



## BREMER COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

203 1<sup>ST</sup> Avenue Northeast  
Waverly, IA 50677

P: (319) 352-4209

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### Commission Meeting Minutes July 19, 2023

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Wednesday, July 19, 2023, at 5:00 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Commissioner, Sara Jennerman; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Present by phone Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Assistant Director Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Chairperson, Rich Miller, opened the meeting at 5:00 pm.

Jennerman motioned to approve the agenda for this meeting, Sager second. June Meeting Minutes were reviewed by all. No additions or corrections were needed. Motion by Sager to approve the minutes, second by Jennerman. Sager signed off on the minutes written by Heidemann.

June Financial report was reviewed by all. Discussion regarding a double payment to NACVSO. Bonzer explained that it was being addressed and he will give an update when it is resolved. Motion by Sager to approve the financial reports, second by Miller. Sager motioned to review *What Every Veteran Should Know* on the Commission's own time, with no opposition from the other members.

All present reviewed the total number of contacts the office had in June and the stats for the June Van Report. Bonzer noted that we had a possible record for the office with 12 new contacts. Sager asked about the number of claims submitted. Bonzer and Heidemann each gave an estimated amount. Heidemann explained that the majority of the administrative duties are being completed by her. She stated that this is the reason she has not been able to get as many claims in as Bonzer. Bonzer stated that he believes Heidemann takes most of the phone calls for the office. Sager asked what could be done to distribute the workload more equally. Heidemann stated that the office could do an audit of the tasks to see which employee has been doing which tasks. It was agreed that the office would gather stats on each task and report back to the Commission. Sager suggested using Teams or an Excel spreadsheet to track the voicemails and callbacks. It was agreed that an Excel spreadsheet would be created to track the number of voicemails and ensure clients are getting callbacks in a timely manner. The idea of bringing in volunteers to help alleviate some of the stress on the employees was discussed. All Commissioners agreed that this would be acceptable and encouraged Heidemann and Bonzer to reach out to those who have expressed interest.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of June.

Director Bonzer started the review of the new business items. Heidemann explained the information from the June 20, 2023, BOS meeting minutes. All reviewed the list of approved budgets for each department. Sager asked the ending amount for FY23 budget. Heidemann explained that the information is listed on the Financial Report for this department reviewed earlier in the meeting. She stated there was roughly \$20,000.00 unused in FY23's budget that would be put into the County's General Fund. Sager asked if there was a way to find out each of the

county department's ending amount of their FY23 budget. It was explained that this information would need to be requested, though all county budgets are public knowledge.

The updated information from IACCVSO regarding VSO salaries across the state was reviewed by all. Heidemann explained that once the fully updated version is complete, a copy will be given to the Commission.

Heidemann discussed that NACo and NACVSO are partnering again for the Green Light Project for Veterans Day. The templates for press releases and a county resolution/declaration were shown and reviewed briefly. Heidemann will be sending out the templates to all of the Commissioners for further review. It was discussed and decided that the office will prepare and submit articles to each newspaper in the county.

Heidemann's Van Coordinator time tracker was reviewed by all. She explained that a name has been given as a possible candidate to take over the Van Coordinator Volunteer position.

Director Bonzer discussed several items of old business and their movement, if any. Bonzer reported how the meeting with Home Base Iowa went when the representative met with the BOS and this office. The office and Commission will need to discuss potential incentives if the BOS decides to become a Home Base Iowa county. The Director reported multiple upcoming meetings, outreach events, and training events that will be taking place or took place in June.

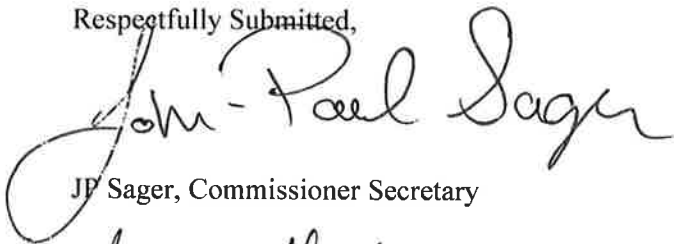
Chairperson Miller opened the meeting for public comment, questions, and comments. Sager asked if the office could speak at the Denver Lions meeting. Bonzer and Heidemann agreed that they would plan on speaking at one of the meetings, date to be determined.

The lunch break plan was not voted on due to unanimous agreement from all parties. Sager asked how the new lunch break plan has been going. Bonzer informed the Commission that he is attempting to do better at taking lunch, but still takes later lunches around 2:00 pm on occasion. Heidemann stated that she has continued to take lunches between 12:00 pm and 12:30 pm, occasionally from 12:30 pm to 1:00 pm.

