

Livingston County Veterans' Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2018

I. Call to Order

Hansel Keene called to order the meeting of the Livingston County Veteran's Committee at 5:30 pm on February 26, 2018 at Livingston County Veteran Services.

II. Roll Call: Hansel Keene conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Bruce Hundley, Jim Wallace, Kevin Nagle and Joe Riker. Also present were County Treasurer Jennifer Nash, Register of Deeds Brandon Denby, Andrea Hodges and Adam Smiddy.

III. Approval of Agenda: Bruce Hundley, motion to move New Business item Relief Lien Process, to after call to the public, 2nd by Joe Riker, motion passed. Agenda Approved.

IV. Call to Public: None.

V. New Business:

Relief Lien Process: The Chair recognized Jennifer Nash Livingston County Treasurer. The Treasurer explained that the current statute to provide relief, does not allow the relief to be delivered in conjunction with any contract or promissory note. The Treasurer also talked through the administrative costs to tracking and ensuring any notes that the County is a lien holder of are protected as it related to other existing programs. Bruce Hundley asked if there were any way to protect against concerns, of granting relief that subsequently benefits an unqualified party should an applicant pass away or an applicant sell a property. The Treasurer explained that under the current millage and statutes, there are no tools that allow any such agreements with an applicant to repay any granted relief. The Register of Deeds suggested providing portions of requests and working with other organizations to alleviate any concerns of an application being too much. Hansel Keene discussed his desire to ensure applicants are serviced but that they will not turn on the invest made by the committee. Joe Riker suggested a possibility of checking an applicant's credit report to ensure the financial picture of the applicant is complete. Jim Wallace asked that if there were any current liens on property because of relief, that those liens needed to be discharged. The Treasurer said they would certainly need to be discharged. The Committee discussed that there are liens on vehicles that were donated previously in conjunction with relief.

VI. Approval of Minutes: For the minutes dated February 5 2018, Bruce Hundley Motions to accept the minutes as presented, second by Kevin Nagle. Discussion, none. Vote, all in favor, Minutes Approved. For the minutes dated February 13 2018, Bruce Hundley Motions to accept the minutes as presented, second by Hansel Keene. Discussion, Jim Wallace asked to clarify the order of motions concerning employee travel and was satisfied. Vote, all in favor, Minutes Approved.

Kevin Nagle moves to go into a closed session to discuss the closed session minutes, Joe Riker seconds. All in favor, Motion Approved.

Joe Riker motioned to approve the closed session minutes as written, second by Kevin Nagle. No discussion. All in favor, Minutes Approved.

VII. Applications for Relief:

17-040: \$8,470.00 for Home Repair & \$3,412.00 for Tombstone. The applicant explained his mortgage refinancing and the dangerous situation that his bathroom presents. The Committee asked questions concerning how much money might have been received during a cash-out refinance and what the applicants concerns were with the possibility of a lien being placed on the property. The applicant explained his mortgage situation and that any money cashed out during refinancing was used to pay medical and funeral debt for his recently deceased spouse. Joe Riker motions to pay for home repair and tombstone in full, second Kevin Nagle. Discussion, Bruce Hundley

18-028: \$2,832.35 for Tax Debt. The Committee discussed with the applicant the need for additional money for utilities overage. The Committee also asked the applicant about the income an adult child is contributing to the home. The applicant responded by stating the child does contribute but only when able due to fluid income. Kevin Nagle motions to pay for 2015-17 taxes up to \$5,000, 2nd for Bruce Hundley. Discussion, Jim Wallace stated that only 2015 taxes being applied for should be paid, only to stay consistent with other decisions. Joe Riker agreed with Jim Wallace. Vote, three yeas, nays were Jim Wallace and Joe Riker. Application Approved.

VIII. Old business:

DnA Testing: The Director presented previous minutes stating that DnA testing was initially agreed to be paid for by Veterans Services Relief due to the Livingston County Veterans Treatment Court (LCVTC) grant issues and would be paid for by that grant once it is renewed. The Committee discussed the need to continue to pay for the testing given the lack of knowledge of participants in the court and if they qualify for Relief. Jim Wallace motion to stop DnA payments going forward and to pay for February payment due, second Joe Riker. Discussion: Hansel Keene discussed the possible cost to the Veterans with travel to the VHA Ann Arbor or

testing costs. Kevin Nagle discussed the lack of leaving an alternative as possibly being reckless. The Director stated that persons in the court still have the ability to apply to Relief for testing to be paid for. Vote, yeas 3, nays were Joe Riker and Hansel Keene. Motion passes, DnA testing payments discontinued.

Employee Travel:

The Director asked for permission for Dawn Learst to attend training for the LCVTC to Grand Rapids, MI and Texas. The Director stated his view that any training required of an employee should be paid for by the County but that the LCVTS Foundation would pay for this training. The Committee asked the Director his opinion about the training and if it were worth sending the employee. The Director responded that the training in Grand Rapids is necessary but the the training in Texas may not be valuable. Kevin Nagle motion to approve travel for Dawn Learst, 2nd Bruce Hundley. Discussion, none. All in favor, motion passes.

