



## **Vietnam Veterans of America Wisconsin State Council**

Unapproved Minutes  
VVA WSC Second Quarter Minutes  
Waupaca, WI  
June 24, 2023

### **Roll Call**

The President requested the Secretary to call the roll: the Executive Officers in attendance were President Michael Demske (0731), Vice-President Daniel Sciuti (0425), Secretary James Mullarkey (0425), Treasurer Patrick Craney (0425), and Richard Lindbeck Executive Director (0448). Also, in attendance were VVA Region Six Director John Margowski and At-Large Director Richard Lindbeck. The WSC Region Directors in attendance were Region 1 Director Thomas Banner, Region 2 Director Mike Johnson, Region 3 Director Duane Canon, and Region 4/At Large Director Greg Foye. The VVA Chapters in attendance included: 0005, 0092, 0101, 0206, 0221, 0224, 0236, 0256, 0324, 0351, 0425, 0437, 0448, 0479, 0635, 0767, 1130, and At-Large. AVVA was represented by 0206, 0437, 0635, 0767, and At-Large. With a 65 percent VVA Chapter representation, a quorum was called.

The Pledge of Allegiance was delivered by members followed by a prayer by the WSC Chaplain Duane Canon.

John Margowski (0425) motioned to approve the Agenda; seconded by Vern Larson (0635); approved without objection.

John Margowski (0425) motioned to approve the Minutes of the WSC Meeting on March 18, 2023; seconded by Duane Canon (0437); approved without objection. (See Website for Report)

### **President's Report – Michael Demske – Executive Director Richard Lindbeck**

President Demske was ill during the meeting and the Executive Director reported our briefly, specifically indicating the donation made to the Mississippi State Council after the devastating tornado was discussed.

### **Vice-President's Report – Daniel Sciuti**

The 2023 National Convention is active on VVA's web page. You can download the registration form, contact the company for scooter rentals, review the agenda (it is updated often), and see the candidate page (still a work in progress). There are also blank applications on the table if you want/need one.

### **Treasurer's Report – Patrick Craney**

The State Council revenue included membership rebates from National, earnings on interest, and receipts from product sales. Expenditures included expenses



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for the Region 6 conference, meeting room rentals, miscellaneous expenses, and AVVA support/donations. Revenue was once again larger than expenditures.

### **Secretary's Report – James Mullarkey**

Jim requested that members look at the [vvawi.org](http://vvawi.org) website as small changes continue to be made. Jim is still missing some information on Chapter officers and delegates (information is taken from reports he receives). The website has been updated so e-mail addresses were replaced with a link to the person listed (e-mail addresses are no longer shown). Pictures of National and Wisconsin State Council officers/directors are included when available. Check the “calendar” for WSC meeting info (date, location, and accommodations); it can also be printed. Chapter reports are included on the website; old reports are archived. The “In Memoriam” section will continue to be updated as information is received, however, large “groups” of obituaries may slow the process. Jim is in the process of trying to get WSC merchandise listed on the website.

**Election and Financial Reports:** 2022 Election Reports will be used to determine voting eligibility at the National Convention; if a Chapter is not listed on the WSC report, Jim doesn't have a copy of the report. Some Chapters have submitted their reports for 2023; Jim anticipates getting the website updated with that information shortly (possibly Monday, 6/26).

(See Website for Report)

### **National Convention – Richard Lindbeck and John Margowski**

Richard indicated National mailed information to Chapter Presidents (John will provide more information on resolutions and proposed Constitutional changes). The information can also be found at [vva.org](http://vva.org) under the “Info for Members” tab (rather than under “National Convention” under the “Events” tab).

John discussed the proposed Resolutions and Constitutional changes that will be presented at the National Convention.

### **Resolutions:**

- Agent Orange resolution offered for retirement; it is now a service connection condition.
- Government Affairs Committee: 1) renames West Palm Beach Veterans Medical Center (Florida) in honor of Thomas H. Corey (former VVA National President); 2) GA-17, amendment changes noted in BOLD; 3) changes in state cemeteries for spouses (not adopted by Committee), leaving up to individual states.
- Minority Affairs: 1) MA-16, amends resolution; 2) proposed resolution 7 not adopted by the Committee (recognizes service of police only, not fire, EMT/EMS, etc.).
- Veterans Benefits: 1) VB-31, protects right to representation in appeals (wording changes); 2) proposed resolution 2, grave marker or medallion for Reservists or National Guard (not adopted by Committee; suggested it be brought up off the floor at the Convention).
- Womens Veterans: WV-8, military sexual trauma; changes wording.
- Veterans Health Care: retire HC-9, VA medical facilities hours of operation.
- Resolutions Committee: 1) Proposed Resolution 4, wants legacy of VVA to continue; 2) Proposed Resolution 5, to dissolve VVA by 4/29/28; plan to be presented to delegates at 2027 VVA National Convention (a “10 year plan” is no longer practical due to the age of VVA members); the plan must be approved by state of New York; VVA financial support to states/Chapters through National members will be gone in 2-3 years.

