

DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 25, 2025

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Department of Veteran Affairs Committee was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at the Chippewa Courthouse in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Secretary Brooks Partridge called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., as Chairman Jim Shogren was not present. The Veterans Board had a quorum and normal business was conducted.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brooks Partridge, Dr. Frederick Ludwig, Bob Savoie, Damon Lieurance (Non-Voting member)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Shogren

OTHERS PRESENT: Melissa Donaghe, John Miller

Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Robert Savoie, supported by Brooks Partridge, to approve the agenda as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

Monthly Report

The monthly report was broken down into new and old business as the board did not have a quorum last meeting.

Old Business:

The month's statistics for the period of December 23, 2024 – January, 28 2025. The office was open for thirty-seven (37) days. There were approximately 65 visits to the office. The office received and placed approximately 250 phone calls during this period. An official welcome to Robert Savoie as a member of our board. A welcome to Damon Lieurance as he Commissioners' Liaison. Melissa and John are still in the process of seeking their PIV cards. There was a change to the property tax exemption law for 100% disabled Veterans. Veterans will only need to make the initial application. The MVAA finalized our grant and the initial money has been distributed to the county. Amendments to the grant allowed our office to receive a new laptop and two (2) cell phones for the office. This equipment will assist in providing better services to our local Veterans.

New Business:

The MVAA recently sent out notices that all county grants reassessed and would be receiving a lower dollar amount for the grants received. Our county will be receiving approximately \$20,000 dollars less. This reduction will require cuts to our planned uses of the grant. After a review of the grant budget, we will be eliminating all advertising and proposed promotional spending. A reduction in available funds used for the County Veterans Trust Fund and emergent relief will also happen. Our office will do all it can to ensure we still provide the best services to our Veterans. The office has registered to virtually attend the "roundtable" event in Lansing on February 27, 2025 at 1:30 pm concerning the reductions to issued grants by the MVAA. Board members are invited to attend the virtual event as well. The office has submitted questions and concerns to the "roundtable" by email. John has received his PIV card and Melissa is still in the process to receive hers. Melissa and John are in the process of seeking cross-accreditation with VFW and VVA. The office assisted a Veteran in their application to receive emergent need funds from the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund. The Veteran was initially granted the relief, but the MVTF board reassessed the decision and revoked the grant with a denial. The office aided the Veteran in completing an appeal and the appeal was denied as well. The office is working with this Veteran to seek alternative income. John attended training in Traverse City that was presented by the MVAA. The training was excellent

training and provided great insight to assist our local veterans. The office has been very involved in outreach. Our office attended the I-500 race and shared a table in the Vendors Tent with the MVAA and the American Legion. John attended a meeting with the organization "Helping Hands". The organization is making quilts and other items for the all-female veteran's honor flight that is taking place in May. John spoke about the honor flight and other services offered through our office. Melissa attended the George and Martha Washington Tea at the American Legion. The event was held to honor female Veterans and Gold & Blue Star mothers. Melissa enjoyed the event. Melissa had a meeting with Dulcee Ranta concerning the changes to the property tax for 100% disabled Veterans. The meeting went well. We continue to use the DAV transportation vehicle on a regular basis to assist Veterans with medical appointments in Iron Mountain. This year is the 75th year that the Iron Mountain VA medical center has been serving Veterans. There will be an open house to celebrate this anniversary on March 5, 2025 from 10 am to 1 pm central time in Iron Mountain.

Approval of the Minutes

Old Business:

The committee received and reviewed the December 23, 2024 committee minutes.

It was moved by Robert Savoie, supported by Brooks Partridge, to approve the December 23, 2024 minutes as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

New Business:

The committee received and reviewed the January 28, 2025 committee minutes.

It was moved by Robert Savoie, supported by Brooks Partridge, to approve the January 28, 2024 minutes as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Burials

Old Business:

No burials for December 23, 2024 – January 28, 2025

New Business:

No burials for January 28, 2025 – February 25, 2025

Grave Markers

Old Business:

No grave marker funds were used in January 2025.

No action needed.

New Business:

Received an invoice for 23 grave markers for Oaklawn Cemetery totaling \$1035.00.

It was moved by Robert Savoie, supported by Brooks Partridge, to approve the fund distribution for the grave markers. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Food Assistance

Old Business:

No food assistance was issued during January 2025.

No action needed.

New Business:

Food assistance of \$150

No action needed.

Old Business:

MVAA Grant Distributions in the amount of \$1973.82

- **Advertisement - \$0**
- **Transportation - \$0**
- **Food Assistance - \$0**
- **Emergent Relief - \$0**
- **Part-time Compliance Officer/Project Director - \$1973.82**

The committee reviewed the MVAA grant distributions in the amount of \$1973.82.

It was moved by Robert Savoie, supported by Dr. Frederick Ludwig, to approve the MVAA grant distributions in the amount of \$1973.82. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

New Business:

MVAA Grant Distributions in the amount of \$1951.01

- **Advertisement - \$0**
- **Transportation - \$50**
- **Food Assistance - \$150**
- **Emergent Relief - \$0**
- **Part-time Compliance Officer/Project Director - \$1751.01**

The committee reviewed the MVAA grant distributions in the amount of \$1951.01.

It was moved by Robert Savoie, supported by Brooks Partridge, to approve the MVAA grant distributions in the amount of \$1951.01. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Date of next committee meeting.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

It was moved by Robert Savoie, supported by Brooks Partridge, to have the next meeting take place on March 25, 2025 at 4:00 pm. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Committee Comments

Board member Robert Savoie stated that he would attending the “roundtable” event concerning the CVTF grant presented by the MVAA on February 27, 2025 at 1:30 pm.

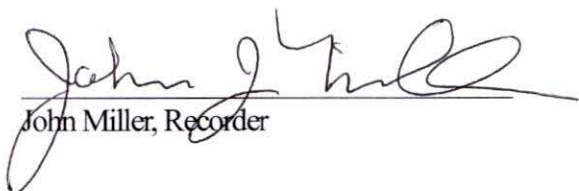
Chairman Comments

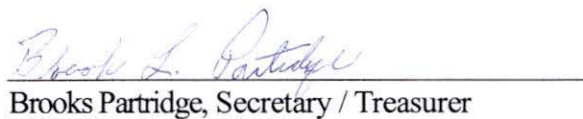
No comments

Adjourn

It was moved by Bob Savoie, supported by Brooks Partridge to adjourn. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.


John Miller, Recorder


Brooks Partridge, Secretary / Treasurer