fund and Soldiers and Sailors Relief Fund trackers to show emergency assistance given. He reported he met with Rob Price from MVAA regarding state grants, and mentioned the use restrictions have been removed, but application date has passed. Per Rob Price the MVAA is considering ending automatic grants to "Big 6" veterans' groups and would instead require everyone to apply for grants and follow reporting rules effective September 2019. The county office could use funds for advertising, since millage is used for direct services.

Motion to approve director's report – Hofmeister
Seconded – Fowle
Approved unanimously

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Roof stated the office staff will be at the state training in April and requested committee meeting be changed to Thursday, April 18th 2019.
Motion to approve date change to 4/18/19 – Hofmeister
Seconded – Fowle
Approved unanimously
- b. Regarding the 2% grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Roof reported he is going to get with county attorney to see if millage funds can be used to assist peacetime veterans, as other offices don't have to follow statute requiring war-era service.
- c. Roof provided vehicle wrap quotes to committee to keep them apprised of progress, and said quotes are based on the percentage of vehicle covered. He said the wrap will help advertise for the office.

Block stated the Supreme Court has ruled that military retirees eligible for retirement pay can be prosecuted by the Uniform Code of Military Justice for infractions after retirement.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to approve adjournment – Hofmeister

Seconded – Horning

Approved unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 AM