### **Constitutional Amendments:**

- 01: DD-214 is no longer kept at the Chapter level; should be destroyed or returned to members.



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- 02: At Large Director candidates who did not win the election shall serve as At Large Director in the event a position becomes vacant (to standardize the process).
- 03: Gives the Board the authority to implement the plan for the future of VVA, the State Councils and the Chapters but **only after** the delegates have adopted it at a National Convention.
- 04: Changes minimum number of Chapters members from 25 to 15 to start a Chapter and to vote at a National Convention.
- 05: Amends wording on number of times Council of State Council Presidents is required to meet.
- 06: Amends the quorum requirements for State Council meetings; would allow them to resolve the issue of not having enough attendance for a quorum and not being able to change quorum by-law requirements due to lack of a quorum.
- 07: To standardize State Council election committee appointments.
- 08: Amends quorum requirements for Chapter meetings; would allow them to resolve the issue of not having enough attendance for a quorum and not being able to change quorum by-law requirements due to lack of a quorum.
- 09: Allows participation through an internet platform.
- NR-01: Removes At Large Directors position; not reported out of Committee.
- NR-02: Reduce number of regions from 9 to 4; not reported out of Committee.

#### **VVA Region 6 Director – John Margowski**

John talked about the Region 6 Conference held in Iowa on May 19-21. The Conference included Dr. Hall's suicide presentation, information on the effect of the National dissolution on states and chapters and raised money for AVVA's Project Friendship (at the AVVA National Convention). Attendees were able to visit a very impressive Gold Star Museum while they were in Iowa.

Dissolution of National affects only the National Corporation so it is expected that Chapter charters will remain valid. National currently has not started the dissolution process but will provide information on it (minutes of the special meeting should be on-line). Chapters will tell the State Council what they want done after the National dissolution. A WSC committee will be formed to discuss ideas/options to ensure Chapter input is used in making those decisions. This will be discussed further at the September meeting.

#### **Veterans Affairs/Council of Veterans Programs – Vern Larson**

Vern asked for a show of hands of anyone who attended the "Veterans Day At The Capital". The ceremony was very well done with 275 participants traveling from Monona Terrace to the Capital (on foot by those who could). They met with Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs Assistant Deputy Secretary Joey Hoey; the Secretary Designee and Deputy Secretary briefly came in to the meeting then left.

Assembly bills AB102 and AB26 were passed and sent to the Senate which appears to be holding the bills up. Vern encouraged everyone to contact their state Senator (calling is most effective) and ask if they are voting in favor of the bills; if not, ask them "why not?".

The Veterans Affairs Committee is an advisory board so they can't make decisions on veterans issues. The Committee has requested they have input on several State Assembly and Senate bills under consideration.

#### **Council on Veterans Programs**

Some representatives on the Council who wished to leave were removed from the roster and several new representatives were added.



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Veterans Service Coordinators are on campuses for the UW system, technical schools, and private colleges.

Vern shared highlights of the June 15 meeting: \$5 million (\$2.5 million/year) will be invested in veterans homes (i.e., tiny homes, etc.); the Department of Veterans Affairs is conducting a study at King; funding for tribal groups increased by 25%; the budget for the Chippewa Falls facility is \$1.3 million/year (there is only 1 permanent government employee; the remainder are contract employees); a grant for \$16,540 was authorized for the USS Wisconsin; the Camp Randall Memorial Sports Center wants to take over another part of the Veterans Park; and the War Memorial Center lost their Milwaukee County funding (it is 20% of their budget).

(See Website for Report)

### **AVVA Report – Pat Furno**

Pat shared that AVVA would be holding a meeting immediately following the State Council meeting to discuss proposed changes to the AVVA by-laws at the National Convention in August. Pat received a call from the Region 6 Representative and the By-Laws Committee chair regarding a proposal she submitted on dual membership.

Pat encouraged Chapters to consider a donation to the AVVA Project Friendship organization for 2023. The organization this year is the National Birth Defect Registry which collects Agent Orange research data and advocates for children with disabilities linked to exposure to Agent Orange or chemicals in the Gulf War.

### **Committee Reports**

*POW/MIA – Duane Canon*

Duane provided updated information on MIA/KIA numbers for World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

(See Website for Report)

*Legislative – Dan Sciuti*

Dan provided handouts with additional details on his legislative report, including how to contact your State legislators.

