



**Vietnam Veterans of America
Wisconsin State Council**

Approved Minutes
VVA WSC Fourth Quarter Minutes
Waupaca, WI
December 2, 2023

VVA WSC Board of Directors Meeting

NOTE: The VVA WSC Board of Directors (BOD) (i.e., the Executive Officers and four Region Directors) was called to order by the VVA WSC President before the WSC Delegate meeting. The notes reported have no motions, recommended actions, or assignments.

The BOD meeting was called to order at 08:57 AM by WSC President Mike Demske (0731). In attendance were Richard Lindbeck (0448) (Executive Director), Dan Sciuti (0437) (Vice-President), Duane Canon (0437) (Region 3 Director), Greg Foye (At-Large) (Region 4/At Large Director), Pat Furno (0635) (AVVA State Representative), and Joy Foye (AVVA At Large) (Notetaker).

Discussions

A. Richard Lindbeck shared information about VVA National:

Phill Waite is the new VVA Office Manager

Membership and finance are the biggest issues facing the National organization.

There has been a large turnover in staff.

The ***potential dissolution*** date is 02/29/2028.

There are a large number of attorneys (estimated between 10 and 12) working for National – two in the office working on claims and between eight and ten working outside of the office (downtown).

B. John Margowski (425) (VVA Region 6 Director) suggested the WSC change to two meetings per year.

If so, when? Margowski suggested the months of March and September. (VVA Constitution Article II Section 7. A reads *each state council shall meet not less than twice per year.*)

- C. What happens to WSC when National is dissolved? Changes will be needed to WSC By-laws since they rely heavily on the VVA Constitution.¹ A committee will be needed to review what changes are needed (e.g., a new charter/constitution and or bylaws for the State of Wisconsin for a non-profit). [Standing VVA WSC Constitution Committee]
- D. It was suggested that WSC awards be reinstated.
- E. National requires a Women Veterans Committee – an AVVA member could chair the committee as a “*special advisor*”.
- F. Re-instating the Veteran of the Year Award was suggested; a committee would be needed, including someone to chair the committee. (see D. above)
- G. WSC is no longer holding Town Halls for Agent Orange/Toxic Exposure due to dwindling attendance and a potential lack of interest.
- H. The PACT Act doesn’t include burn pits for Vietnam veterans even though they were exposed; work is being done to change eligibility for Vietnam veterans.
- I. Potential names for the WSC after dissolution were discussed – Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans is already in use. Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans of America was suggested as a possible.
- J. Veteran Voices of America is taking over claims for National. While the organization is not employed by VVA, it is certified by VVA and includes several former VVA employees who handled those claims.

The meeting adjourned at 09:38 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Foye

AVVA At-Large/WSC Associate Secretary

1 Articles of incorporation/constitution matter mostly at the beginning of a corporation's existence e.g., establishment of the WSC following the dissolution of VVA National. The constitution defines the elements and function of the corporation. However, the constitution doesn't play much of a role in the day-to-day life of a corporation. By-laws, on the other hand, are all about how a company/corporation functions daily and can be revised as needed to reflect changing realities, expectations, and goals. (Adapted from: What Is the Difference Between By-laws & the Constitution of an Organization? [Eric Feigenbaum CHRON, 2024](#))



**Vietnam Veterans of America
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VVA WSC Delegates Meeting

The WSC Delegate meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by President Mike Demske. Duane Canon (WSC Chaplain) did the invocation followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call of VVA Chapter delegates present 0005, 0101, 0351, 0425, 0437, 0448, 0479, 0635, 0729, 0731, 1130, and At-Large. AVVA representation included 0005, 0206, 0351, 0437, 0448, 0635, and At-Large. A quorum was called.

Duane Canon (0437) was appointed parliamentarian, and Greg Foye (At-Large/Region 4 Director) was appointed timekeeper.

President's Report – Mike Demske

Mike was unable to attend the late National State Presidents Council Board meeting due to a medical condition.

