

MINUTES
CVSO ADVISORY COUNCIL
September 25, 2008
Waupaca, Wisconsin

Members Present

Nick Benzinger, Shawano
Andrew Clark, Outagamie
Mark Grams, Dodge
Mike Haley, Chippewa
Jon LiDonne, Waupaca
Ted Mynyk, Iowa
John Solis, Rock
Robert Stone, Winnebago

Members Excused

Fred Kaiser, Waushara

WDVA Present

Ken Black, Acting Secretary
Andy Schuster, Public Affairs Director
Bill Crowley, Commandant, WVH-King
David Rueth, WI GI Bill Coordinator
Nate Nez, Regional Coordinator

Others Present

Dawn Andersen, Asst CVSO Barron Co.
Dani Riesbeck, Staff Oneida Co.
Kerry Metoxen, TVSO Oneida
Dan Connery, Asst CVSO Dane Co.
Judy Steckbauer, Deputy CVSO Winnebago Co.
Marcia Ziegler, Adm. Sec. Clark Co.
Teresa Hartjes, Staff Wood Co.
Charleen Moscinski, Staff Wood Co.
Greg Sniegowski, Asst CVSO Wood Co.
Shari Zeichert, Staff Marathon Co.
Mary Dunn, Staff Marathon Co.
Chris Beer, Staff Green Co.
Laura Moore, Staff Crawford Co.
Evelyn Williams, Asst CVSO Vernon Co.
Marv Freedman, Board of Veterans Affairs
Matt Nikolay, Sen. Feingold's Office

Other CVSOs Present

Joe Aulik, Kewaunee
Jane Babcock, Manitowoc
Scott Bachowski, Barron
Mark Baldwin, Washington
Duane Bauer, Dunn
Richard Bayer, Racine
Scott Berger, Marathon
Gerald Beuthin, Green Lake
Randy Bjerke, Jackson
Ray Boeckman, Sawyer
Ken Brown, Ozaukee
Donna Chrzras, Columbia
Yvonne Duesterhoeft, Jefferson
Rick Gates, Polk
Jim Gausmann, LaCrosse
Ted Harvey, Price
Holly Hoppe, Oconto
Michael Jackson, Dane
Chris Johnson, Bayfield
Chris Jordan, Walworth
Sandra Kramer, Richland
Carl Krantz, Washburn
Rock Larson, Wood
Vern Lovley, Juneau
John Margowski, Waukesha
Dale Oatman, Langlade
Jon Scheldroup, Douglas
Clif Sorenson, Eau Claire
Charles Splonskowski, Iron
Tom Taber, Grant
David Thomas, Taylor
David Till, Pierce
Tony Tyczynski, Sauk
Tammy Walters, Oneida
David Weiskircher, Lafayette
John Wertschnig, Fond du Lac
Jim Young, Vernon

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting of the CVSO Advisory Council was called to order by Chairman Stone at 3:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A quorum was present.

2. **Certification of Notice of Meeting**

Certification was so noted.

3. Approval of Minutes of August 14, 2008

The Chairman asked if there were any additions or corrections and hearing none stated that the minutes of the August 14th CVSO Advisory Council meeting are approved.

4. Announcements and Introductions

Introductions included: Bill Crowley, Commandant, Wisconsin Veterans Home-King; Andy Schuster, Public Affairs Director; Matt Nikolay, Senator Feingold's Staff; and Marv Freedman, Chair of the Board of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Stone thanked the Council for electing him as Chairman. He looks forward to bringing the CVSO Association's message to the Board.

5. Public Input

Mark Baldwin, Washington County, thanked the WDVA Claims office, specifically Jim Engel and Sandra VanZeeland, for the package that was put together for the Association.

Michael Jackson, Dane County, congratulated Mr. Stone on his election as Chair. He noted that Mr. Stone is the most senior active CVSO in Wisconsin. Also, congratulations to Nick Benzinger on his election as Vice Chair. Mr. Jackson's final comment was to commend and thank former Chair John Solis and former Vice Chair Mark Grams for the wonderful job that they did during their terms as CVSO Advisory Council officers.

