

County of Kent Department of Veterans' Affairs



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VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE January 2, 2014 – 8:00 a.m. 82 Ionia NW, STE 380

Paul Potter, Chair
Fred Chambers
Mary Johnson
Harold Mast
Mel Bauman

MINUTES

Present: Fred Chambers, Harold Mast, Mary Johnson, Mel Bauman, Paul Potter, Wayman Britt, Carrie Roy

Guests: None

Absent:

1. **Call to Order** – Paul Potter called the meeting to order and lead the in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Approval of Agenda/Minutes** Harold Mast moved to approve the minutes from December 5, 2013. Mary Johnson seconded. Minutes approved.
3. **Staff Report:**
 - A. **Financial Status as of 01/01/2014:** Ms. Roy reviewed the AFF with the committee. She indicated that there is 15% of the budget remaining in 2013. She explained that the main reason for this was the unusual low expenditures in the burial line item as well as the \$16,000 grant from the State. Mel Bauman asked if people were not applying for the burial benefit. Ms. Roy stated that she believes the WWII veterans' death rate has already peaked and thus decline.
 - B. **Emergency Needs and Burials:** Ms. Roy reviewed the emergency relief and burial expenses. She noted that \$1,300 was expended on food vouchers in December, \$414 for rent, \$623.31 on utilities and \$2,100 for burials.

C. Year End: Ms. Roy provided a brief overview on expenditures for 2013. She pointed out that May was a high month in burials, food and utilities. There was \$71,242 expended in emergency relief in 2013 and \$40,064 expended in burials.

5. Reports:

A. Claims and Recoveries: Ms. Roy referred to the next report regarding claims and recoveries. The Department filed 29 claims in December. This brought the total claims filed in 2013 to 423. She pointed out that \$697,606 is being brought in per month and total annual recoveries are a little over 8.3 million dollars. Ms. Roy stated that she hopes to have more administrative support in 2014 so that she is able to do more outreach which will help the department file more claims.

6. Around the Table: There was discussion regarding the GDx report. Ms. Roy stated that MI improved by 3 slots overall. She noted that the report is based on Veterans Affairs expenditures only. The committee discussed the current Emergency Relief Policies. The committee agreed on changing the policies to allow an eligible veteran to apply for assistance twice within a twelve month period, however placing a \$1,000 annual cap on assistance provided. The committee looked at the average assistance per year and it was determined that \$1,000 is very close to the average amount awarded. By allowing more than one application per year, this will allow a veteran who may have used soldiers' relief for a \$100 dollar food voucher in January, to receive help with rent or a utility in July. The policies were updated effectively immediately. They are attached.

7. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

8. Next Meeting: February 6, 2014.