



COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mandy Coates, Director	JoAnne Downes
Bill Blanchard, Chairperson	Chad Gerdes
Larry Hingtgen, Secretary	Ines Beltre

Formal Meeting Minutes April 22, 2025

Meeting called to order at 17:03 by Hingtgen

Present: Larry Hingtgen, Chad Gerdes, Ines Beltre, Joanne Downes, and Mandy Coates.

Guests: Ryan Maas, Johnson County Attorney's Office

Unless Notes, all actions were taken unanimously

1. Motion by Downes, second by Gerdes to approve the March minutes
2. Motion by Beltre, second by Downes to approve the March vouchers
3. Motion by Downes, second by Gerdes to approve the 3rd Quarter Auditor Report
4. Department is at 50% Spent. Josh is on orders, operating as a one-person office tentatively until October. Veterans Justice Court was discussed, the only court available in Iowa is in Woodbury County and idea has been explored before by the local Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator and Director, it was not deemed feasible. Hard files have started to be scanned in, the goal to someday be mostly paperless in the office. Discussed the reasoning why Veterans should not use a claim shark, as they are not accredited and can take backpay away from Veterans, while a VSO can do the same thing for free. Iowa Moratorium ended, lack of payments during this time has created an issue of debt. Discussed the Cleland-Dole act which provides WWII Veterans with access to free VA Healthcare and places them in priority group 6. Educated a VHA worker regarding this with a Veteran who received a letter in the mail stating he would be placed in priority group 8. Attended the IVETS Fundraiser, Naming Selection Committee Meeting for the ICVHA Women's Clinic room, 2nd Brigade Deployment town hall, Hosted Veterans Appreciation event and worked the VBA claims clinic at the National Guard Armory. Still getting calls from Rock Island that are unable to get a hold of their county VSO.
5. Coates informed the Commission on the IACVS Spring School Conference including legislative updates regarding property tax, Commission appointees, and training authorization being held under control of Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs. Back-up for office and access to files in case of absence of Director was discussed. Trust Fund application has been updated and will go through County VSO. The State and the Association are working together on a 5-year training plan and cohesion going forward.
6. Hingtgen and Beltre were the only applicants for the new commission term.

Hingtgen adjourned the meeting at 17:37

Recorded by Mandy Coates

These minutes will be presented to the Secretary for approval during our May 2025 meeting.

5/21/2025

Signature on File

Date:

Secretary or Alternate