

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

VAC COMMITTEE

Monday, January 23, 2012

**Brookens Administrative Center, Jennifer K. Putman Meeting Room
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lloyd Carter, Stephanie Holderfield, Stan James,
Ralph Langenheim (Chair)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Carol Ammons

OTHERS PRESENT: Ray Elliott, Brad Gould (Urbana VFW), Ron Hubert (Champaign VFW), Sandy Hubert, Alan Kurtz (County Board member), Kay Rhodes (Administrative Assistant), C. Pius Weibel (County Board Chair)

Call to Order

Langenheim called the meeting to order at 4:16 p.m.

Roll Call

Carter, Holderfield, James, and Langenheim were present, establishing the presence of a quorum.

Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION by Holderfield to approve the agenda; seconded by Carter. **Motion carried with unanimous support.**

Langenheim asked for questions concerning the Constitution and By Laws of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Champaign County. James referenced page one, Article II-Purpose, and stated there were other organizations that serve veterans and asked why the County had been approached to fund a Champaign County Veterans Assistance Commission.

Hubert explained that the local Veterans Assistance Commission was formed in 1995 at the time they had the Veterans Memorial built at the Courthouse. He explained the commission was established not only to build the memorial, but also to assist veterans. Hubert said over the years, the commission has tried to assist any veterans who came into town. They have kept track of real vets coming into town because some people only said they were vets and tried to defraud people. They have assisted vets by purchasing gas, paying for a hotel room, or purchasing food. Hubert said the commission always makes the purchase for the veteran and they have never supplied cash. They keep the other veterans organizations in the area informed about the true veterans that they have had contact with as well as those who attempt to defraud the public.

Hubert said they also maintained the memorial through the purchase of lights and flags. Hubert explained it has reached the point that the commission cannot continue to ask the other veterans organizations more and more funding. He explained much of the funding had come from the commission members personally.

James said the request should be examined thoroughly and they should proceed for the right reasons because they would need to ask the citizens of Champaign County for a tax levy to support an office and staff. He was concerned about the creation of an overlap in services. Hubert explained that the other veterans' organizations contact them when a need arises.

Kurtz said the funding would not necessarily come out of taxpayer dollars as a levy and could be placed in the budget. James said the General Corporate budget has many priorities to take care of such as facilities. James said it appeared to him that the budget to fund this commission would be approximately \$80,000 dollars to provide office space and staff. James would like to see the county provide funding through vouchers to assist the veterans and not create jobs. Hubert said the text in the Constitution and Bylaws was based on what other counties have done. This was just a starting point and adjustments could be made. Carter supported the creation of the VAC of Champaign County because there is no community assistance for vets. Holderfield agreed with both James and Carter, but the administrative costs were a concern and she wanted to give the vets assistance and not spend funding on administrative costs.

Weibel stated the provision of office space, phone, pc, and furniture would be the easy part. The harder part would be determining a budget. Weibel asked what the expenditures had been for the past few years. Hubert explained the levels of assistance was listed on page 8 and based on Livingston County because they had approximately the same number of vets as Champaign County. Hubert said he obtained most of his information from Livingston and Effingham county Veteran's Assistance commissions. Discussion followed regarding the budgets for McLean and Peoria counties. Langenheim said a request for information from Macon and Livingston counties had been made but not received yet.

Hubert said there needed to be accountability by entering vets into the system. Langenheim felt they should provide vets with temporary assistance and then refer them on for other agency assistance. Weibel had discussed the laws governing the formation of a County Veterans' Assistance commission with legal council and the law is obtuse.

James pointed out the bylaws state that the County Board would properly compensate VAC for work. James hoped that statements like this would be omitted. Hubert explained that they started with a generic draft, they do not want money for themselves, and these items could be omitted. Holderfield agreed that they need to make sure the bylaws are clearly spelled out to protect the County and the organization and delete items that could allow abuse of the system.

James suggested they look at by laws, budget, and timeline of when office needed. Weibel said the budget could be adjusted. Weibel said some VAC laws state the veteran must be a resident of the county and they could have different levels of aid for resident veterans and those passing through. James would like to see a voucher system for accountability.

Langenheim stated the committee consensus was to proceed and ask the members of the various veterans associations to provide revised bylaws, timeline, and budget. Hubert said this information would be provided within 30 days. James stated they needed to elect a Vice Chair. **MOTION** by James to appoint Carter as the Vice Chair; seconded by Holderfield. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kay Rhodes
Administrative Assistant