Heidemann asked if the Commission would like to move the meetings to an earlier time due to all members typically showing up early. Jennerman motioned to start Commission Meetings at 4:30 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month. Sager second. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Jennerman to adjourn, seconded by Chairperson Miller, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:17 pm. The next regular meeting will be on August 16, 2023, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary



Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director



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### Commission Meeting Minutes August 16, 2023

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner, Sara Jennerman; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Excused Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Assistant Director Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Chairperson, Rich Miller, opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

July Meeting Minutes were reviewed by all. No additions or corrections were needed. Motion by Jennerman to approve the minutes, second by Miller. Sager will sign off on the minutes written by Heidemann at the next scheduled meeting.

July Financial report was reviewed by all. Motion by Jennerman to approve the financial reports, second by Miller. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

All present were informed by Bonzer that all contact numbers of the office in July are pending. It was decided that at the next meeting, we will update July's numbers. The stats for the July Van Report were reviewed. Heidemann informed all that the three cancelations were from the facilities and not the veterans. She explained that the veterans got a call the morning of the ride and one was notified after arriving at the facility.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of July. Bonzer let the Commissioners know that he is waiting to hear back from the BOS about their decision on making Bremer County a Home Base Iowa county.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. During the review and discussion of this section, it was unanimously decided that employee evaluations would be tabled until all Commission members were present. Bonzer discussed the need for volunteers after notifying the Commission that we have not completed the grave marker inventory. He discussed that there is an individual who has expressed interest, though they have a criminal background. He stated that he feels they are not the same person as they were. It was decided that if they would like to volunteer they will need to fill out the form and complete any background checks necessary and see where it goes.

While discussing the maintenance of veteran graves line item, Chairperson Miller informed all present that in the WAVP board meetings he has attended, there are funds going to someone to refurbish the graves in Waverly. The remainder of the new business items were covered.

Chairperson Miller opened the meeting for public comment, questions, and comments. Heidemann informed the Commission that she is running for the IACCVSO Board position, Sergeant at Arms. Bonzer expressed his

concerns. Heidemann made it clear that if it is too much to handle on top of all of her office duties she will rescind her offer to run or resign if elected this fall.

Heidemann informed the Commission that NACVSO is asking for support to pass legislation regarding CVSOs at the federal level. Heidemann shared the news of the christening of the new USS Iowa submarine. Heidemann informed the Commission that Iowa City received our office's donation to the VA Van. These were funds donated to the office for that purpose. Heidemann informed the Commission that our VA Van will likely be traded for a new one in the near future due to the number of miles on the current van.

All discussed the agreed-upon Excel spreadsheet that was created by Heidemann on 7/20/23 to track the number of voicemails and ensure clients are getting callbacks in a timely manner. Bonzer stated that he had not started using it until 8/16/23. He stated that it was a well-made document and that he would start using it more. Heidemann explained to the Commissioners what is being tracked and informed them that she has been the only one updating the document when voicemails come in. Bonzer and Heidemann informed the Commission they are going to try to meet weekly, no less than monthly, to ensure there is continuous communication on how the office is running.

Director Bonzer discussed several items of old business and their movement, if any. Heidemann asked about NACo's Green Light Project. It was discussed and decided that the office would supply a brief description of the Green Light Project to put into the local papers.

The Director reported multiple upcoming meetings, outreach events, and training events that will be taking place or took place in August.

Motion by Commissioner Jennerman to adjourn, seconded by Chairperson Miller, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 5:52 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on September 20, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary



Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director





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### Commission Meeting Minutes September 20, 2023

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 4:55 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Commissioner, Sara Jennerman; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Guest: Michelle Sager. Present via Phone: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Assistant Director Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Secretary Sager opened the meeting, at the request of Chairperson Miller, at 4:55 p.m. Miller motioned to approve this meeting's agenda, second by Jennerman.

August Meeting Minutes were reviewed by all. No additions or corrections were needed. Motion by Miller to approve the minutes, second by Sager, motion carried. Sager signed July's Minutes and will sign off on August's minutes, written by Heidemann, at the next scheduled meeting.

