



Together Always

**AVVA - AT LARGE NEWSLETTER
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I attended the Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting Saturday, September 25, 2021 in Waupaca which included an AVVA meeting.

AVVA Report

AVVA members met prior to the State Council meeting to discuss by-law changes to be presented at the upcoming National AVVA Convention. Most of the changes requested are for consistency in wording but it also including wording and to delay holding National Conventions and/or Leadership and Educational Conferences in the event of an unusual circumstance (i.e., COVID-19).

- **Article III, Section 3.02 Membership:** establishes 3 membership classes instead of 2. The new membership class would add Incarcerated Veteran Members (limited to incarcerated non-Vietnam veterans) and establish their right to hold office *only within* the facility in which they are housed. Dual members (limited to those eligible for membership in VVA) would be given the right to vote at the Chapter level. We support these changes.
- **Article III Section 3.07b Voting:** (prohibits absentee ballots) added wording “nor will any member of one chapter vote on behalf of another chapter”. VVA allows chapters who are not attending the National Convention to “release” their delegates to another Chapter (completion of a specific form is required). This item was discussed. We do not support this change; we suggested AVVA follow VVA’s current procedure.
- **Article IV Section 4.04-4.10 Term of Office And Office Holding Limitations:** Adds wording to extend the two year term of office if an unavoidable event forces an election to be postponed. It also limits regional and deputy directors to five (5) consecutive terms in the same office; this requires current sections 4.04 to 4.10 to be renumbered to 4.05 to 4.11. We support these changes.
- **Article V Section 5.02 Election of Officers:** deletes wording “in the odd numbered years”. We support this change.
- **Article V Section 5.03 Term of Office and Office Holding Limitations:** adds wording to extend the two year term of office if an unavoidable event forces an election to be postponed. We support this change.
- **Article VI Section 6.01 a-c Annual Meetings and National Events:** changes wording from “An annual meeting shall be held in the third quarter of the calendar year” to “will be held at a time and location determined by the board” for both the National Convention (6.01 a) and the Leadership and Educational Conference (6.01 b). We support these changes.

Pat reminded everyone that 2022 is an election year for Chapters; more details to follow at the December meeting.

State Council

Dr. Jeffrey Whittle gave a presentation requesting assistance for research on how peer and veteran groups support veterans who experience PTSD. He believes veterans can help identify important questions and advise how best to conduct the study. Dr. Whittle discussed possible PTSD symptoms: intrusive (flashbacks, etc.), avoidance symptoms (avoiding more things over time); negative moods or thoughts; and arousal or reactivity changes (“roller coaster/adrenalin rush”). He also discussed a variety of treatments that are available including symptom support, peer support activities, drug therapies and psychotherapies. He requested input from attendees who have experience with the treatments regarding what did or didn’t work for them. Dr. Whittle

discussed how veterans deal with their PTSD. Most veterans decline treatment for a variety of reasons including lack of availability, logistical difficulties or treatment isn't suggested by their provider. Veterans may not want treatment due to the bad reputation of the provider (i.e., VA), they don't think they need treatment, they had a bad initial experience with a provider or the treatment doesn't sound like something they want to do. Dr. Whittle requested input on how to deliver care more generally (especially for rural veterans), that veterans refer other eligible veterans for care or benefits, and for veterans to join the "Million Veterans Program" and/or the "All Of Us" program.

President's Report (Michael Demske)

- Governor Evers declared August 27, 2021 as USS Wisconsin day.
- John Rowan will present a petition at the Convention to a representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The petition will demand the Department begin research on the generational effects of Agent Orange as required in the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2019 (which passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in 2019). To date, no research has been started.

Secretary's Report (Jim Mullarkey)

- The new website should be available no later than 10/31/2021 (hopefully by around 10/15).
- It is critical that Chapters send Jim a copy of their election and financial reports so he has the correct information for the material(s) he sends to the Chapters.
- Robert's Rules of Order, Version 12 is being used for meetings.

Treasurer's Report (Pat Furno)

- Pat F. gave the report since Pat Craney had an excused absence. There are currently 10 VVA and 3 AVVA members attending the National Convention. The allocated maximum reimbursement amounts for delegates was discussed again. It currently appears the total amount allocated won't be needed since 3 VVA members costs should be eligible for reimbursement by National.

National Director's Report (John Margowski)

- John led a discussion on the constitutional amendments and resolutions for the National Convention, including a constitutional amendment to allow for "electronic" meetings.
- Due to reduced staffing, VVA National no longer has an in-house Human Resources director; the position will be outsourced. Human Resources expenses were already in the budget; the cost to outsource should be the same or less than what was originally budgeted.

Old Business

- The Executive Director position was approved. The Executive Director is appointed by the State Council President; Mike appointed Richard Lindbeck to the new position.

New Business

- John M. advised the Convention agenda will be posted on vva.org. Delegates should regularly check the vva.org website for any updates regarding restrictions for the Convention (check the "banners"); all COVID-19 rules are established by the State of North Carolina, Guilford County and the City of Greensboro).
- Dates for the 2022 meetings were established: March 19 (Waupaca); June 25 (Camp Victory, Willard); September 24 (Waupaca) and December 1 and 2 (Waupaca).
- Please let Jim know if you will be attending the holiday gathering; dinner will be at the Par 4 Conference Center with attendees ordering off the menu and paying for their individual meal(s).
- There was a discussion regarding purchasing a projector to use at Town Halls and/or any other Wisconsin State Council meetings. A maximum amount for the purchase (including a case for the projector) was discussed and approved.
- The Louisiana State Council requested financial assistance for the 5 Louisiana Chapters directly affected by Hurricane Ida. The requested was discussed and a donation was approved.

Upcoming Events:

November 2-6, 2021

National Convention; Greensboro, NC

December 10-11, 2021

Wisconsin State Council holiday gathering; Par 4 Comfort Suites, Waupaca

Upcoming Events (continued):

March 19, 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting; Par 4 Comfort Suites, Waupaca

June 25 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting and picnic; Camp Victory (N9839 Sterling Road, Willard, WI)
September 24, 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting; Par 4 Comfort Suites, Waupaca

December 1-2, 2022

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting and holiday gathering; Par 4 Comfort Suites, Waupaca

May I send you this newsletter by e-mail? If so, please contact me at jlfoye@frontier.com with a subject line of "AVVA At-Large Newsletter" or by phone at 715-842-9197 (we don't have caller ID so you'll need to leave your phone number in order for me to return your call). Any suggestions on what (or how much) information to include in the newsletter is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Take care and be safe.



Joy L. Foye
Wisconsin AVVA At-Large Representative