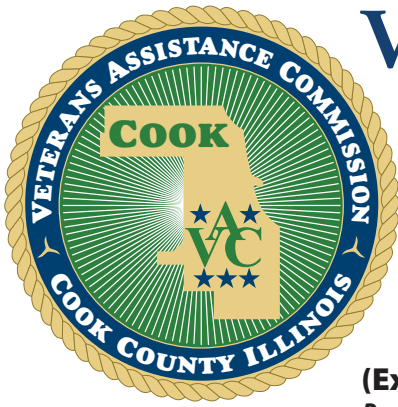


VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF COOK COUNTY

Meeting Agenda
25 June 2024
Hines VA Building 9
5000 5th Ave, Hines, IL 60141

Executive Board Members: Frank Gutierrez (*President*), William Browne (*1st Vice President*), Dutch DeGroot (*2nd Vice President*), Robert Arciola (*Treasurer*)
At Large Board Members: Greg Jacobs, Wayne Kern, John Steciw
Appointees: Jim Parker (*Secretary*), Kevin Ake (*Chaplain*), Gina A. LoGalbo (*Judge Advocate*), Lorenzo Fiorentino (*Sergeant at Arms*)
Superintendent: Elizabeth D. Soto

- I. Welcome - Frank Gutierrez
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call/Establish Quorum – Dutch DeGroot/ Jim Parker
 - c. Recognition of Guests - Frank Gutierrez
- II. Opening Reflection - Chaplain Kevin Ake
 - a. Prayer/Reflection
 - b. Posting of Colors/Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Presentation by Shannon Yount Attorney General's Military & Veterans Rights Bureau
- IV. Consent Agenda - Frank Gutierrez
 - a. Approval of Membership Meeting 26 March 2024 Minutes
- V. Governance Report - Robert Arciola
 - a. Approval of Previous Financial Reports
- VI. VACCC Office Report(s) - Superintendent Elizabeth Soto
 - a. Review/Approve Financial & Disbursement Reports
 - b. Review Veterans Served Race & Gender
 - c. Office Update/Monthly Outreach Report
 - d. Communications/Website Update
 - e. Cook County HR and Hiring Staff Update
- VII. Bylaws - John Steciw
 - a. **Second Reading** Bylaws proposed Amendment to be added to Article V SECTION 5.6. Meetings F. The President may change the date of a regularly scheduled Quarterly Membership Meeting when necessary, provided prior notice is given and requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act are met.
- VIII. Budget – William Browne.
- IX. Services Provided - Wayne Kern
 - a. Updates
- XI. Future Meeting Sites Update - Dutch DeGroot
 - a. 24 Sept. American Legion Post 1941, 900 LaGrange Rd, La Grange, IL 60525
- XII. Old Business - Frank Gutierrez
 - a. Report on 501(c)3 findings
- XIII. New Business - Frank Gutierrez
 - a. Proposed Federal Grant Superintendent Soto
- XIV. Comments from Special Guest
- XV. Public Comment for Items Not on The Agenda - Frank Gutierrez
- XVI. Adjournment



VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF COOK COUNTY

Membership Meeting Minutes

25 June 2024

Location:

Edward Hines, Jr. VA

5000 5th Ave, Hines, IL 60141

(Executive Board Members): Frank Gutierrez (*President*), William Browne (*1st Vice President*), Dutch DeGroot (*2nd Vice President*), Robert Arciola (*Treasurer*).

At Large Board Members: Greg Jacobs, Wayne Kern, John Steciw. Non voting **Appointees** Jim Parker (*Secretary*), Kevin Ake (*Chaplain*), Gina A. LoGalbo (*Judge Advocate*), Lorenzo Fiorentino (*Sargent at Arms*). Elizabeth Soto (*Superintendent*)