August Financial report was reviewed by all. Motion by Sager to approve the financial reports, second by Miller. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

The new columns for the Office Report were reviewed by all. Heidemann explained that she changed the column information due to the conversation between Sager, Bonzer, and herself. The stats for the August Van Report were reviewed. All reviewed the Excel spreadsheets that were created by Heidemann; tracking the number of voicemails and ensuring clients are getting callbacks in a timely manner; and tracking the number of Intent to Files and Claims submitted by each CVSO.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of September. Heidemann reported on the Bremer County Suicide Prevention Coalition (BCSPC) event held in Denver at the American Legion on 9/14/2023.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. The Public Education Services line item was reviewed. It was discussed by all that it is for purchasing new office materials and could've been used for posting the BCSPC event in the newspapers. All Commissioners and CVSOs received a copy of the Iowa Open Meetings Open Records Handbook for their review. Heidemann expressed that they should all review the booklet on their own time, and should take note of the frequently asked questions section, due to it explaining code in a simple way with real life examples.

At 6:02 p.m., Chairperson Miller left the meeting.

Continued discussion of new business items. CVSO job description from the IACCVSO website are to be emailed out to the Commission.

Director Bonzer discussed several items of old business and their movement, if any. The Director reported multiple upcoming meetings, outreach events, and training events that will be taking place or took place in September. Due to the Commissioner's prior obligations, the other topics of old business, including employee evaluations, were tabled for the next meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Jennerman to adjourn, seconded by Secretary Sager, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:06 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on September 20, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary



Written by: Bailey Heidemann, Assistant Director



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### Commission Meeting Minutes October 18, 2023

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 4:40 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Excused: Commissioner, Sara Jennerman. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Assistant Director Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Miller motioned to approve this meeting's agenda, second by Sager, motion carried.

All reviewed September Meeting Minutes. No additions or corrections were needed. Motion by Sager to approve the minutes, second by Miller, motion carried. Sager signed September and August Minutes, written by Heidemann.

All reviewed the September Financial Report. Motion by Sager to approve the financial report, second by Miller. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

All reviewed the September Office Report. Sager asked about the Intent to Files that are within the 30-day mark. Heidemann explained that they were her's and that she continues to struggle to keep up on VA claims she has, due to doing all administrative tasks for the office. Sager stated that Bonzer is to take administrative duties from Heidemann so she can complete her list of VA claims. Bonzer agreed and asked if there were VA claims that he could take from Heidemann. Heidemann stated that it would be more helpful if he started helping with administrative duties. Bonzer agreed to do so, and both agreed that those duties would be made more evenly distributed. Heidemann and Bonzer explained the differences between a Fully Developed Claim and a Standard Claim to help explain the time frame in which it takes them to complete VA claims. Further explanation led to a discussion regarding the normal practice in the office being Fully Developed Claims. Due to the increase in the number of veterans wanting to submit a VA claim, the office will need to use the Standard Claim process more. The Commissioners agreed that this would be an acceptable approach.

There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted. Bonzer discussed one family, without disclosing any PPI, who is working on completing an application. It was decided unanimously that if the application were to be submitted our office would be able to provide \$600.00 in assistance toward the family's utility bills.

The September Van Report was reviewed by all. Heidemann informed all present that the numbers have been lower than in previous months. Heidemann also informed the Commission that the new van was retrieved at the beginning of this month. She stated that they were welcome to tour it at the end of the meeting, and all agreed to do so.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of September.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. Heidemann informed the Commission that she was elected to be the new Sergeant at Arms for the Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veterans Service Officers (IACCVSO). Heidemann thanked the Commission for allowing her to run for this position. She explained that it is a two-year term and she will be in charge of keeping order in the EBoard meetings as well as at IACCVSO Trainings.

The Intent to File tracker was reviewed. It was unanimously decided that a "Confirmation VA Received Claim" would be added to the tracker. Heidemann will add this column before the next Commission meeting.

The Commission asked for a press release and county resolution for Operation Green Light. Bonzer informed the Commission that the Board of Supervisors stated that he would get those done, but needed to see what the templates said. Heidemann stated that she would send Bonzer the templates for him to review.

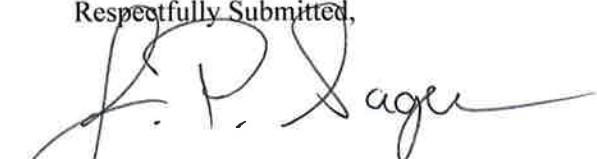
Secretary Sager updated all present regarding the information learned at Commissioner School 2023. It was unanimously decided that the office job descriptions will be updated to include; gaining a PIV card within the first year of employment and mandatory attendance at the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) National Conference annually. These changes will be written in FY24 and, upon the Board of Supervisors's approval, will be implemented in FY25. The office will be implementing the \$3,000.00 earmark out of the \$10,000.00 allocation fund for trainings and National Conference. Sager stated that there are pending code changes at the state level to include the changes listed above. Sager and Miller unanimously determined that both employees will plan on going to the National Conference this coming May 2024. Sager asked for the office to look into whether an intern can be paid or not. Bonzer said he would look into it and report back.

