



COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mandy Coates, Director	JoAnne Downes
Bill Blanchard, Chairperson	Chad Gerdes
Larry Hingtgen, Secretary	Jacob Korbakes

Formal Meeting Minutes
Health and Human Services Building
855 South Dubuque St. Iowa City, IA 52240
Conference Room 203 B
December 16, 2025

Meeting called to order at 17:01 by Blanchard

Present: Bill Blanchard, Chad Gerdes, Jacob Korbakes, JoAnne Downes, Larry Hingtgen via phone, and Mandy Coates.

Guests: Nathan Peters - Johnson County Attorney's Office, Rod Sullivan - Board of Supervisors Office, and Josh Brown - CVSO.

Unless noted, all actions were taken unanimously

1. Motion by Gerdes, second by Korbakes to approve the November minutes
2. Motion by Downes, second by Hingtgen to approve the November vouchers
3. Budget is at 30% spent for the year. Federal claim revenue for Johnson County in November was \$3,239,781.00. Coates informed Commission regarding a Veteran who she turned away for services due to safety and harassment concerns. Coates informed them she has been documenting the incident and to reach out to her if they hear anything. Coates also informed of another Veteran who has been manipulative for their awareness. Coates shared that the Iowa City VA Hospital is under a national reorganization where over 125 clinical jobs will not be filled and the VHA as a whole will be restructured. Coates and Brown presented at the University of Iowa Veterans Transition Course. Coates joined the State of Iowa's Women's Veteran Committee as a start up group. Coates met with Judge Kevin McKeever to discuss a Access to Justice Commission start up. Coates and Brown attended a webinar on deescalation, basic tools for social workers.
4. Coates informed Commission of Discharge Upgrade process and also informed them of Discharge upgrades for VA Benefits purposes and shared case study
5. Coates presented the 2027 Budget that will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 12, 2025
6. Coates asked the Commission to think of outreach ideas or events, possible event around Memorial Day

Blanchard adjourned the meeting at 17:25

Recorded by Mandy Coates

These minutes will be presented to the Secretary for approval during our January 2026 meeting.

1/20/2026

Date:

Signature on File

Secretary or Alternate