

Jasper County Commission of Veterans Affairs
Administrator Alyssa Wilson
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Phone 1-641-792-7993
Commissioners: Fred Chabot, Marta Ford, Jerry Nelson, and Ed Spangenburg

10 October 2024

Minutes

On 10 October 2024, at 1500 hours, Commission Chairperson Jerry Nelson called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Jasper County Veterans Affairs Commission to order. The commissioners in attendance were: Fred Chabot, Marta Ford, Jerry Nelson, Ed Spangenburg, and Kat Thompson. Also in attendance were Human Resources Director Dennis Simon, JCVA Administrator Alyssa Wilson, Shared Benefits Coordinator Josh Price, Newton News reporter Chris Braunschweig, and Newton News staff member Pam DeBruyn.

Approve Minutes:

Marta Ford made a motion and Kat Thompson seconded to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled Commission meeting held on 11 September 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business:

1. CVSO Training for Josh Price:

Josh Price commented that he completed Basic Benefits accreditation training 23-27 September 2024. He added that 160 attendees had registered for the week-long training and 40 attendees failed. Josh has also completed Trip Training. He and Administrator Wilson will work on his accreditation from the congressionally-recognized veterans service organizations in order to secure his certification from the Office of General Counsel and, ultimately, his PIV card.

2. Colfax/Mingo Veterans Outreach:

The outreach event scheduled for 21 September 2024, 1000 hours, at the Colfax City Hall, was attended by a small number of veterans, Administrator Wilson and Commissioners Fred Chabot, Jerry Nelson, and Ed Spangenburg. Administrator Wilson brought coffee for the event and Fred Chabot brought two dozen donuts from Newton HyVee. Administrator Wilson answered veterans' questions during the meeting. Awareness of the event and community conversations after the event led to possibly four veterans visiting JCVA for assistance. The consensus of the Commission is that the next outreach events should be scheduled for Monroe and Prairie City.

3. Rules of Engagement:

The 1997 set of Newton school board ground rules for meetings Fred Chabot introduced on 11 September 2024 has acquired some legs. Kat Thompson distributed a revised set of "rules of engagement." Fred Chabot objected to the name "rules of engagement" due to its applicability to wartime military operations, laws of armed conflict, and hostile forces. He suggested use of the name "core values." Jerry Nelson suggested that a name change to "Rules of Etiquette." Much of the ensuing discussion was unintelligible on the voice recorder. Ed Spangenburg made a motion and Marta Ford seconded to adopt the name "Rules of Etiquette" and the ten phrases included on the draft document created by Kat Thompson. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

1. Pam DeBruyn, Newton News - Newton Community Brochure Proposal:

Ms. DeBruyn explained that the Newton News will soon publish a free booklet to be called “At Your Service.” It will contain advertisements of commercial companies, non-profit groups, and governmental agencies. A full-page ad costs \$160.00. The booklet is intended to be in use for one year. Approximately 4,000 copies will be distributed in Newton, all other Jasper County communities, Grinnell, and Marshalltown. Marta Ford made a motion and Ed Spangenburg seconded to purchase a full-page ad for the Jasper County Veterans Affairs Commission in this publication. The funding will come from the Commission’s county budget. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. DeBruyn invited the Commission to purchase its usual 2” by 5” ad in the upcoming Newton News Veterans Day Tribute publication for \$45.00. Kat Thompson made the applicable motion which was seconded by Marta Ford. Funding will come from the Commission’s county budget. The motion passed unanimously. Finally, Ms. DeBruyn invited the Commission to purchase as many \$50 2” by 5” ads as desired in each of their four Jasper County publications whenever desired to publicize our outreach events. The publications are the Newton News, Jasper County Advertiser (shopper with 10,000 recipients), Jasper County Tribune (covering Colfax, Mingo, and Baxter), and Prairie City Explorer (covering Prairie City and Monroe).

2. September 2024 Administrator’s Activity Report:

Commissioners reviewed the September, 2024 Administrator’s Activity Report. Discussion ensued regarding the new supplemental spreadsheet Administrator Wilson is using to document her work with individual veterans. It is very labor intensive, but useful for reference purposes. Josh Price will use a similar spreadsheet to document his work with our veterans once he receives certification to access VA databases. Administrator Wilson will investigate monthly distribution to commissioners of this voluminous spreadsheet as an email attachment not to be printed.

3. August, 2024 Expenses, Allocation, Donation, ESFP Report:

Commissioners reviewed the September, 2024 set of reports. National school for Administrator Wilson and Josh Price is scheduled to take place in Louisville, Kentucky in 2024. Administrator Wilson clarified that county funds will not be used for veterans’ medical expenses as is stated in Commission bylaws. Jerry Nelson mentioned that the Veterans Affairs office is in arrears on its quarterly reports to the county supervisors. Administrator Wilson will work with Josh Price to get these reports current as soon as possible.

4. Stars and Stripes Veterans Breakfast:

It was the consensus of the Commission that the Veterans Affairs office will be closed on 14 November 2024 so that both Alyssa and Josh are able to staff an information table (no cost) at the Jasper County Retired Senior Volunteer Program breakfast for Jasper County veterans. The venue is the second floor conference room at DMACC in Newton.

5. Home Visits:

Administrator Wilson explained that social workers and in-home nurses have been contacting her to conduct in-home visits for homebound Jasper County veterans. The purpose of the in-home visit would be to initiate a benefit claim for the homebound veteran to the VA for a service-connected disability or disease. If approved by the VA, this would make the veteran eligible for publicly funded medical and transportation services. Much of this discussion was unintelligible on the voice recorder. Jerry Nelson explained at one of the county supervisors’ meetings in July, 2024, the supervisors were pretty clear that JCVA county employees were not to conduct home visits. There are workarounds for this problem through use of mailings and/or relatives and social workers as couriers. Jerry will circle around to the county supervisors for clarification of this matter.

Marta Ford made a motion and Ed Spangenburg seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1620 hours. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Input: None

Confirm next meeting: Wednesday, 13 November 2024, 1500 hrs., at the Jasper County Office Building.

/s/ Ferdinand J. Chabot, Secretary