All discussed cross-accreditation and the purpose of it. Heidemann explained that she had renewed her accreditation with DAV (Disabled American Veterans) which was due at the end of September. Bonzer stated that he had not done so, but would look into it and remedy any issues immediately.

Director Bonzer discussed several items of old business and their movement, if any. The Director reported multiple upcoming meetings, outreach events, and training events that will be taking place or took place in October. All present toured the new VA Van.

Motion by Secretary Sager to adjourn, seconded by Chairperson Miller, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:25 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on November 15, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary



Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director





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### Commission Meeting Minutes November 15, 2023

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner, Sara Jennerman; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Present via phone: Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Assistant Director Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

All reviewed October Meeting Minutes. No additions or corrections were needed. Motion by Jennerman to approve the minutes, second by Sager, motion carried. At December's meeting Sager will sign October's minutes, written by Heidemann.

All reviewed the October Financial Report. Motion by Sager to approve the financial report, second by Miller. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

All reviewed the ~~September~~ <sup>October</sup> Office Report. Bonzer asked the Commission if National Guard members would qualify for General Assistance. The Commission unanimously agreed that they would need to complete the application and meet the criteria in order to qualify. There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted.

The October Van Report was reviewed by all. Heidemann informed all present that the numbers have continued to be lower than in previous months. Heidemann reported that purchasing duplicate keys or a Pelican case for the one key are equally expensive. It was decided that purchasing keys for each driver would be the better option and the Pelican case option would be the back up plan if Rolling Ford won't cut the keys purchased on Amazon.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of October.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. Bonzer informed the Commission that he had not gotten a proposal to the Board of Supervisors and would need to plan better for next year. Heidemann confirmed that she had emailed the information and the samples, found on the National Association of Counties (NACo) webpage, on 10/24/2023.

Jennermann exited at 5:04 pm.

All discussed the first drafts of the FY25 budget that were prepared by Heidemann. Heidemann explained the changes made and informed the Commission that once she receives the proper worksheets from the Finance Director she will transfer the information to those worksheets. When discussing Revenue estimates, Miller asked if the gift cards work better as donations towards needy veterans than donating money. Bonzer and Heidemann



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Assistant Director Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

All reviewed October Meeting Minutes. No additions or corrections were needed. Motion by Jennerman to approve the minutes, second by Sager, motion carried. At December's meeting Sager will sign October's minutes, written by Heidemann.

All reviewed the October Financial Report. Motion by Sager to approve the financial report, second by Miller. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

All reviewed the October Office Report. Bonzer asked the Commission if National Guard members would qualify for General Assistance. The Commission unanimously agreed that they would need to complete the application and meet the criteria in order to qualify. There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted.

The October Van Report was reviewed by all. Heidemann informed all present that the numbers have continued to be lower than in previous months. Heidemann reported that purchasing duplicate keys or a Pelican case for the one key are equally expensive. It was decided that purchasing keys for each driver would be the better option and the Pelican case option would be the back up plan if Rolling Ford won't cut the keys purchased on Amazon.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of October.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. Bonzer informed the Commission that he had not gotten a proposal to the Board of Supervisors and would need to plan better for next year. Heidemann confirmed that she had emailed the information and the samples, found on the National Association of Counties (NACo) webpage, on 10/24/2023.

Jennermann exited at 5:04 pm.

All discussed the first drafts of the FY25 budget that were prepared by Heidemann. Heidemann explained the changes made and informed the Commission that once she receives the proper worksheets from the Finance Director she will transfer the information to those worksheets. When discussing Revenue estimates, Miller asked if the gift cards work better as donations towards needy veterans than donating money. Bonzer and Heidemann stated that they do work better and it allows the office to provide quick relief to a veteran or family that only

stated that they do work better and it allows the office to provide quick relief to a veteran or family that only needs a little help to get by until the next pay check. The gift cards that were donated last year were gas and grocery gift cards, all from service organizations in the community. Bonzer informed that a veteran wanting to express his gratitude donated a gift card to Texas Roadhouse after Bonzer denied the gift. Heidemann informed the Commission that Trinity Church in Waverly is donating holiday meals to 9 veterans this year. The office coordinates the meal pick-ups with the veteran/family.