Wisconsin:

- Wisconsin Assembly Bill 7: modifies residency requirement for the tuition and fee remission program for certain veterans, their spouses and children enrolled in University of Wisconsin System schools and technical colleges.
- Wisconsin Assembly Bill 8: expands the definition of “veteran” to include individuals who were naturalized under the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000 and extends most veterans benefits to anyone who meets this definition of veteran; admission to a state veterans home and burial in a veterans cemetery are not included as they are subject to federal regulation.
- Wisconsin Assembly Bill 12: modifies residency requirement for the tuition and fee remission program for certain veterans, their spouse and children enrolled in University of Wisconsin System institutions and technical colleges. It makes a similar change for grant eligibility in private nonprofit colleges and modifies the UW System nonresident tuition exemption for certain veterans.



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- Wisconsin Assembly Bill 91: creates an application fee exemption for veterans and members of the U.S. Armed forces applying for admission to University of Wisconsin System schools or technical colleges.
- Wisconsin Senate Bill 102: reduces the service-connected disability eligibility threshold from 100% to at least 70% for an eligible veteran, the spouse of an eligible veteran and the unmarried surviving spouse of an eligible veteran to claim the veterans and surviving spouses property tax credit.
- U.S. House of Representatives Bill H.R. 542 – the Elizabeth Dole Home – and Community-Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Care Act of 2023 (Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2023) addresses home care and caregiver programs provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Under the bill, % of the cost that would have been incurred if a veteran had been furnished VA nursing home care unless the VA determines that a higher cost is in the best interest of the veteran (currently, these expenditures are limited to 65% of the cost). Among other requirements, the VA must seek to enter into an agreement with the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly in certain areas to furnish non-institutional alternatives to nursing home care; implement various programs (e.g., the Veteran Directed Care program) to expand access to home- and community-based services; provide specified support and benefits to caregivers of certain disabled veterans; implement a pilot program to provide homemaker and home health aide services to veterans who reside in communities with a shortage of home health aides; and ensure the availability of home and community-based services for Native American veterans. For veterans or family caregivers who are discharged from the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, a caregiver support coordinator must provide for a personalized transition to an appropriate program. The Veterans Health Administration must review programs administered through the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care to ensure consistency in program management, eliminate service gaps at the medical center level, and ensure the availability of and access to home- and community-based services.
- U.S. House of Representatives: H.R. 4601 - *Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act*: authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide grants to states and Indian tribes to implement programs that improve outreach and assistance to veterans and their families to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about veterans' benefits and programs. Specifically, the VA may provide grants to states and tribes to (1) implement or enhance outreach activities; (2) increase the number of county or tribal veterans service officers in the state or tribe; or (3) expand, implement, or otherwise enhance existing programs and services of the existing state or tribal organization that is recognized by the VA in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for veterans benefits through representatives who hold positions as county or tribal veterans service officers. The VA must prioritize awarding of grants in areas with a critical shortage of county or tribal veterans service officers, areas with high rates of suicide among veterans, and areas with high rates of referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line. The bill also extends certain loan fee rates through February 10, 2031, under the VA's home loan program. During FY2024-FY2028, the VA is authorized to hire two or more additional full-time equivalent employees in the VA's Office of General Counsel to carry out duties under the accreditation, discipline, and fees program.

In related actions:

- On March 9, 2023, six women assigned to the Army's 30th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Army Medical Department gathered at Oklahoma's Fort Sill to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948. The June 12, 1948, law permitted



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troops of the Women's Army Corps to be part of the “regular Army” and for women to serve on active duty and reserve duty for all other military services. The law was proposed by then General Dwight D. Eisenhower and approved by President Harry S. Truman.

- On April 4, 2023, VA published a final rule in the Federal Reserve Register that exempts American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans from co-payments for health care and urgent care received through VA. The VA will reimburse co-payments for health care and urgent care received on or after Jan. 5, 2022, and waive future co-payments for eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans

## **Chapter Reports**

Chapter 101 – Gary Schoenborn reported the Chapter was formed in 1983 so they are celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with various activities in Wisconsin Rapids.

### **Old Business:**

None

### **New Business:**

A motion was made by Tom Banner to investigate a portable microphone/speaker system; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joe Graff; passed.

There are currently 10 members from Wisconsin who are planning on attending the National Convention. A motion was made by Vern Larson to approve an allocation of \$7,000 to help defray expenses of Wisconsin delegates to the National Convention with a maximum of \$500/person. Eligible delegates include members of VVA and AVVA. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joe Heil; motion passed.

Richard Lindbeck shared a request from Mike Demske to establish a \$3,000 disaster fund; it was determined a motion wasn't needed since this could be established as a line item in the budget.

A motion was made to donate \$1,000 for the 2023 AVVA Project Friendship designee; the motion was approved.

The question was asked of the delegates regarding having the September meeting as the annual “picnic” or a regular meeting. A vote was taken; September will be a standard meeting.

Motion by Duane Canon to adjourn; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Darrell Prince; motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*James E. Mullarkey*

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary  
Wisconsin State Council

*Joy Foye*

Joy Foye  
AVVA At-Large Member



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