Jasper County Commission of Veterans Affairs
315 West Third Street North, Suite 250, Newton, IA 50208
Phone 1-641-792-7993
Commissioners: Fred Chabot, Marta Ford, Jerry Nelson, Kat Thompson, and Ed Spangenburg

11 June 2025

Minutes

On 11 June 2025, 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, Jerry Nelson, Kat Thompson, and Ed Spangenburg. Also in attendance: JCVA Director Ray Maxey, Shared Benefits Coordinator and County Veterans Service Officer Josh Price, Human Resources Director Dennis Simon, Newton News reporter Chris Braunschweig, and five guests including Lloyd Jones, American Legion representative, and Robert Suesakul.

Approve Minutes:
Kat Thompson made a motion and Ed Spangenburg seconded to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled commission meeting held on 14 May 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business:

1. New Commissioner Appointment (Approved by BOS):
Chairperson Jerry Nelson officially welcomed Robert Suesakul on board as the new commissioner who will take Fred Chabot's seat on 1 July 2025.

New Business:

1. May, 2025 Activity Report:
Commissioners reviewed the report. Staff noted that 106 veterans signed in on the PII sheet during their visits to our offices. Multiple sign-ins by the same person have been monitored and prevented. Jasper County veterans are very pleased that no appointment is needed to visit our offices. Staff members are rotating lunch breaks so that there is always a staff member in the office over the lunch period.

2. May, 2025 Expenses and Allocation Report:
Commissioners reviewed the report.

3. Til Valhalla Shirt Order with Logo:
A limited number of this brand of short-sleeved t-shirt have been ordered. They will be given at no cost to a veteran of any Iowa county who expresses an interest in a shirt. Staff are also looking at the possibility of purchasing ball caps with the new JCVA logo.

4. Flag Cases with JCVA Plate - Pickup 6/10:
Staff found a supplier of high quality flag cases in Pennsylvania; the cases are made in America, not imported. The vendor has an almost unlimited supply at a cost of $39.00 each compared to a previous vendor's cost of $65.00 each. The flag cases are supplied to the funeral home at no cost to the veteran. There is an identification plate on the back side of each case. Staff plan to keep a supply of 15 flag cases on hand.

5. Revisiting Annual Training in Louisville, Kentucky:

Josh will attend the annual training in person. Ray will not attend annual training this year in light of his recent training to achieve certification. The estimated cost of Josh's attendance is $2,300 to $3,000. The General Assistance office is on board with Josh's attendance at this training. The Certified Veterans Advocate (CVA) training is scheduled for 11 July 2025 during the period of annual training. Ed Spangenburg made a motion and Kat Thompson seconded to approve Josh's attendance at Annual Training to include the CVA session. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Visiting with Other Counties for VBMS Training:
Ray and Josh will visit other Iowa county veterans affairs offices in the coming weeks to acquire insight into details of using the Veterans Benefits Management System. This will be much more economical and of better quality than formal training by the software vendor. The consensus of the Commission was that they press on with these visits.

Public Input: None

Announcements: Fred Chabot reminded staff that the SD card used to record 2023, 2024, and January through April, 2025 Commission meetings is in Ryan Eaton's office. Fred gave the meeting recording device to Josh for safekeeping until a new Commission secretary is appointed.

Kat Thompson made a motion and Ed Spangenburg seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1600 hours. The motion passed unanimously.

Confirm next meeting: Wednesday, 9 July 2025, 1500 hrs., Jasper County Office Building.

/s/ Ferdinand J. Chabot, Secretary