Bonzer initiated discussion on the move to the Drexler building. Heidemann clarified that this has not been decided yet and it won't be until the addition to the Courthouse and or the Public Health building is built. Heidemann and Bonzer discussed the tour of the Drexler building. Heidemann presented the floor plan showing the tentative plan for placement of all the organizations in the Annex.

Jennerman re-entered the meeting at 5:35 pm.

All filled in Jennerman of the information she missed. The Commission asked to be kept up to date on this topic. They expressed that our office needs to be a secured office building. Further explaining that the nature of the office's work, veteran private information, files, and interviews, needs to stay in a locked building where access is granted by the employees. Sager asked how other offices operate. Heidemann and Bonzer explained that not all offices are in a secured building and most are still in the basements of the county courthouse or even a rented space provided by a service organization. Sager asked that this topic be brought up to the IACCVSO E-Board to see if this is something that could be discussed at spring or fall school. Heidemann stated she would bring it to the board's attention at the meeting in January.

Bonzer informed the Commission that the office has it's regular update with the Board of Supervisors and an additional meeting regarding budgets. Bonzer stated that he would like to know if he can cancel the regular update and combine the two meetings. Heidemann explained that it would be better to keep them separate due to the amount of information needing to be covered at each and the allotted time not being long enough. The Commission agreed and Bonzer stated he would keep the regular update at its scheduled date. Miller will be the only Commissioner to attend the meeting regarding budgets. Bonzer and Heidemann are planning to be in attendance.

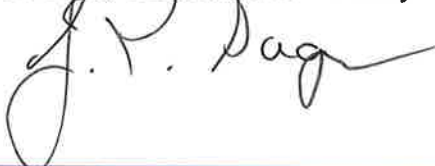
Director Bonzer discussed several items of old business and their movement, if any. Heidemann reported that she has a good relationship with the Tripoli VFW, and the service organization plans to continue their support of the office. Both Bonzer and Heidemann are to mark in the Intent to File tracker whether VA has received the information submitted. Bonzer discussed The Director reported multiple upcoming meetings, outreach events, and training events that will be taking place or took place in November. Bonzer informed the Commission of the interview with the potential intern from the University of Northern Iowa's social work program. The Commission expressed wanting to meet the intern and ask that they attend at least one Commission meeting. Bonzer and Heidemann stated that their attendance to a meeting will be an expectation of the internship.

Sager exited at 6:07 pm.

The remainder of the events for November and December were addressed. Motion by Commissioner Jennerman to adjourn, seconded by Chairperson Miller, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:12 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on December 20, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary



Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director







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### Commission Meeting Minutes December 20, 2023

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Excused: Commissioner, Sara Jennerman. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Assistant Director Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

Heidemann informed all that Jennerman would be absent. Jennerman asked Heidemann to see if the other Commissioners would be open to moving the meeting day due to Wednesdays no longer working for her schedule. Sager and Miller stated they would look at their schedules to see if another day of the week would work for them.

All reviewed November Meeting Minutes. No additions or corrections were needed. Motion by Sager to approve the minutes, second by Miller, motion carried.

All reviewed the November Financial Report. Motion by Sager to approve the financial report, second by Miller. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

All reviewed the November Office Report. Miller said the Board of Supervisors commented that they like the 30-60-90 format of reporting, and they are reading the meeting minutes. There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted. Heidemann informed the Commissioners that there was another donation of gift cards from a local veteran organization, as well as, an individual who donated four \$100.00 gift cards to Fareway. Heidemann explained that the office now has three sets of gift cards from last year's donations (one \$50.00 Kwik Star and \$50.00 Fareway; two \$50.00 Casey's and \$50.00 Fareway), as well as, one \$50.00 to Texas Roadhouse (from a veteran helped by the office), five \$50.00 to HyVee, five \$50.00 to Fareway, five \$50.00 to Casey's, five \$50.00 to Kwik Star, and the four \$100.00 to Fareway. These gift cards will be used for veterans and their families who are in need and meet the basic requirements for VA General Assistance but need more immediate assistance.

The November Van Report was reviewed by all. Heidemann informed all present that the numbers have continued to be lower than in previous months. Heidemann reported that she is working on placing the Amazon order including the van keys.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of November.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. The monthly reports from the Des Moines Regional Office were reviewed.



