



COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mandy Coates, Director

JoAnne Downes

Bill Blanchard, Chairperson

Chad Gerdes

Larry Hingtgen, Secretary

Ines Beltre

Formal Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2025

Meeting called to order at 17:00 by Blanchard

Present: Bill Blanchard, Chad Gerdes, Ines Beltre, Joanne Downes, and Mandy Coates.

Guests: Nathan Peters, Johnson County Attorney's Office

Unless Noted, all actions were taken unanimously

1. Motion by Downes, second by Gerdes to approve the April minutes
2. Motion by Beltre, second by Downes to approve the April vouchers
3. Department is spent at 56%. Federal VA Compensation revenue for April was \$2,975,281.00. Director reported seeing an increase in service-connected deaths and DIC applications and awards. Coates informed the Commission of appreciation to Beltre for assisting with Spanish translation. Coates will provide a Memorial Day speech during the formal BOS meeting on Thursday, May 22nd and invited Commission. Veterans Benefit Administration has an extremely backlogged claim count. They are on a hiring freeze, and going to mandatory overtime. 218,241 original claims, 310,343 various appeals, and 223,309 dependency claims are outstanding nationally. Director completed IACVS proposed reduction training, Ethics Training through the VA, and Dementia Friendly Training, attended the VA Regional Office 3rd Quarter Update, joined the CADRE Veteran Engagement Pannel and attended the ICVHA Stakeholder Face to Face meeting.
4. New Trust Fund Application was reviewed and process was explained to Commission for submission
5. A copy of the Policy and Procedures for Temporary Emergency Assistance and Burial were provided to the Commission. Discussed the process of starting to edit and update the procedures and bring them to next month's meeting to merge and update.
6. Guidance was given to Coates regarding assisting people from outside counties and states. Coates will prioritize Johnson County residents, and then other counties after referring them to their county VSO first, and then veterans from other states only in extraordinary cases per director's discretion.
7. A potential campaign was discussed regarding ideas of outreach to prevent the use of claim sharks and promote our services.

Blanchard adjourned the meeting at 17:45

Recorded by Mandy Coates

These minutes will be presented to the Secretary for approval during our June 2025 meeting.

6/17/2025

Signature on File

Date:

Secretary or Alternate