The Wisconsin State Council Board of Directors had a meeting preceding this meeting – see above for notes. Topics of discussion included:

1. John Margowski requested, by e-mail, that the membership discuss changing the number of State Council meetings from 4 to 2. This will require changing the WSC's By-Laws and would not be effective until 2025. The topic will be added to the March 2024 meeting agenda. Tom Banner (0767) asked if elections must be held in June; yes, unless/until the WSC By-Laws are changed.
2. Recommendation that the Veterans of the Year Award be reinstated. The form for National could be used for the award but a Committee Chair will be needed. There was a discussion regarding the criteria to be used for award eligibility. Tom Banner (0767) suggested the WSC veteran of the year criteria be used.
3. The Wisconsin State Council is required by the National to have a Women Veterans Committee. Tom Banner (0767) said he may have a potential member who could chair the committee.
4. If/When National dissolves, Wisconsin will need to reincorporate under a different name; Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans of America was suggested as a possible name.

Meeting dates for 2024 were discussed: March 16, June 22, September 21, and December 7 (Holiday WSC gathering on December 6).

Vice President's Report – Dan Sciuti

Dan attended VVA Chapter 101's 40th anniversary celebration in Wisconsin Rapids. Dan represented VVA National and the WSC as he presented Chapter 101 with their anniversary certificate from VVA National.

Dan also discussed the lifetime pass to National Parks and other public lands for veterans and Gold Star families. Wisconsin state parks currently do not have a lifetime pass for veterans but it does have a \$10 Conservation Patron Pass for 100% disabled veterans.

Dan also briefly discussed the America The Beautiful--National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass (Interagency Pass) Program which includes a free annual pass for active-duty members and their dependents. Other free or discounted passes, including some lifetime passes, are available for those with permanent disabilities, fourth-grade students, volunteers, and senior citizens (age 62 or older).

Dan talked about the Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC), a free membership travel club for all active, retired, and veteran military members. AFVC offers reduced prices on vacations, exclusive discounts on hotels, and much more. You will need to create a free account on their website: <https://www.afvclub.com/> to take advantage of the discounts they offer.

Treasurer's Report – Pat Craney

Pat had an excused absence; copies of the current information were available. We continue to have more revenue than expenses. There were no questions regarding the Treasurer's report.

Secretary's Report – Jim Mullarkey

Jim had an excused absence so there was no report; no action was taken on approving the proposed Minutes from the September 23, 2023 meeting – Officers, Directors, and Delegates the September 2023 Minutes are attached to this email and on vvawi.org.

WSC Regional Reports:

Region 1: Tom Banner - no report

Region 3: Duane Canon – no report; if any Chapters in Region 3 would like him to visit them, let him know.

Region 4: Greg Foye – no report; if Chapters in Region 4 want him to visit them, let him know (gsfoye6871@gmail.com)

At-Large: Greg Foye – no report

Region 6 Director – John Margowski

John had an excused absence. Richard Lindbeck shared several items from John with the group.

VVA National is losing employees faster than they can be replaced.

The **current dissolution date is 02/29/2028** but it is currently not a “drop dead” date.

National At-Large Director Report – Richard Lindbeck

There are currently two attorneys in the VVA National office with another eight to ten working outside the office downtown.

Phill Waite is the new VVA Office Manager. He is making sure phones are answered. If you don't receive a response when you call, send an e-mail letting Phill know and include the date and time of your call as well as who you were trying to reach and why you were calling.

Richard discussed the last National Board meeting as well as CSCP:

A complete inventory of all assets of the National office was completed (this is required to close the corporation).

National has a new Silver Spring drop box address (Box 49030 which replaces Box 44299).

The Korean Valor Act has been passed (it means Korean veterans will be eligible for VA medical benefits).

The 2024 Leadership Conference will be in Reno, NV on August 20-24, 2024 at the Silver Legacy Resort and Casino; they will work on streamlining processes for the 2025 National Convention. National ended up paying people to attend the last Leadership Conference.

President Jack McManus talked about the household goods program (25% of the proceeds go to the National and 75% go to the State Council if that state has a household goods program); currently, advertisements cost more than the income they generate for the stores in Minnesota and Illinois.

The Air Force will move the Ranch Hand frozen specimens from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base; the logistics of moving all the freezers needed for storing the specimens is still being worked out.

Canadian veterans who served in the U.S. military are currently not eligible to participate in Honor Flights.

Richard was appointed as Credentials Chair for the National Convention and Secretary for the Membership Committee.

Not all (National) Regional Directors have alternates; the Region 6 Alternate Director is Greg Pauline of Iowa.