All discussed the meeting with the Board of Supervisors that was attended by Miller, Bonzer, and Heidemann. The FY25 budget was discussed, and prepared by Heidemann. Heidemann explained the changes made and how to read the new budget worksheets. The Commission was informed of the budget workshop with the Board of Supervisors being held on 1/2/2024. The Commissioners will attempt to attend this meeting in support of the office. Sager asked that the CVSO wage sheet be sent to the Commission again to help see where Heidemann's wage compared to other counties. Heidemann stated that she would send out the information that was provided by IACCVSO in 2022. Sager and Miller asked Heidemann if the wage increase presented in the budget for FY25 would be a livable wage for her. Heidemann stated that she didn't think so, but she would run the numbers and get back to them. Heidemann asked if they had seen the report from United Way called the ALICE report. The commissioners said they had not heard of the report and asked that it be sent to them. Heidemann said she would send it to everyone.

All old business was reviewed and discussed as needed. Employee evaluations will be completed before the end of FY24. All December and January events were reviewed by all.

The Commission tasked the office with researching tactics to help fight for Heidemann's wage increase. The Commission asked how other states operate. Heidemann explained that there are states that are regionalized and Iowa is unique in the sense that we have a CVSO in every county. She went on to explain that there are cases in Iowa where one CVSO is tasked with covering more than one county. The Commission commented that regionalizing and covering more than one county would not be ideal or as effective and that our office is fortunate that we have two CVSOs.

Heidemann explained that NACVSO had implemented an annual re-certification exam at the request of the OGC. The exam is due by 1/31/2024. Heidemann informed the Commission that a passing score is 21/30. She stated that she had already completed the exam and passed with a 25/30. Bonzer stated that he plans to complete it soon.

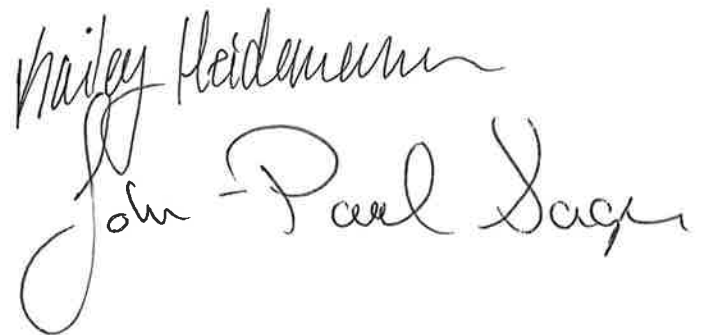
Heidemann informed the Commission that the meeting minutes need to be completed by the Secretary. She stated that she would do December's meeting minutes, but the Commission needs to take over this responsibility per code. Sager suggested that the Commissioners have a three-month rotation as the Secretary. This issue will be addressed again and voted on at the next meeting.

Motion by Chairperson Miller to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Sager, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:20 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on January 17, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary

Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director

Handwritten signatures of Kailey Heidemann and John Paul Sager. The signature of Kailey Heidemann is written in cursive and is positioned above the signature of John Paul Sager, which is also in cursive and larger in size.



## BREMER COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

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### Commission Meeting Minutes February 27, 2024

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Commissioner, Sara Jennerman; Director, Daniel Bonzer; Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann; and UNI Intern, Ashlynn Kalous. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Kalous distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office.

Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:41 p.m., Pledge of Allegiance. A motion by Miller to approve the agenda, seconded by Jennerman.

Sager motioned to approve the December meeting minutes. Miller second and the motion carried. Sager signed the minutes. A brief review of January and February editions of *What Every Veteran Should Know*, by all present. All reviewed and discussed the December and January Financial Reports. Motion by Jennerman to approve the Financial Report, second by Sager.

All reviewed the December and January Office Reports. There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted. The December and January Van Reports were reviewed by all.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the months of December, January, and February.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. Bonzer and Heidemann updated the Commission on the UNI Intern, present, and the office Volunteer, Sylvan not present. The office volunteer has met the requirements set by the county to be a County Volunteer. All reviewed the office claims tracker for 30, 60, and 90 days. Heidemann and Bonzer are to balance the workload, with Bonzer taking on more administrative duties from Heidemann. Heidemann ask that the Commission set a date to complete Employee Evaluations. They did not set a date for completion.

Bonzer asked Heidemann to express the importance of the tour at GuideLink in Iowa City with Ashlynn, the intern. Heidemann explained that the tour is a unique learning opportunity that the intern will not have another chance at getting. Ashlynn and Kailey will stop at Iowa County's Veterans Affairs office on the same trip, giving Ashlynn another learning opportunity. The Commission asked if there were funds in the budget for this event. Heidemann explained that there are and that this would be considered outreach. The Commission unanimously voted to allow the Assistant Director and the UNI Intern to go on the visits.

