

CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEETING  
600 Gunder Road NE, Suite 6 Elkader, Iowa 52043  
Clayton County Office Building/Public Meeting Room  
February 14, 2023

Veterans Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. on February 14, 2023 by Commissioner Clark at the Clayton County Office Building/Public Meeting Room.

Roll Call: Clark, Torkelson and Jordan.

Motion was made by Clark to approve the minutes from January 10, 2023. Motion was seconded by Torkelson; Motion carried.

There were no public comments made.

Old Business:

- 1.) Shuttle Coordinator and Shuttle Drivers are needed to man the VA van which goes to Dubuque and Iowa City from Clayton and Delaware Counties. Jordan Contacted Ken Seeney, current Coordinator, to discuss the demands of the role of Coordinator and Driver, and offering a stipend for these positions. At the current time we have only one driver available. Jordan said he was trying to find a coordinator and drivers by contacting interested individuals at Legion Post Meetings, non-profit businesses, Economic Development Departments, and Chamber of Commerce in Clayton and Delaware Counties to encourage people to apply for these positions. Discussion was conducted regarding placing an ad in local newspapers offering a stipend for both positions upon Board of Supervisor approval. Ideas were discussed about the monetary stipend being \$75.00 per trip for drivers and a \$100.00 monthly payment for Coordinator. The average hours for Coordinator is approximately 5 hours per month. Clark made the motion to pay \$100.00 monthly to the Coordinator, Torkelson seconded the motion; motion carried. Clark made the motion to pay Drivers \$75.00 per trip, Torkelson seconded the motion; motion carried. Clark made the motion to reimburse drivers mileage from and to the van housed in Clayton or Delaware Counties at 60 cents per mile, Torkelson seconded the motion; motion carried. Clark made the motion to place an ad in appropriate newspapers advertising the Coordinator and Driver positions not to exceed the standard rate of \$300.00; Torkelson seconded the motion; motion carried. Jordan will confirm publications in local newspapers.
- 2.) Outreach Event in March. In honor of Women's History Month in March 2023, an event has been planned to celebrate women who have served and continue to serve our country. Clayton County Veteran Affairs Office welcomes Denise Lana, U.S. Air Force Veteran and Staff Writer for the Driftless Journal and Public Opinion newspapers, as she shares her experience as a female service member navigating the military and subsequent readjustment to civilian life. The event is an open dialogue platform designed to empower female veterans to share their stories, highlight resources available to female service members and veterans, and identify ways that individuals can support this integral uniformed collective. Date of event is: Saturday, March 11, 2023 beginning at 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Location: Driftless Area Wetland Center, 509 Hwy. 18, Marquette, IA 52158. A Press Release has been planned for this event. The Driftless Area Wetland Center can accommodate 45-50 people for the event.
- 3.) A Follow-up Event for Mental Health with Discussion from advocates and participants is also being planned for May of 2023.
- 4.) Discussion was held about the purchase of a Laptop for the Veterans Commission Office. Jordan said he is still looking into this. He wants to be mindful of the monies that the office has in acquiring this office equipment.
- 5.) Brief discussion was held regarding securing an additional person for the Veterans Commission office. Jordan was looking at a possible internship position.

- 6.) Clark brought up the recent Military Sexual Trauma information. Jordan plans to look materials over, and address these concerns at a later meeting.
- 7.) Clark addressed the concern of the homeless veteran in our County. Veteran has found housing.

New Business:

- 1.) Jordan shared a copy of the VSO Monthly Activity report for January, 2023. 34 calls were received this month re: Veteran related concerns. 21 total office visits from veterans. 2 veteran outreach meetings. 1 veteran home visit. Notable Inquiries: Managing two disability claims right now for applicants who did not directly serve in presumptive locations associated with Agent Orange, but who each may have experienced a toxic exposure. Both claims will be challenging, in that their claims do not satisfy all prongs of a prima facie case. VA & State Updates: Effective January 17 Veterans in an acute suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost. This is part of a 10-year National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide and the current administration's commitment to reduce incidents. This includes inpatient care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for 90 days. Veterans do not have to be enrolled in VA system for this benefit. This effort allows the VA to provide, pay for or reimburse treatment of eligible individuals' emergency suicide care, transportation costs and follow-up care. Eligibility for the benefit has expanded to include reserve service members (there conditions about service) and former members who experienced sexual assault. Veteran Affairs Life Insurance (VALife) is now available and provides low costs coverage for veterans who have a service-connected disability. May obtain up to \$40,000 in coverage in \$10,000 increments. The premiums are determined based on Veterans age when they apply and the amount of coverage the Veteran elects. Once enrolled, the premium does not increase.
- 2.) PACT ACT was discussed – enrolled in VA healthcare – scheduled environmental exposure.
- 3.) Jordan said we were to be mindful of our successors in our role of commissioners. We are to be engaged and active.
- 4.) Clark was wondering if cards could be made available to encourage new members to want to be future commissioners.
- 5.) Review of Claims.
- 6.) Next meeting will be on March 14 at 7:30 a.m.

