

## **Cerro Gordo County Veteran Affairs Commission Meeting Minutes Monday, January 30, 2023, 9:00 am**

Commissioner attendance: Jessica Reith, Cecil Foell, Richard Ochoa and Cindy Davis. Other representative Maria Bilharz (Director CVSO), Paul Beatty (CVSO)

Absent: Daryl Johnson

1. Meeting called to order by Jessica Reith at 9:04 a.m.
2. Read through last month minutes. Cindy Davis made a motion to approve the January minutes, second by Richard Ochoa. Motion passed.

Old Business- No old business was reviewed.

Lori Meacham Ginapp, CG Board Supervisor stopped by to meet the commissioners. She provided information about her plan to visit local community coffee shops to visit with her constituents.

3. Signing of bills. Bills that were signed included: phone, KCMR Vets Tribute, postage. Richard Ochoa made a motion to approve the bills; second by Cecil Foell. Motion passed.

#### 4. What's New in the Office:

- The VA office has been working hard to get the CG County Supervisor's to pass a resolution to join Home Base Iowa. They are looking into incentives to bring to the table and to involve the communities. Alyssa has sent out close to 100 letters to Cerro Gordo County businesses to see if they would like to be a part of the gift basket incentives to make veteran more aware of their surroundings, and businesses in the community. Unfortunately, there has been a less than stellar response from businesses, therefore they will look at going out to business to visit with them and if needed purchase items from them to put in the gift basket in return for a coupon to add with the item. They plan to move forward with purchasing items for the gift basket such as hockey t-shirts, and City of Clear Lake mugs or Cabin Coffee mugs to advocate the area.
- The main incentive plan for Home Base Iowa in Cerro Gordo County is to offer veterans taking part in Home Base Iowa would be to assist the veteran with a rent or home deposit, or a utility hook up incentive. This year will be a trial run with the program. A meeting with the supervisors will take place soon to see how these incentives will be funded if approved when the resolution is reviewed. The deadline to get this wrapped up is April 1, 2023.
- The VA office has been busy filing service-connected PACT claims. The new law that went into place has expanded the disability list for Gulf War and Vietnam Veterans. On February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 the VA sent a mass letter out to all veterans notifying them of these law changes that was approved in the Fall of 2022. This is the second mass mailing they have sent out on behalf of potentially filing for claims. One misperception is the Vietnam veterans are assuming that they can file for the Gulf War presumptive. Conditions need to be formally diagnosed and filed under the correct wartime era to file to be automatically granted. Many veterans are coming in with no

health issues but are stating they want to file under PACT ACT. You still need to file under a health condition to file for a service-connected claim. You cannot file for strictly “PACT ACT, AGENT ORANGE or BURN PITS.”

- Lori Meacham Ginapp had contacted the VA office to inquire about changing their shredding service to 43 North Iowa from Shred Right. After conversation with the commissioners, it is best to continue to stay with Shred Right because they offer locked boxes for shredding, they come on site and shred the materials on site and provide certification that the items were shredded. This meets the confidentiality requirements.

5. Public Comments – There were no public comments

6. Next meeting scheduled for March 27th, 2023 - 9:00 am

7. Adjourn – Cindy Davis made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Richard Ochoa. Motion passed.

Minutes submitted by Cindy Davis