

**Minutes of July 30, 2026 Regular Quarterly Meeting
Veterans' Assistance Commission of Stephenson County (VACSC)**

At 6:30 pm, President Gary Eisenhower Sr. called the meeting to order and declared a quorum had been met with 8 representative organizations present. He led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance. Fred Asche opened the meeting with prayer. Meeting consisted of Superintendent Wagner, office assistant Deb Holmes, Lisa Eisenhower (absent), and (10) Commissioners. Visitor(s) none.

Approval of Minutes:

Following the Commission's review of the 4/ 30/ 26 regular Quarterly Meeting minutes, a motion was made by Fred Asche to accept the minutes as printed, with a second by Sam Veer. The motion carried with a 8 YES to 0 NO, positive voice vote.

Following the Commission's review of the June 28, 2026 Budget Approval Meeting minutes, a motion made by Tim Schoeny to accept the minutes as printed, seconded by Fred Asche. The motion carried with a 8 YES/ 0 NO positive voice vote.

Correspondence

Superintendent reported:

- July 24th "Quilt of Valor" for Eugene Fritz poster.
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Finance:

Accountant Lisa Eisenhower submitted and with the Superintendent discussed the following items of the Quarterly Financial Reports. **Please Note:** A copy of the Financial Reports are filed with these minutes.

Bills Payable and Approval:

Following an overview and informative discussion, all the bills payable for Q4 were accepted as printed. Sam Veer motioned to accept the bills payable as printed, seconded by Tim Schoeny. The motion carried with an 8 YES to 0 NO, positive voice vote. The budget comparison FY 25 - 26 sheets, the income statement and balance sheet were discussed.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent's Report, covered the following areas: **Please Note:** A complete copy of the Superintendent's report is filed with these minutes.

Superintendent presented his report to the Commission. All meetings were either by phone, email, or in person.

Update on Quarterly Activities (April through September):

- 4/01/26 Brady's termination date required by IMRF.
- 6/01/26 FHN reported Lorin Andre's passing. No Family.
- 6/15/26 Tom McCartney delivered Lorin's info to VAC office.
- 7/2/ 26 Lorin's cremains, urn, death certs, cemetery and headstone paid for with Lorin's money.
- 7/21/26 Office attended Government day and Vets day at the fair.
- 7/23/26 Met with Patrick Sellers concerning 2026 grant for the VAC.
- 7/24/26 Office "Quilt of Valor" ceremony for Eugene Fritz.
- 9/ 14-18/26 East Peoria VSO training/conference.

Other Assistance Provided (ongoing):

- Receive mail for a Veteran without a permanent mailing address.
- Still continue to network with County military service organizations, City/Village/State elected officials, civic/service organizations (Kiwanis, Lions, Elks etc.)
- Work with Erica Chapple, FPD Social Service Pro, in support of a homeless veterans.
- Mobile food pantry for selected indigent veterans and their families via FHN Bimonthly coordinating with the NIFB and Ron Slade delivering.
- SCPD new Probation officer Justin Lehman, Army Veteran.
- SCPD probation officer Becky Peters. Assist individuals with community service hours.
- Provide meeting space for Rockford's Vet Center Counselor and homeless coordinator as needed.
- Referring Veterans to following agencies : IDVA, IDES, FACC, NICAA, RAMP, DRS, VOICES, Work Force Connection, Senior Resource Center
- Veteran legal assistance with AFLAN and Prairie State Legal Services.
- Brad Curtis of "Curtis Software Development" will install a new drivers' trip application for the van service. Work in progress on the new computer updates for our three vans per Brad Curtis. Need to install computers and hot spot indicators, plus training, pending!
- Renewed media 6 month contract advertizing on SCFB electronic Board.
- Searching the requirements to start a Veterans Court in Stephenson Cty.

- **Completed Items:**
- Purchased 10x10 tent/awning, 6ft folding table, 2 folding camping chairs.
- June Veterans' cookout successful, (100+) SERVED. Excess food handed out to the indigent Veterans who receive food baskets from the VAC.
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Report of Assistance Provided: (FY 2026) January thru July)

- Emergency Assistance, helped 5 veterans.
- Current General Assistance (monthly), 12 active, 0 pending.
- Raised the emergency assistance level from \$500 (2007) to \$625 (as of July 1st, 2019).
- Raised the General Assistance (GA) from \$425 to \$450 due to rising rents.
- Helped 18 additional Veterans with assistance by directing them to other agencies for help and or necessary VA paperwork.
- 62 + veterans utilized the foot locker this 4th quarter.
- Assisted 83 veterans with their benefits paperwork.
- Submitted 35 electronic forms to VA, 3 accepted, 20 are in the VBMS system.
- Total of 6 claims submitted, 3 DIC claims for surviving spouses and 3 fully

developed new claims.

- Brady spoke with 24 Veterans/spouses SS benefits, SS retirement, SSI. and SSDI.