Clark made the motion to adjourn, Torkelson seconded the motion; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Geralyn Torkelson

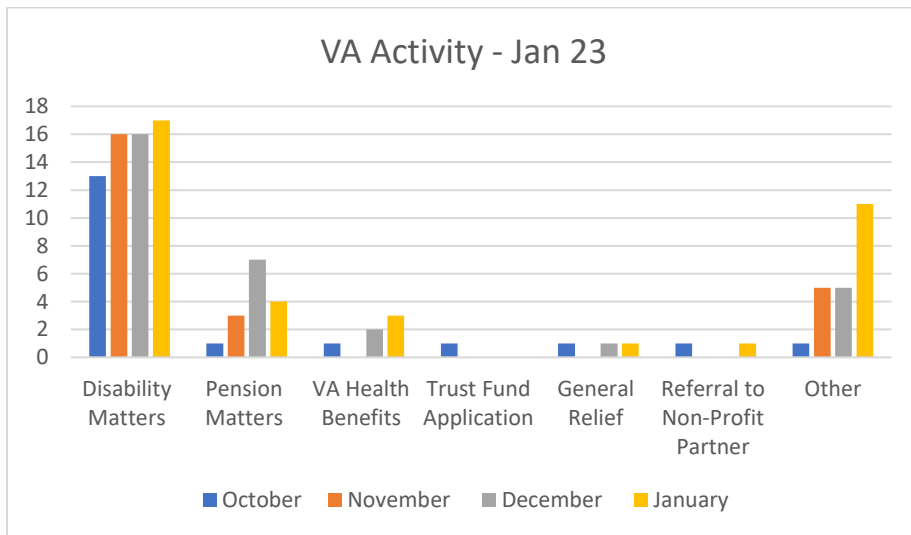
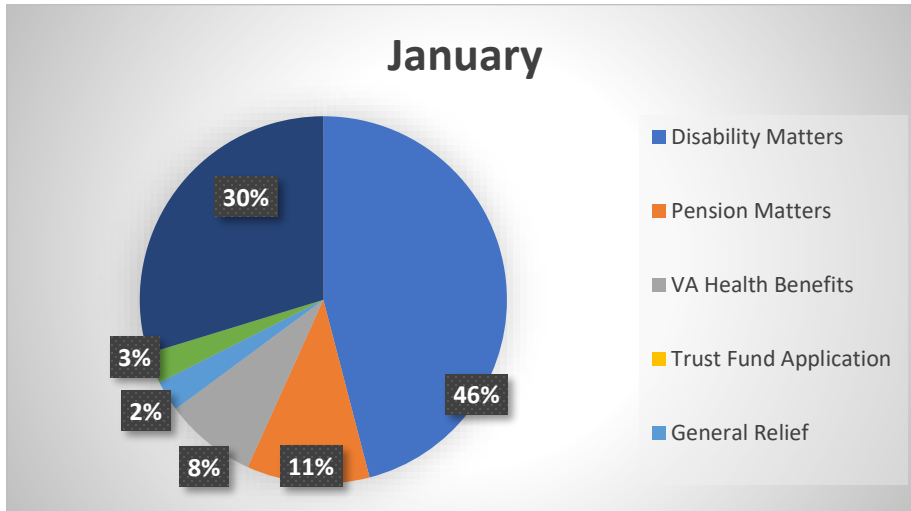
## January Report

**34** total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns.

**21** total office visits from Veterans.

**2** veteran outreach meetings.

**1** veteran home visit.



### Notable Inquiries:

Managing two disability claims right now for applicants who did not directly serve in presumptive locations associated with Agent Orange, but who each may have experienced a toxic exposure. Both claims will be challenging, in that their claims do not satisfy all prongs of a prima facie case.

### VA & State Updates:

1. Effective January 17<sup>th</sup> Veterans in an acute suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost. This is part of a 10-year National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide and the current administration's commitment to reduce incidents. This includes inpatient care for up to 30 days and

outpatient care for 90 days. Veterans do not have to be enrolled in VA system for this benefit. This effort allows the VA to provide, pay for or reimburse treatment of eligible individuals' emergency suicide care, transportation costs and follow-up care. Eligibility for the benefit has expanded to include reserve service members (there conditions about service) and former members who experienced sexual assault.

2. Veteran Affairs Life Insurance (VaLife) is now available and provide low costs coverage for veterans who have a service-connected disability. May obtain up to \$40,000 in coverage in \$10,000 increments. The premiums are determined based on Veterans age when they apply and the amount of coverage the Veteran elects. Once enrolled, the premium does not increase.

[Veterans Affairs Life Insurance \(VALife\) | Veterans Affairs](#)