



West Virginia Veterans Council
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 13, 2015

- The meeting opened at 1:00 pm in the Governor’s Conference Room at the West Virginia State Capitol.
- Meeting called to order by Chairman Bare.
- Eight members were present, enough to establish a quorum.
- Those present were: Randall Bare, James DeCarlo, Cedric Greene, Bill Harris, James McCormick, Harrison Gilliam, Mary Byrd and Miles Epling. Not present: Woody Williams.
- James DeCarlo motioned to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion seconded by Bill Harris. **Motion passed.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Revised Honor Guard Resolution

- An updated resolution regarding National Guard providing Honor Guard duties at the cemetery on an as-needed basis was introduced by Secretary Thompson (to clarify confusion surrounding the original resolution presented at the previous meeting).
- James DeCarlo motioned to adopt new revised resolution.
- Bill Harris seconded. **Motion passed.**
- Chairman Bare emphasized there should never be any charge for honors provided at a funeral.
- Chairman Bare shared federal guidelines that specify committal services can’t exceed 20 minutes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Faster Release of Meeting Minutes

- James McCormick made a motion on behalf of Woody Williams to improve communications of the Council by mandating a “draft” copy of minutes be sent to Council members shortly after each meeting. (Currently, minutes are provided approximately one month prior to the next meeting).
- Cedric Greene said the system is good as is.

- James DeCarlo, Harrison Gilliam and Miles Epling agreed with Cedric Greene. **Issue tabled.**

DD214 Equivalent Legislation

- Chairman Bare shared a letter from a Milton VFW post seeking federal legislation to establish a DD214 equivalent. State support requested. Chairman Bare will pass the letter on to Senator Manchin's office.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (Rick Thompson):

Events & Memorials Resolution:

- Secretary Thompson presented a resolution asking veteran service organizations to notify the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance of any events or memorials scheduled to take place on or be installed on state property, especially the State Capitol and Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery.
- Miles Epling motioned to approve.
- James DeCarlo seconded. **Motion passed.**

Common Ground MOU:

- Secretary Thompson presented a Memorandum of Understanding from the West Virginia Board of Education and numerous other institutions aimed at increasing graduation rates and preparing students for college or military service.
- Miles Epling made a motion that the Council participate in the Memorandum of Understanding in such capacity as outlined in the draft document.
- Motion seconded by Harrison Gilliam. **Motion passed.**

West Virginia Veterans Nursing Facility:

- There are currently 107 residents.
- There is a flu outbreak at the facility; new admissions have been temporarily postponed.
- The interest list continues to fluctuate between 10 and 20.

Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery:

- The cemetery has exceeded 300 interments.
- The Korean War Monument has been placed, but no decisions regarding a possible ceremony have been made.
- The Don Kinnard Monument has been placed. VFW is planning a ceremony, but our office has not yet been informed of any dates or other details.

Veterans Home:

- Census is 85 residents.
- Focus is on obtaining oral health care for all residents.

Field Offices:

- For the first time in many years, all field offices are fully staffed.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS:

- Bill Harris suggested holding a Council meeting in Wheeling.
- Veterans Visibility Day was discussed. Heather to send information to Council when confirmed.
- Harrison Gilliam confirmed that monthly phone call with feds that he was assigned to at last Council meeting is helpful, especially for northern and eastern parts of the state.
- Chairman Bare reiterated points from previous meetings, warning others about solicitors who seek donations for veterans, but then take that money out of state.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

- Discussion regarding Fireworks bill. The Department is pushing it again this year.
- James DeCarlo motioned to adjourn the meeting.
- Seconded by Bill Harris. **Meeting adjourned** at 2:00 pm.

Heather Ransom
Communications Director

Rick Thompson
Cabinet Secretary