

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Meeting

JUNE 27, 2013

Standing Committee

The meeting of the Department VA & R Committee was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairman Ray Moore at 2:00 p.m. at the in the Tahquamenon Room of the Kewadin Convention Center, Sault Sainte Marie Michigan.

Roll call of members present were: Chairman Ray Moore, Donald Chimielewski , Donald Howard, Vice Chairman Tony Licari & Secretary Dave Spencer.

Department Service Officers present were – Director James Topps, Phil McCaskey, Pat Kline, Lannie Thomas, and Gary Garvin.

There were 16 guests present.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on February 16, 2013 were read by Moore. It was moved by Licari and supported by Chimielewski that the minutes of the February 2013 meeting of the Department VA & R Committee be approved; Motion carried.

Mr. Topps was asked to introduce his staff members present and presented his report. He noted that the staff is working very hard and presented a current update of activities from Oct. 1 through May 31 which noted total recoveries of \$88,797,533.00 with activity on 4,777 cases. He also reported the staff is working with the newly created Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency and there are currently two (2) members of that staff shadowing our Service Officers in the Detroit Office. He will also only be sending three (3) staff members for training in D.C. in the future with a rotation system, and all of the Staff will not attend the Indianapolis training in the future. Applications are also now available for registration to the annual Service Officers School at the R. A. McMullin DNR Conference Center at Higgins Lake.

Chairman Moore introduced Service Officer Emeritus Richard Morrison as a guest and Dick gave the group and gave support to the program.

Chairman Moore reported the receipt of 82 Post Service Officer Reports and noted that the Committee had reviewed them and chose a PSO and DSO of the year. These awards will be presented at the Fall Conference. He noted the number of reports received was less than last year and the Service Officers need to read the letter attached which indicates the reporting period is May 1 to April 30. He was unhappy to have received a number of reports before Christmas and several more prior to May 1, which rendered them ineligible for consideration of these awards. Certificates will be sent to all who at least took the time to send the report in.

Chairman Moore also reported on correspondence from the Legislative Chairman, Doug Williams, regarding support from Senator Stabenow's office regarding expiring leases for CBOC's and the possibility of funds not being available to pay these leases and thus the loss of access to Health Care by our Veterans, her letter was in support of this funding being reinstated.

Mr. Topps introduced our National guest

Mr. Licari asked about the possibility of a fund raiser for the Higgins Lake scholarship fund. A challenge coin was suggested. Motion by Howard, Supported by Chimielewski to pursue the design and cost of a challenge coin to be sold to raise some funds. Passed.

Mr. James Feliciano, Chairman of the VAVS/VHVS Sub-Committee reported on their meeting held earlier today. He noted this committee may send letters requesting donations to support the efforts and services provided by the volunteers at our VA Hospitals, Clinics and State Homes.

Mr. Howard requested an update from Mr. Topps about Service Officer Chris Smirnes who is on medical leave. Mr. Topps reported Chris is still in treatment for his cancer and support can be provided by checking the family web-site or making a contribution through Headquarters..

There being no further business a Motion to adjourn prevailed at 2:56 p.m.