Veterans Assistance Commission

Meeting Summary – June 17, 2026

Date/Time: June 17, 2026, 6:00pm
Location: (Not specified in transcript)
Attendees:

- Gary Reynolds
- Joe Norris
- Kevin Gatewood
- Scott Burge
- Ryan Schurz
- Zach Brooks
- Michael Hayden (joined after start)

1. Administrative Proceedings

1.1. Call to Order & Roll Call

- Meeting called to order at 6:00pm by chair.
- Attendees recorded as above.

1.2. Minutes Review

- Minutes from previous meetings are now available on the organization's website (vacjc.org, scroll to bottom).
- Motion made and adopted to waive reading of previous minutes.

2. Financial Reports

2.1. Treasurer's Report

- Printed bank details were unclear; issues encountered with accessing comprehensive financial information.
- **Account Balances as of June 17, 2026**:
    - Discretionary Account: $5,398.55
    - Precise Operating Account balance not available at meeting; to be confirmed in the next few days.
- Treasurer (Joe) was recently out of town, so some account questions pending.
- Discussion regarding possible maintenance fees if debit cards are not used periodically.
- Motion made and adopted to waive the detailed treasurer's report pending clarification; Treasurer will text updated balances to members.
- Expenses questioned; some unclear expenditures to be reviewed with the bank in person.

2.2. Expenditures and Payments

- **Rent**: Paid for the rest of this year and part of next year.
- **Toner**: $256 for two cartridges purchased; payment pending but ordered by phone to avoid postal delays.
- **Other Expenses**:
    - No payment made yet for signage; awaiting further details/quote.
    - Outstanding expenditures to be clarified with the bank.

2.3. Signage and Facility Improvements

- Discussion about acquiring a new sign: potential extra cost for adding "United Way" branding.
- United Way grant to cover broader building/signage renovations is in effect; work to happen around October.
- Suggestion to wait until United Way renovations (including signage and possible lighting) are implemented for cost efficiency.
- Interim solutions like temporary or magnetic signage and banners were discussed; some items, like canopies and table covers, are already available.
- Security upgrades planned as part of United Way funding: doors, camera systems, and buzz-in system are forthcoming.

3. Communications & Reports

3.1. Outreach and Assistance Programs

- Illinois Joining Forces (IJF) conference update: New transportation assistance program for veterans needing travel to CMP exams via contract with Hoover, paid by IJF (requires veterans to create an account).
- No other significant communications or distress reports.
- Reimbursement from the county recently received.

3.2. Community Events and Presence

- Discussion of visibility at local events (e.g., Fall Fest, Sweet Corn/Watermelon Festival).
    - Need for appropriate signage and professional appearance at such events.
    - Existing campaign materials (tablecloths, roll-up signs, canopy) discussed, some currently on hold.

4. Old and New Business

4.1. Old Business

- Reimbursement from the county noted as completed.
- No other unfinished/old agenda items.
- Ongoing review of a veteran’s assistance case: interim funding and landlord negotiation resolved a housing risk, with $280 balance remaining for the veteran after donations and support.

4.2. New Business

- **Professional Appearance at Public Events**:
    - Discussion raised regarding Zach Brooks wearing a stocking cap at the Memorial Day courthouse ceremony.
    - Issue: Some veterans found it unprofessional; Zach explained medical exemption supported by VA/medical documentation.
    - Board consensus: Issue clarified and accepted, suggestion to consider branded headwear if necessary.
    - General appreciation expressed for Zach's work and public service, with a recognition of positive feedback received.
- **Monthly Activity/Data Reporting**:
    - Suggestion to include regular (monthly or weekly) activity reports in meeting minutes and/or on the website, ensuring transparency and meeting state requirements.
    - Reports to include number of veterans helped, financial assistance provided, and support activities (no personal data).
    - Zach to send these summaries to be included in minutes and made public via the website.
    - No formal motion needed; established as board policy.

5. Equipment and Purchasing

5.1. Scanner Purchase

- Existing scanner considered too slow; need for improved office equipment identified.
- Discussion of local copier/scanner contract options and pricing comparisons.
    - Portable scanner with 50-page autofeed currently used, but insufficient for workload.
    - Preferred model: Kodak S2070 (speeds over 100 pages/minute).
    - Prices searched: Range $990 - $1,500 (Office Depot: $1,500; B&H Photo: $990).
- **Motion passed**: Authorize purchase of scanner up to $1,500; if cost exceeds this, return to board for approval.

5.2. Office Supplies

- Discussion about sourcing paper (suggestion: join county/school bulk purchases for savings).
- Ink and toner supplies purchased from End Off, which offers best prices.
- All other office supply needs currently met.

5.3. Facility/Security Upgrades

- Only outstanding need: upgrade for security door to enable buzz-in access.
- Additional relevant improvements part of United Way project to be implemented in October.

6. Traffic and Service Report

- Zach reported on office traffic:
    - In-person and phone contacts fluctuate weekly.
    - Noted that activity is expected to increase around holidays and after security upgrades/staffing changes.

7. Action Items

- Treasurer to confirm actual account balances and send via text to board in several days.
- Treasurer and Zach to reconcile and clarify all unclear expenditures.
- Zach to follow up with sign company (Todd Ham), gather full details and cost, and coordinate timing with United Way's October renovations.
- Zach to supply monthly (or weekly) summaries of services rendered and support provided for public posting in meeting minutes and on the website.
- Zach to purchase a new scanner not to exceed $1,500 and report back if higher options are being considered.
- Zach to explore bulk paper purchasing opportunities with county/schools.

8. Follow-up and Next Steps

- United Way grant renovations and signage improvements to be monitored for October timeframe.
- Continue monitoring and reporting on financial expenditures and transparency.
- Continue submitting regular activity/service reports for board review and public accountability.
- Regular equipment needs to be re-evaluated as upgrades and growth occur.

9. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made and passed.
- Meeting officially closed (time not specified, but after scanner and supply discussions).

Notable Dates & Deadlines:

- Next monthly statement from bank due in 3–4 days (as of June 17, 2026).
- United Way renovations/signage targeted for October 2026.
- Scanner purchase to happen as soon as quote confirmed (up to $1,500).

General Observations

- The board is focused on transparency, professionalism, steady community outreach, and efficient service.
- No substantial conflicts, consensus reached on all motions.
- Significant appreciation voiced for Zach Brooks's work and transparency regarding accommodations and activities.

Action Items

- □ Send the link to the meeting minutes on the website to anyone who needs it — @A
- □ Go to the bank to get the actual balance on the discretionary and operations accounts — @B · due 2026-06-18
- □ Text everyone the monthly bank statement once received — @B
- □ Run a balance inquiry on the discretionary card — @A
- □ Send out the updated bank balances after reconciling — @B
- □ Email treasurer's report details to A for website posting and spreadsheet updating — @E
- □ Try to contact Todd Ham about the sign and any possible donation or discount — @A
- □ Hold off on sign installation until October when United Way finishes rework and grant projects — @E
- □ Email monthly or weekly reports of veteran assistance activities to A for inclusion in minutes and website — @E
- □ Purchase a scanner up to $1500 for efficient document scanning — @E
- □ Look into buying paper in bulk via county or school purchases for cost savings — @E