- I. Welcome – President Gutierrez.
 - a. Call to order at 1900hrs.
 - b. Roll Call/Quorum – 2nd VP DeGroot called the roll of members and announced 33 members attending which exceeds the quorum requirement of 19. A copy of the Sign In Sheet is attached to and a part of these Minutes. Gutierrez introduced the following guest: Terry Prince, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. CC Commissioner Tara Stamps, CC Commissioner Josina Morita, Diana Huizar, representative of CC Commissioner Maggie Trevor, and Shannon Yount of *Illinois Attorney General's Military and Veterans Rights Bureau*.
- II. Opening
 - a. Prayer/Reflection– Chaplain Kevin Ake
 - b. Posting of the Colors VFW 4th District color guard
 - c. Pledge of Allegiance.
 - d. DeGroot gave a short report on membership.
- III. Special Presentation -- Sharon Yount of Attorney General's Military and Veterans Rights Bureau gave an overview report on her organization:
 - a. Her office is the only one like in the US.
 - b. Its Mission is three-fold:
 1. Education and Outreach to Illinois veterans regarding their rights and assistance offered. Informative presentations are available to veteran organizations. Additional, printed materials are available at her table.
 2. Enforcement of the rights of Illinois veterans under the laws of this State.
 3. Advise and represent the AG's Office in legal matters involving our veterans.
 - c. The entire staff of attorneys in her office is made up of veterans.
 - d. Attorneys are assigned to specialized subject matter areas.
- IV. Consent Agenda – President Gutierrez.
 - a. Approval of Minutes of March 26 Membership Meeting. The Minutes were not read but were distributed to all members in advance of this meeting. Motion to Approve the Minutes made by James Schultz and duly seconded. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.
- V. Governance Report – Treasurer Aricola
 - a. He reported that the Membership Corp. account balance of \$5,026.57 was confirmed on a review of recovered financial records that were reviewed the last E.B. meeting.

- VI. VACCC Office Reports – Superintendent Elizabeth Soto on the following for the second quarter:**
- a.** Financial & Disbursement Reports. We had a 30% increase in dollar expenditures and a 10% increase in veterans served from the 1st quarter.
 - b.** Veterans Served race & gender Reports.
 - c.** Monthly Outreach Report. The staff spent 49 hours doing Outreach presentations. We had a new programs of Walgreens gift cards for veterans, new building signage and the recent dedication of a new mural at the office.
 - d.** Communications/Website Update. We are working with CC staff on a website. 2nd VP DeGroot is leading this effort.
 - e.** Cook County HR and Staff Hiring Update. We recently posted four new staff positions: a VSO, an Outreach Coordinator, an Operations Specialist and an Administrative Assistant.
- VII. Bylaws – John Steciw**
- a.** Steciw gave the Second Reading of the following proposed amendment, the First Reading of which was held at the March membership Meeting and which was approved by the EB at its June 5 meeting:
“Article V SECTION 5.6 Meetings F. The President may change the date of a regularly scheduled Quarterly Membership meeting when necessary, provided prior notice is given and requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act are met.”
Upon a proper Motion by Art Ellingsen, duly seconded, the foregoing was approved by unanimous voice vote.
- VIII. Budget – 1st VP Browne**
- a.** No report at this time but he will be looking for volunteers with financial skills to assist when it’s time to work on the next budget.
- IX. Services Provided. AL Board Member Kern**
- a.** Reported that there is no longer a Committee for this. Since the last meeting only one request for service was received regarding White Sox tickets which requires further study.
- X. Future Meeting Sites Update -- 2nd VP DeGroot**
- a.** DeGroot said that AML Post 1941, 900 LaGrange Road LaGrange, has agreed to this location for the September 24, 2024 meeting.
- XI. Old Business -- President Gutierrez**
- a.** President Gutierrez suggested further discussions regarding the Membership Corp. be tabled until the next meeting.
- XII. New Business – President Gutierrez**
- a.** Proposed Federal Grant. Tabled.
- XIII. Comments from Special Guests:**
- a.** Commissioner Morita said her predecessor was a vet and she promised to continue his support for them. She also apologized for the lack of sufficient funds to properly run the VACCC in the passed and pledged to do better. In her District she has been working to improve services to veterans, especial regarding dental care.
 - b.** Commissioner Stamps echoed Commission Morita said a large part of her motivation comes from the fact that she takes care of her elderly uncle who is a veteran. She also said that going forward her support of the VACCC will be guided by her new slogan, “We can demand more.” She added that the budget should reflect the County’s support for vets.
 - c.** Director Prince promised the vets that his office will remain dedicated to help all Illinois vets. The IDVA has received its largest budget in history and it is being used. As an example, he pointed to the recent opening of a 200-bed residential facility for vets in Oak Park.

XIV. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda -- Frank Gutierrez.

