



COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mandy Coates, Director
Bill Blanchard, Chairperson
Larry Hingtgen, Secretary

JoAnne Downes
Chad Gerdes
Jacob Korbakes

Formal Meeting Minutes
Health and Human Services Building
855 South Dubuque Street, Iowa City, IA 52240
Conference Room 203 B
January 20, 2026

Meeting called to order at 17:00 by Blanchard

Present: Bill Blanchard, Chad Gerdes, Jacob Korbakes, JoAnne Downes, and Mandy Coates.
Guests: Ryan Maas - Johnson County Attorney's Office, and Josh Brown - CVSO.

Unless noted, all actions were taken unanimously

1. Motion by Gerdes, second by Korbakes to approve the December minutes
2. Motion by Downes, second by Korbakes to approve the December vouchers
3. Budget is at 34% spent for the year. Federal claim revenue for Johnson County in December was \$3,351,025.00. Coates informed the Commission regarding a potential mandatory "Know your Rights" 4th Amendment training proposed by Supervisor Fixmer-Oraiz and how it wouldn't be necessary or appropriate for all county employees and would potentially be in violation of employee's political rights. They don't have a cost, know of who will put on the training, or what the training will consist of. The Commission is willing to vote that Veterans Affairs will not have to take the training depending on what it consists of when more information is put out. Coates informed the Commission that she presented the budget to the Board of Supervisors and CVSO Brown met with the Ambulance Department to discuss VA billing. Coates provided outreach at the Whole Health Focus Group by the Iowa City Veterans Affairs Women's Clinic and attended the Oxford American Legion Breakfast. Coates and Brown also attended CHAMPVA training held by the VA Regional Office.
4. Coates presented the new 2026 VA Compensation Rates
5. CVSO Brown presented an outreach proposal to the Commission for IVETS, which the Commission supported
6. Coates briefed the Commission on the Governor's Condition of the State and the proposed bill for incentivized grant funding. Coates informed Commission of the reasons why it would harm the current success that CVSO's have and how it will hinder Veterans. Coates also informed them that the Association was not made aware or consulted regarding this proposed change and how the State can not come close to the National training which we currently receive. They will also be cutting costs, that was not presented in the promotion of the bill.

Blanchard adjourned the meeting at 17:55

Recorded by Mandy Coates

These minutes will be presented to the Secretary for approval during our February 2026 meeting.
2/17/2026

Signature on File

Date:

Secretary or Alternate