6. Budget Update

Ken Black, Acting Secretary, said that the budget was moved forward. The VetEd Program went through without the private school piece and the five year piece attached to it. There will be problems with expenditure of dollars in the VetEd Program. Every year, at the end of the first year of the budget, we run out of money in the VetEd Program. What we do then is take money from the next year to pay the current year's bill. Consequently, at the end of the second year, we need to get more money through a Joint Finance 13.10 procedure. Going forward, Mr. Black will not do business that way. Now, at the end of the first year, the bill will be paid and as we get toward the second year, an estimate will have to be made as to how much can be paid in the second semester to veterans that apply for the VetEd. It may be an 80% or 70% reimbursement, depending upon how many dollars remain. Mr. Black will not go to Joint Finance to get authority to take more money out of the Veterans Trust Fund.

Secondly, Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant (ANVG) will be out of dollars within the next week and a half. Caps were lifted and the lifetime cap was bumped up to \$7,500; consequently, there was a run on the program.

The budget contained a request for about \$7,955,400 in general purpose revenue (GPR). Additionally, the Department had requested four additional FTEs as outreach personnel; however that number was reduced by the Board to one outreach personnel. The Department was trying to position two liaisons at the Universities for the Vet Ed Program and that, as well, did not go through in the budget.

Mark Grams asked with regards to the dollar outage in the ANVG, will applications still be accepted and put in queue for when there is funding again? Mr. Black took that under

advisement. Mr. Grams asked how soon before the start of the semester do you anticipate making the judgment on what the reimbursement rate is going to be. Mr. Black said that he knows it has to be up front and as early on as possible because it is a budget issue for the student.

7. Wisconsin G. I. Bill Update

Mr. Stone said he understands that there was an inter-departmental committee established to look into the G.I. Bill. It was brought to his attention that this committee was absent CVSO representation. Mr. Black said it is the Department's intent to get CVSOs involved. Mr. Stone asked for recommendations from the Council. Mr. Solis made a motion that one CVSO from each region should be chosen by the Executive Committee to be part of the G.I. Bill Committee. Mr. LiDonne seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously on a voice vote.

8. Bonus – WDVA Staff

Mr. Stone said the issue of bonuses or discretionary compensation was brought up. It is not the intent of the Council to micro-manage the Department, however, they want to be keenly aware of the budget and make positive recommendations.

Mr. Black asked that questions asked of him be backed up with an explanation so that he can understand the intent of the question. Mr. Stone asked if there is a provision within the Department to grant discretionary compensation to personnel. Mr. LiDonne said that there are rumors that the Department is paying bonuses and he is getting asked questions from people and he would like to know how to address that. Mr. Black said discretionary compensation awards (DCAs) have been given to individuals throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs in the past. We look for the individuals throughout the organization that are doing a good job for this type of recognition. Probably there won't be any DCAs going forward simply because we have ourselves in a financial situation where we need to tighten our belts. Mark Grams asked if these DCAs are paid out of the Trust Fund. Mr. Black said he does not know. Mr. Grams asked that information on where money comes from to pay DCAs be provided at the next meeting.

9. Council Members' Matters (Not Subject to Adoption)

Mr. Grams said there was a time when the WDVA Claims Office was short of support staff and he thought that was taken care of. He read from WDVA Bulletin #861, "This action was necessitated by several conditions: Procedures recently changed or established by the USDVA, delays in the receipt and increasing volume of U.S. mail and ongoing support staff shortages in WDVA Claims Office." Could you address how much you're short or if there is something in the budget to address this particular shortage in staff?. Mr. Black did not recall anything in the budget that addressed this particular situation. He added that WDVA has shortages across the entire Department.

Mr. LiDonne said as outgoing CVSO Association President, he will no longer be a member of the CVSO Advisory Council and it has been a pleasure to provide input over this past year.

Mr. Stone extended personal and Association compliments and appreciation to Jim Engel and to the Department for the accreditation training.

10. Next Meeting Schedule

October 16th at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton.

11. Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Solis, seconded by Mr. LiDonne and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the CVS0 Advisory Council meeting, the time was 3:45 p.m.

Robert Stone
Chairman