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Report on VACSC Veterans' Van Service:

- Have 13 Drivers on roster.
- Coordinate with Dale Schweitzer and Ron Slade for the bi-monthly Veteran Food Deliveries.
- Attended 2 webinars for authorized agent for IMRF.
- March 26 purchased new Chrysler Pacifica.
- Madison van and van #2 are both enrolled at water castle washing program. VAC pays \$31 @month on both vans. We and or the drivers can wash the vans.
- Several drivers stated we should purchase splash guards to protect the paint on new van.
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Vehicle Maintenance

- 2020 Chrysler Pacifica's maintenance are up to date.
- Chrysler Pacifica have new tires as of Nov. 2024.
- All 3 vans will receive new surface laptops per Brad Curtis's "trip App."
- Scheduled van trips : April.. 21 trips, May.. 25 trips, June.. 21 trips,
- Total driver hours 401; 90 office volunteer hours GARY SR. and Roy Maurer. Total mileage - 6744
- All three vans maintenance completed and up to date.

Report of Donations Received January through March:

- Lena Am. Legion and Auxiliary (Tim Schoeny).
- Silvercreek Reformed Church.
- Mark & Cindy Erb.
- Dennis & Janice Fryer.
- Orangeville Am. Legion & Aux.
- Freeport Lions Club.
- Warrior Brotherhood Motorcycle Club
- Lena Lions Club.

Report of Monetary Donations received January thru April:

- Legion McConnell American \$500.00 for van fund.
- My Friends Closet Thrift Shop \$1000.00.
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Report of Admin Asst./ VSO Activities:

Client Services:

- 99 clients were assisted regarding potential benefit claims.
- 95 clients with the Intent To File (ITF) submissions completed and sent to VA for further processing.
- 20 Standard Form 180 (SF-180) requests for military records were submitted to the National Archives.
- We have 7 claims now pending.
- Have 2DIC for surviving spouse and 1 funeral reimbursement for a surviving spouse.

Training & Development:

- We have successfully completed and passed our basic benefits course and test. We have received our accreditation through NACVSO.

Community Engagement:

- Made initial contact with several key individuals and organizations to strengthen referral and outreach efforts within our community.

Upcoming Events:

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Action Items:

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Other Business:

- Sat. Sept.19th, Air Show at airport, PC Legion colorguard.
- Amvets Post #32 , 2nd Tues. meeting; join –no dues; \$5.00 meals; meal -5pm,; meeting -6pm.
- TBD Organizing Funeral Service for Lorin Andre.

Public Participation: none

Sam Veer motioned to adjourn at 7: 50 pm with a second by Dennis Fryer. The motion carried with a 8 YES to 0 NO, positive voice vote.

Next Regular Quarterly Meeting will be on 10/29//26 @ 6:30pm VACSC Office, 10 N. Galena Ave. Suite 120, Freeport, IL.

**Respectfully submitted,
Gary Eisenhower Sr.
Interim Secretary**

Addendum of Approved Action Items from 2023 to Current

- **Approved** a list of guidelines for public comment during the “Public Participation” segment of the meeting agenda, effective as of January 25, 2024 quarterly meeting once approved.
- **Approved** updates to employee handbook Section 5.03 “Time Keeping by adding a new paragraph which exemplifies the responsibilities and sign offs. See Attachment A.
- **Approved** updates to the employee handbook Section 2.01 “Holidays” regarding the Stephenson County annual holidays SCHEDULE. See Attachment B.
- **Approved** a new law for the PTO (personal time off) under Section 2.03 “personal days” See Attachment Law (Jan.2024). Includes a Labor law addendum on PTO.
- **Approved** a Service provider agreement, for the granting and disbursing of general assistance funds, for the provision of veterans’ medical transportation services. Grant awarded by the Freeport Township (\$35,000). (Effective 7-25-24).
- **Approved** hiring Jacob Wagner as Superintendent for an initial 3 year period at the current Superintendent’s salary rate. Hired Jacob on January 13 thru 24, hourly and effective January 27, 2025 as salary.
- **Approved** the purchase of software” Visual GA Application” for \$5,000 (database + 1year support): then \$1,125 @ yearly maintenance after purchase.
- **Approved** Jacob Wagner as the new authorized agent for the VACSC’s IMRF retirement Fund.
- **Approved** resigning State Bank / Citizens Bank signature cards with the following names approved (October 23, 2023): Gary Eisenhower Sr., Tom Klemm, and Jacob Wagner will be added at this time. (Jan. 27, 2025 effective).
- **Approved** WHIPLASH to build 2 new desktop computers for van Service and Superintendent (\$2695).
- **Approved** office upgrade to the “T-Mobile) business plan (\$594).
- **Approved** Hiring Brady Johnson as a part-time (20 hr) employee at \$18 to start. Effective 10/30/25...!
- **Approved** purchase of 4 new office phones to go with “T” –Mobile Dial Pad. (\$328).
- **Approved** hiring Kristine Spivey part-time employee for VSO (20 hours @ \$18 per hour) effective 6/23/25.
- **Approved** purchase of a laptop & accessories for new VSO.

- **Approve** Purchase of new program (VETS PRO) for VA benefits submission.
- **Approved** purchase for new software for the VAC Van Service. Discussion: Brad Curtis software “Trip App” approximate quote \$7,00