The monthly stats reports from the Des Moines VA Regional Office showed that Bremer County had a 91k increase in overall benefits being paid to the veterans of the county. Comparitvly to the surrounding counties, excluding Black Hawk, Bremer's was the highest. All present discussed FY25's budget. The first budget that was

presented to the Board of Supervisors was rejected. The Director was marked as having a 3.43% increase and the Assistant Director was marked to have an 11.76% increase. The office was asked to figure for a combined wage increase of 6%. The Commission approved Bonzer's 3.43%, giving Heidemann a 9.45% increase. They plan to push for the Assistant Director's additional wage increase next fiscal year. FY25 will begin July 1, 2024.

The Director informed the Commission that due to his mistake, the office would not be able to attend NACVSO's National Conference in Denver, Colorado. The Commission and staff agreed that getting on the waiting list or attending the conference virtually would not be beneficial. The Commission approved for the office to be closed that week for staff to catch up on their work.

The Commission discussed providing Ashlynn, the intern, with a certificate of completion/appreciation, a gift card for dinner, and offering letters of recommendation. There was no action taken on this matter. Ashlynn presented the updated brochure she made for the office. All were very happy and made some suggestions, such as: having pictures from all branches; changing "Chairperson" to "Commissioner" due to this position rotating, and changing Sager's first name to JP. Ashlynn stated that she would get those items adjusted before the order is placed by Heidemann. UNI intern exited.

Assistant Director Heidemann shared what she knew about HF2062, a new bill to update open record law. Heidemann reported on the Van Driver's hours for 2022 and 2023. The Commission asked about recognition items that could be purchased for the drivers. No action was taken on this matter. All reviewed the inventory list for the grave markers on hand. There is roughly \$3,000.00 in the budget for this line item at this time.

Commissioner Sager presented the office with \$250.00 in donation money from the Denver American Legion to be used for purchasing gift cards for Veterans in need to be given out by the office.

Events for March and April were discussed. All old business was reviewed with no movement on the topics.

Motion by Chairperson Miller to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Jennerman, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:30 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on March 27, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JP Sager", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kailey Heidemann", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



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### Commission Meeting Minutes March 27, 2024

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Director, Daniel Bonzer; Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann, and Bremer County Veterans Affairs Intern, Ashlynn Gingrich. Excused: Commissioner, Sara Jennerman. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Bremer County Veterans Affairs Intern, Ashlynn Gingrich distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office. Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

Sager signed December Meeting Minutes that were approved at the last Commission Meeting.

All reviewed and discussed the February Financial Report. Bonzer requested a new desktop computer and monitor ranging between \$2,200.00-2,700.00 total. He further explained that MIS is planning on working on his current monitor and computer to see if cleaning it up will make it run more efficiently. Heidemann informed the Commissioners that the budget line item for this would be under Minor Office Furn/Equip and has \$1,500.00 budgeted with no expenses taken out as of last Expense Report. Bonzer brought up the camera system in the Annex; Bremer County MIS quoted the repairs at \$1,300.00 with a motion to approve splitting the expenses 60/40 with Bremer County General Assistance/Mental Health by Sager, second by Miller. Heidemann informed the Commission that the funds for the cameras would come out of the previously stated line item budgeted at \$1,500.00. There were no other remarks or questions regarding the Financial Report. Motion by Sager to approve the Financial Report, second by Miller. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

All reviewed the February Office Report. There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted.

The February Van Report was reviewed by all. Heidemann informed all present that the cancelation listed was due to not having successful contact with the veteran to confirm the ride.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the month of March. Bonzer discussed the afternoon of Friday, March 29, 2024; he scheduled appointments forgetting that it was Good Friday, as Bremer County closes at noon. He requested staying in the office until 4:30, and flexing the hours off to another day. The commission discussed it, Sager motioned to approve if Bonzer gets prior approval from a county official, and Miller seconded.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. Assistant Director Heidemann discussed the IACCVSO state commission meeting update. The monthly reports from the Des Moines Regional Office were reviewed by all, along with the county award report for January and February.



All discussed the UNI intern and volunteer; the volunteer requested a small amount of payment for his drives to and from Waverly. Bonzer suggested the volunteer receive accreditation from a veteran organization, and work remotely in the Bremer County Veterans Affairs office. Heidemann and Gingrich clarified that the volunteer had only requested that the office look into whether or not he could be compensated mileage. Heidemann pointed out that Bonzer was the one who brought up the volunteer getting accredited and working in the office. Bonzer stated that we should come back to the question at hand with more information at a later date/time.