- a.** Greg Jacobs ask what is being done about Claim sharks in Illinois? Ms. Yount said that her office can assist veteran with Claim Shark issues.
- b.** Ron Gillespie said that he is from Lake County and their vets will support the VACCC.
- c.** Paul Knutson said that he is very proud of the organization and congratulated the VACCC leadership in making it much better.
- d.** Steve MacGinnis said that he is also from Lake County and that when he sees that changes in the VACCC all he can say to Elizabeth is, "WOW!"
- e.** A representative of VFW Post 3579 gave a shout out to the EB for its efforts to move the VACCC to a new location.
- f.** Ms. Owens, representing herself, asked how small business can get certified to do more for the VACCC. President Gutierrez said the CC website has guidelines for this.
- g.** Pat Kowalski, a volunteer at the Hines Food Bank, mentioned the terrible quality of food there. She said our vets deserve better and requested the VACCC's help in this regard.
- h.** Mark Kwiatkowski ask if there were plans to have VACCC offices in the North and West suburbs. Elizabeth said the River Grove site was selected because it will be funded by an ear mark grant from Rep. Ramirez and it is in her District. When that is completed the VACCC will seek to added offices where most needed by vets.
- i.** 2nd VP DeGroot requested an ovation for Elizabeth and her staff for their hard work and dedication and got a very loud one.

He closed with, *"The days of a dysfunctional VACCC are done!"*

XV. Adjournment.

President Gutierrez closed with a thank you to the Commissioners, guest and members for attending. *"We are moving forward and will keep going."*

Upon a proper Motion by Mark Kwiatkowski, duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2016 hrs.

Submitted by *Jim Parker*, Secretary



VACCC MEMBERSHIP SIGN IN SHEET

25 JUNE 2024

Organization	X	Delegate	X	Alternate Delegate
American Legion 36	X	Patrick Flannigan	X	Gregory Jacobs
American Legion 104	X	Michael F Tuman	X	Dennis Chavez
American Legion 183	X	Peter Papuc	X	Timothy Bodkin
American Legion 208	X	Greg Padovani	X	Dale Berg
American Legion 216	X	Kevin Ake		
American Legion 335	X	Lorenzo Fiorentino		Edward Castaneda
American Legion 525		William "Bill" Starr	X	Laura Matuszak
American Legion 541		Walter J Galiga		Megan Gill
American Legion 615	X	Ken McClory	X	John Kaminecki
American Legion 758	X	Beau D. Butts	X	William M. Szura
American Legion 806		Dale Tippett	X	Pete Hirt
American Legion 943	X	John Steciw	X	Adam Bihun
American Legion 973	X	Eden Puente		
American Legion 974	X	Anthony Siciliano	X	Thomas Zito
American Legion 1941		Mike Maher	X	Carlos Medina
American Legion 1983	X	Mark Kwiatkowski	X	Antony (Tony) Thomas
AMVETS 66	X	James Schultz	X	James (Jim) Parker
AMVETS 268	X	Eddie Brown Jr.	X	Richard Nielson
JWV 710	X	Dr. Jerry Field		Howard Goldstein
MCL 553	X	Randall L. Tyner	X	Gina Ann LoGalbo
MOAA Chicago	X	Roman Golash		Warren D. Cuplin
Navy League Chicago 69		Leslie Rodriguez	X	Paul J. Bezazian
PVA Vaughan Chapter	X	Robert Arciola		Robert Statam
VFW 311	X	Bill Browne	X	Aretha Spurlock
VFW 981	X	Stewart Abblink		Timothy Delaney
VFW 1337	X	Wayne K. Kern	X	John "Dutch" DeGroot
VFW 2202	X	John Healy	X	Joe Wein
VFW 2868	X	EvaMarie Duff	X	Eric Moralas
VFW 3579	X	Ramon Prieto	X	Keith Renner
VFW 5979		Richard Wojewnik	X	David Ruiz
VFW 7186	X	Thomas J. "Jim" Hughes	X	Jason Kruger
VFW 8322	X	Frank Gutierrez		
VFW 9284	X	Arthur J. Ellingsen	X	Wallace Campbell
VFW 10778	X	Chuck Bosko		
VVA 242		Kevin Calkins		John B. Andres Jr.
33 of 34 Attended		52 Deligate & Alternates Attended		
Dropped membership				