The Director asked for permission for all counselors and the Director to attend MACVC training in Traverse City, Mi. The Director explained the requirement for employees to attend this training annually to maintain NACVSO accreditation. Kevin Nagle asked if Rose Kenny should go to training if she may not stay long term, the Director replied that she would stay. Kevin Nagle motions to send the required employees to training with a budget up to \$2,100.00, 2nd Joe Riker. Discussion, Jim Wallace asked if the motion covers all the required expenses, which the Director affirmed it does. Vote, all in favor, motion pass.

The Director asked for permission to send two counselors and the Director to NACVSO training for accreditation and advanced training. The Director explained the costs to be \$4,773.78 and discussed the process for accreditation and the advanced training and how it will benefit the office. Kevin Nagle asked questions on the need for the cross accreditation, which the Director explained the need so that Veterans will have representation before the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) as required by 38CFR14.627. The Committee asked if the office has had to appear before the BVA for a Veteran, which the Director has replied no, because no counselor has been certified to do so. The Committee asked if Rose Kenny will be staying and if she should attend this advanced training. The Director responded that she is planning to stay to the best of his knowledge. Jim Wallace motions to send Adam, Rose and Andrea to NACVSO training with a budget of \$5,200.00, 2nd Joe Riker. Discussion, Kevin Nagle discussed the need for accreditation but would not vote sending Rose based on her participation in the office and the potential benefits from sending her. Jim Wallace disagreed based on Rose's expertise and need to reward her to keep her in the office. Hansel Keene stated that he does not have confidence that Rose will stay and that such an investment is immature at this point. The Director stated that he believes that talent should be

invested in and limiting training for someone based upon a possible future is not in the best interest of an organization. Jim Wallace stated that it is ignorance by some board members in knowing the process of veterans claims and an assumption that Rose will not stay, is not good for the office. Kevin Nagle stated that nothing will change based upon not sending Rose to training. The Director stated that this training would align the capability of the office with other departments in other counties. Vote, yeas were Jim Wallace; nays were Hansel Keene, Joe Riker, Bruce Hundley and Kevin Nagle. Motion denied.

Jim Wallace motions to send Adam Smiddy and Andrea Hodges to NACVSO training, Discussion, none. All in favor, motion passes.

The Director discussed all employee travel being required to be approved by the Committee. Jim Wallace motions to allow the Director to authorize all instate travel for employees, 2nd Joe Riker. Discussion, none. Vote the yeas were Joe Riker and Jim Wallace; the Nays were Hansel Keene, Bruce Hundley and Kevin Nagle. Joe Riker Motions that all travel within the state be authorized by the Director but all outreach events be authorized by the Committee such as any event with a “table” as representation, 2nd Jim Wallace. Discussion, the Director clarified what participation in events need to be approved by the committee such as VCAT, legislative or VA events. Bruce Hundley cited the need for adequate planning for requesting permission to attend these events. The Director cited that the need to attend Veterans events which do not take place in Livingston County is there and having to seek permission to attend is ridiculous, short sighted, bad planning and put the office in a bad position to service Veterans. Vote, Yeas were Jim Wallace, Joe Riker; Nays were Hansel Keene, Kevin Nagle and Bruce Hundley. Motion fails.

Jim Wallace asked for further information on the termite case. The Director stated that the family is still working with contractors to make a better application. Joe Riker noted that he does not see paying that amount, \$120,000 for a home, and the need for a cap to prevent the board from considering similar applications in the future. Jim Wallace maintained that no cap should be considered to maintain flexibility. Kevin Nagle stated that an amount should be used to require a unanimous vote.

IX. New business:

Directors Report: The director reported that during 16 working days the office had 91 appointments, gave 58 rides, and filed 17 claims, 8 relief claims, 4 homeless Veterans sheltered. The current relief budget stood at \$38,203.00. The Director reported that the department has a cash available balance of \$930,000.00 from the current and previous year’s unspent relief and budget items. The Director reported that the interviews went well and a driver would be selected soon. The Director stated

that he would put forward resolutions honoring the Veteran of the Year, there were no objections. The Director stated that he would like to increase the budget for promotional items for outreach events such as stress ball, coins, challenge coins, pens and pamphlets. The committee asked about the events these items would be made available and what advertising could be used to promote the office. Motion to increase publishing budget to \$5,000.00, 2nd by Jim Wallace. Discussion, none. All in favor, motion passes.

The Director discussed outreach for February as Community Connect and Walk for Warmth. For March the director stated that the website will be updated with meeting minutes and a jobs page, flags for memorial day will be ordered and possible mobile office hours at the Hartland senior center. Kevin Nagle asked that the committee be notified of upcoming events.

X. Good of the Order.

Joe Riker discussed the need to advertise the office to get more veterans services to include possible renting a billboard. Jim Wallace suggested tracking referrals to the office.

Joe Riker asked that the office track economic value to the county by delivering benefits to the Veterans.

XI. Adjournment

Kevin Nagle motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 pm, Joe Riker seconds. 5 yeas,
Meeting Adjourned

Minutes submitted by: Adam Smiddy

An audio recording is available.