

Wisconsin State Council Meeting

President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. on September 21, 2019 in Waupaca, Wisconsin. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was offered to our POW/MIA's and active duty service members. The roll call of Officers, Directors and Chapters was completed. A quorum was confirmed with 17 chapters present.

Present: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, (Secretary, excused); Directors from Regions 1, 2 and 4, (3 was excused); Chapters present were: 5 (4/2), 101 (1), 115 (1), 206 (2 AVVA), 220 (1), 224 (1), 236 (1), 256 (2), 324 (1), 331 (1), 425 (3+1), 448 (4), 479 (1), 529 (1), 635 (1+1), 767 (2), 921 (1), 1130 (1), and At Large (1+1). VVA Region 6 Director Bob Grabinski was also present.

Tom Heitman was appointed Parliamentarian; John Margowski was appointed Time Keeper.

Approval of Agenda:

A motion was made to eliminate the 12:00 PM end time on the current agenda and all future agendas. Motion by Foye (At Large), 2nd by Willman (479). Passed without objection.

Approval of Minutes:

WSC Committee Reports amended to read: "Since this came out of Committee there was a motion, but no 2nd required; the By-Laws were accepted without objection." (No notation on who made motion to accept; I think Tom Heitman brought this up so he may have moved to accept as amended, but I don't know who/if a 2nd was made). Minutes were approved as amended.

President Lindbeck recognized past Presidents John Margowski, Bob Piaro, and Bob Morzenti; Region 6 representative Bob Grabinski; and former Army SSgt Sam Rogers of Concerned Veterans for America - Wisconsin.

Invited Guest:

Sam Rogers, Concerned Veterans for America – Wisconsin

Sam served in the Army for 8 years. He became involved with VVA when Rebecca at VVA National reached out to him. Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) has their own "mission" (I attached the bio he distributed) and is a policy-based advocacy organization. CVA would sponsor "joint events" to provide educational events for the community. The events would include a variety of topics, including toxic exposure, CVA's foreign political initiative, etc., to allow the organizations to reach a broader audience and share CVA's message network with other organizations. Sam talked about the process CVA uses to network with students and/or college professionals in order to get their message out to the public and other diverse audiences. Veteran organizations who participate in the events would be able to share their information at those events, the organizational information could then be spread through word of mouth. The goal of CVA is to empower all veteran organizations to hold the government accountable for their actions, increase visibility and engage younger veterans on current and/or outstanding issues. There are 18 state Student Veterans of America Chapters, 150 active volunteers, 2 full-time staff and several part-time staff in Wisconsin; there are 360,000 members nationally; they "rotate out" when they graduate and try to find a new organization to join.

President's Report – Richard Lindbeck:

- National Convention: 13 registered delegates from Wisconsin; 677 regular delegates (200 less than at New Orleans). The 2021 Convention is in Greensboro, NC and will look at the resolutions regarding where the organization will go--the National Board must decide. There are \$20,000,000 in assets to disburse when VVA eventually disbands. National election results:

President – John Rowan

Vice President – Tom Burke

Secretary – Bill Meeks

Treasurer – Jack McManus

Board of Directors:

Credentials Committee Chair – Richard Lindbeck

Resolutions Committee Chair – John Margowski

Finance Committee Co-Chair(?) – Bob Grabinski

- The U S Army drill team will perform at West Bend High School at 11:30 AM on 11/1
- John Margowski discussed “ending” VVA:
Working Group I provided National with an extensive report that wasn’t officially recognized (it was “accepted” by National) or discussed at the Convention; Working Group II had nothing to discuss; John Rowan challenged the Board to do what many perceived as what WG II was tasked to do. A motion to accept WG I recommendations but was never voted on. There is concern about the lack of focus on how to handle the dissolution situation since this is the 3rd time the issue has been brought up. Concerned Veterans for America (CVA), which has been mentioned as a successor to VVA, has no veterans benefits program. If VVA fails to follow New York law **at any time**, the State of New York can come in and take over the organization. WG I recommendations would apply to the Wisconsin State Council if National is dissolved.
- Richard passed around the Arizona state “report” on the Convention (a bound booklet of about 40 pages)

Committee Report:

Vern Larson is serving on the advisory boards for the Council of Veterans Programs (appointed by Richard) and as Chair of the Board of Veterans Affairs and gave reports on each of them.