The PACT Act will be monitored so that proper implementation is done. Currently, Vietnam Veterans are not considered eligible for burn pits coverage.

AVVA will do a presentation at the Leadership Conference [TBD]

Richard also reported on the Council of State Council Presidents (CSCP) meeting.

The Chairman of **CSCP**, Samuel Brick, changed the meeting time on the agenda without authorization from Secretary Meeks.

Chairman Brick interprets NY law as VVA incorporation being perpetual and that the State of New York does not want VVA's assets upon dissolution. This is not the way other VVA attorneys interpret the law.

Executive Director Report – Richard Lindbeck

Richard traveled to the Executive Residence in Madison on 11/09/23 to attend Governor Evers' invitation-only veterans tribute. Governor Evers stated he is committed to supporting the 30,000 veterans in Wisconsin. Secretary Designee James Bond presented the Women Veteran of the Year award. Richard spoke to various attendees at the meeting including Secretary Designee Bond, Major General Knapp (Commander of the Wisconsin National Guard), former State Senator Dave Zein, and Richard Hunt of Marinette Marine (they have a program to hire veterans for welding positions in their shipyard).

On November 10, Richard was the keynote speaker for the dedication of the Civil War Memorial in Newburg. All Washington County Civil War veterans have been identified. It was a long and difficult task but certainly worth the effort.

Bob Schara (1130) shared that Martin Schreiber held a dementia seminar at Lac Coutre Oreilles.

Bob also said, his Chapter (1130) ordered and received 6,000 **Orange Blossoms** from a source in Elkins, West Virginia. The cost is \$146.50 per 1,000 (shipping included); their phone number is (304) 630-2288. Bob said their Chapter did very well with their Orange Blossom sales.

Tom Banner (0767) asked what happens if a Chapter doesn't resolve a suspension within 3 years. Richard replied that the Chapter would lose their Charter.

Veterans Affairs Committee/Council on Veterans Programs – Vern Larson

The Department of Veterans Affairs will contract with a vendor for a study on the long-term care needs of veterans and all state veterans homes. The study, including a master plan for King, should be completed by 06/01/25 and will provide a framework to guide decision-making for future operations and development for King. There is now an undeveloped plot on Rainbow Lake after individual houses were torn down. Funding has also been allocated to study the veterans' homes at Chippewa Falls and Union Grove which should be completed by 01/01/25. These studies are very important but are also very complex. The Department of Veterans Affairs has selected **VetsCAN** and Purdue University to complete the study.

Worker shortages continue to be a focus for all veterans' home facilities.

Bob Schara (1130) asked if Tomah is still an active facility; yes they are; however, Tomah is a federal, not a state facility.

The Camp Randall Memorial project that Vern reported on in September was approved by the Board of Veterans Affairs.

The Board of Veterans Affairs was given a tour of the new Moses Hall at King. It is a beautiful facility.

The Wisconsin Senate approved bill SB251 (AB 23). The bill eliminates several members of the Council of Veterans Programs (COVP) and adds three new members (from colleges and technical schools).

Vern reminded everyone about the not-for-profit grants that are available through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Information can be found online under WI DVA (<https://www.va.gov>).

AVVA Report – Pat Furno

There will be an AVVA meeting immediately following the State Council meeting to discuss AVVA recruitment.

There is now a minimum age of 21 for AVVA members to hold Chapter, State, or National offices.

Committee Reports

POW/MIA Report – Duane Canon

Duane provided updated information on MIA/KIA numbers for World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. If you would like to do personal research, Duane uses the site: <https://www.dpaa.mil>.

Legislative – Dan Sciuti

No report.

Chapter Reports:

No verbal Chapter reports were given.

Old Business:

Future meeting sites were brought up; however, the discussion was tabled until the number of meetings is decided.

Tom Banner (0767) is looking for a volunteer to take care of the speaker system the State Council purchased; no one volunteered.

New Business:

Wade Van Ryzin (0351) shared that a three-county toxic exposure meeting will be held May 10-11, 2024 at the Appleton Expo Center and will have 60+ booths. Contact the Outagamie, Winneconne, or Calumet County CVSO if you have questions or would like more information.

No 50/50 raffle was held.

Motion by Duane Canon (0437) to adjourn; 2nd by Vern (#635); motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 11:24.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy L. Foye

AVVA At-Large/WSC Associate Secretary