



COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mandy Coates, Director	JoAnne Downes
Bill Blanchard, Chairperson	Chad Gerdes
Larry Hingtgen, Secretary	Jacob Korbakes

Formal Meeting Minutes
Health and Human Services Building
855 South Dubuque St. Iowa City, IA 52240
Conference Room 203 C
October 28, 2025

Meeting called to order at 17:00 by Blanchard

Present: Bill Blanchard, Chad Gerdes, Joanne Downes, Jacob Korbakes, and Mandy Coates.

Guests: Nathan Peters, Johnson County Attorney's Office and Joshua Brown, County Veteran Service Officer

Unless noted, all actions were taken unanimously

1. Motion by Gerdes, second by Korbakes to approve the September minutes.
2. Motion by Korbakes, second by Gerdes to approve the September vouchers.
3. Blanchard and Korbakes briefed Commission on IDVA Commissioner Training
4. Coates briefed Commission of Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs CVSO Fall School. Coates informed Commission of IDVA's Commander's speech and email regarding the dissatisfaction with the amount of compensation that Iowa is awarded with. We rank 44th in the Nation. Coates informed the Commission of the email that the Commander sent out showing Johnson County ranking 79th as far as compensation awarded/veteran population. Coates also showed the actual numbers of compensation that Johnson County brings in each month as a whole, and it is over 3.1 million a month. Commissioners and Coates agree that the numbers can't be matched apples to apples. Coates informed Commission that there may be more legislative changes coming from the Commander and Governor in the future that we may or may not support.
5. Coates informed Commission regarding what services are affected and not affected by the shut down regarding federal VA services. Coates informed Commission regarding transition pains regarding workday and how she will be meeting with Finance to get more training. Coates informed Commission regarding Board of Supervisor meeting regarding placing a Deputy in the Administration building. Coates has informed the Board and Department Heads that she would like a Deputy to walk through the building and stated this during the Department Head Meeting. Jon Green, Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors, stated that we will follow current protocol regarding safety and calling the JCC if an emergency as a response to this statement.
6. FY26 Quarter 1 Auditor Report was presented to Commission.
7. Closed Session – Pre-Evaluation, Self-Evaluation and Goal Setting Veteran Service Director – Mandy Coates
Motion by Korbakes, Second by Downes to enter into a closed session at 5: 20 p.m. pursuant to Iowa Code 21.5(1)(i); "To evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session. Roll call: Aye, Gerdes, Blanchard, Downes, Korbakes, all in favor of entering a closed session. Blanchard adjourned the closed session at 5:57 p.m. and opened into an open session.

Blanchard adjourned the meeting at 18:02

Recorded by Mandy Coates

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

11/18/2025

Signature on file

Date:

Secretary or Alternate