- Council of Veterans Programs:
Larry Hill is the Board chair.
Legislative update and issues: Department of Veterans Affairs does take stands on specific issues, i.e., supporting a lower threshold on widows receiving property tax relief, reversing the suspension of veteran students for late tuition payments. Vern spent time with individual organizations finding out about their membership.
They revised their by-laws.
The new State Veteran Affairs Secretary is Mary Kohler; she has attended all the Council of Veterans Programs meetings.
- Board of Veterans Affairs:
The position is a 2-year term
Veteran’s Trust Fund: King has been a major source of funding for the Trust. Vern suggested looking development options at King. King received money in the Governor’s budget to assist the facility.
grant applications
there is a “Chair of Honor” in the Capital rotunda (to recognize Wisconsin veterans)
looking at how to continue cash flow at all 3 veteran homes (King, Union Grove and Chippewa)
You can contact Vern with questions, and/or suggestion by phone or e-mail (on web-site?). He encouraged everyone to volunteer at any of the 3 homes or provide donations for them. A question was asked about the Woods facility; it is a large facility with a different licensure.

Vice President’s Report - Dan Sciuti:

- Will submit written report later

Region 1 Director

- No report

Region 2 Director

- No report

Region 3 Director

- Absent

Region 4 Director

- No report

AVVA Report – Pat Furno

- The following officers were elected at the National Convention in Spokane:
 President – Joanna Henshaw, Nevada
 Vice President – Kaye Gardner, Maryland
 Secretary – Nina Schloffel, California
 Treasurer – Kathy Andras, Louisiana
 Region 6 Director – Fran Davis, Missouri
 Region 6 Deputy Director – Rick Talford, Wisconsin
- Pat has state level issues to discuss with AVVA members (including information on 2021 National Convention delegates) at the December meeting. If there is no Agent Orange/Toxic Exposure meeting, AVVA will meet before the State Council meeting, otherwise it will be after the State Council meeting is completed.
- Chapter Representative elections must be held in April, 2020.

Region 6 Director’s Report - Bob Grabinski:

- Bob is serving on the National Budget Committee.
- Bob requested input on a potential Region 6 Conference, including: where, when and what topics to cover. Bob requested you send any suggestions to Richard, who will forward them to Bob.
- If you have concerns, Bob requested you copy Richard in on the e-mail you send Bob (bgrabinski@vva.org) so Richard is also aware of them.
- Bob also advised that the articles he submits to The Veteran are edited so what you see may not be exactly what he submitted.

At Large Director’s Report – John Margowski

- There was no opportunity to discuss, nor vote on, the Working Group I report on the dissolution of VVA at the National Convention.
- Wisconsin AB 888 and SB 116 are veteran property tax credit bills; contact your State representative regarding passage of these bills.
- There is a veteran’s job fair on 10/15
- A multi-million dollar court decision was on veterans using both the Montgomery GI Bill and Post 9/11 benefits (the Montgomery GI Bill benefits would be used first, then the Post 9/11 benefits). The courts also ruled regarding veterans who were denied emergency care or emergency care reimbursement; this could cost millions, if not billions, of dollars.
- A new Wisconsin national cemetery was discussed. The Northwoods Veterans Cemetery in Harshaw was discussed.
- Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin proposed a bill (which passed) to protect economic security (please check with John for details since my notes are pretty sketchy!).
- Several veteran-related scams were discussed, including fake e-mails.
- A bill for Wisconsin to pay for funding to be used to search for MIA’s wasn’t passed.
- The rule requiring veterans be married 10 years in order for their surviving spouse to collect their disability payment has been changed to a 1-year requirement.

Scholarship Report - Virginia Nuske:

- 3 scholarships at \$1,500 will be awarded. Students who are graduating from high school or are already in college are eligible to apply. Applications can be found on the website (vva.wi.org) and are due on 2/15/20.

Treasurer’s Report - Pat Craney:

- The State Council is doing well on their actual vs projected expenses.

Chapter Reports:

- Verbal reports given by Chapters 5 (Eau Claire), 479 (North Central Wisconsin/Wausau) and 767 (Milwaukee).

Old Business:

- It was asked if the Household Goods money issue was ever resolved; the response was that it had been.

New Business:

- A question was asked regarding why the State Council meets at The Highground in June. The space limitations in the garage and the distance to travel for a number of delegates were concerns that were expressed. The strong connection between Vietnam veterans and the State Council with The Highground was discussed. A suggestion was made by Jim Ottman (Chapter 331) that the June meeting be moved to The HighGround's newly acquired facility (Camp Victory), about 15 miles north of The Highground. The facility has a room large enough for the group as well as a full kitchen. The Secretary will contact Jon Weiler, HighGround's Executive Director, to see if that would be a possibility.
- Pat Furno distributed the appropriate paperwork Chapters need to complete State tax-exempt forms for potential purchases.
- Tom Heitman requested a section titled "announcements/information/for the good of the order" (or similar language) be added to the agenda.

Motion by Tom Heitman (Chapter ?) to adjourn; 2nd by Second by Joe Heil (Chapter 5). Passed

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM.

Joy L. Foye
Recording Secretary