The topic of the Board of Supervisors having an open seat in the next local election was initiated by Bonzer. Bonzer discussed his personal views with all present making blanket statements about the social work profession. Miller rebutted with Bonzer needing to look into all candidates and their campaign stances. After deliberation, Sager asked that the conversation end due to this being an inappropriate conversation to have in this setting.

Assistant Director Heidemann discussed the ISAC County Structure Presentation that she had read through. The chain of command between the Commission, Board of Supervisors, and the County Veteran Service Officers was reviewed. Heidemann further explained the other packet material with all present. Sager and Miller requested Heidemann send them more information on VHA eligibility, 38 C.F.R. 3.1, diagram of County Structure, and invoice for the GotPrint order.

All old business was reviewed and discussed as needed. Heidemann asked that the Commission please schedule a time for employee evaluations to be completed. It was determined that they will be completed before the end of FY24. Sager and Miller discussed having a joint conversation to complete the Director's evaluation. Heidemann informed them that they could do that as long as they follow Open Meeting and Open Record law. She further explained that they would need to post a proper agenda at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and complete accurate meeting minutes. Bonzer stated that Heidemann was overthinking the meeting and that they could meet if they wanted to. Heidemann corrected Bonzer informing all present that there are consequences, to include fines, if the Commissioners were to do the meeting without following code. She further explained that anytime, electronic or otherwise, there are two Commissioners present and discussing anything to do with the office/their duties it is considered a meeting in the eyes of the law. Heidemann offered to write the agenda if necessary. Bonzer brought up the meeting needing to be closed due to it being about HR matters. Heidemann assured him that it would only need to be during closed session if the employee requests that. She further explained that she will be sending out more information regarding this topic due to the lack of understanding of the severity of the situation. Sager stated that he wants to make sure the Commission follows any and all rules by the book, Miller agreed. Heidemann stated she would be happy to get them all any information they would like to know about this.

Motion by Chairperson Miller to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Sager, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:22 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on April 23, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary



Written by: Ashlynn Gingrich,  
Bremer County Veterans Affairs Intern



Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director





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### Commission Meeting Minutes April 23, 2024

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Excused: Commissioner, Sara Jennerman. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Heidemann distributed meeting materials. The packet reviewed was emailed out prior to the meeting to all members of the commission and office.

Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:41 p.m.

Sager motioned to approve March meeting minutes. Miller second and the motion carried. Sager signed the minutes. All reviewed and discussed the March Financial Report. Motion by Miller to approve the Financial Report, second by Sager. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

Miller opened discussion of HF259. Heidemann explained that she would be covering the changes in detail during the New Business discussion.

All reviewed the February Office Report. There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted. The February Van Report was reviewed by all. Heidemann informed all present that two of the cancelations were by the rider and one was due to not having a driver available.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the months of March and April.

Director Bonzer initiated the review of the new business items. Assistant Director Heidemann shared what she had been told by the IACCVSO leadership about the new law, HF259, while at Spring School. Bonzer and Heidemann reviewed topics covered at Spring School. Heidemann discussed various updates with VA. The monthly county award report for March from the Des Moines Regional Office were reviewed.

Heidemann informed all present that only one Commissioner needs to complete the employee evaluation for Bonzer, and that her eval would be completed by Bonzer, reviewed by the Commission. She further explained that if the other Commissioners would like to give input that is fine, but there can't be any discussion. The Commissioners stated that they understood and briefly discussed Chairperson Miller completing the eval for the Director. The evaluations will be completed before the start of FY25.

All old business was reviewed and discussed as needed. Heidemann informed the Commission that Ashlynn, the Intern, would have her intership completed before the beginning of May. She explained to all present that she would not have been able to catch up on her communication logs had it not been for Ashlynn.

The Commissioners asked that more brochures be ordered so they can be distributed throughout the communities, local Veteran Service Organizations, and other public buildings. The Commissioners took some of the brochures the office already has to start the distribution process.

Motion by Chairperson Miller to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Sager, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 5:51 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on May 28, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary

Handwritten signature of JP Sager in cursive script.

Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director

Handwritten signature of Kailey Heidemann in cursive script.



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### Commission Meeting Minutes May 28, 2024

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Commissioner, Sara Jennerman; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were discussed.

Heidemann distributed meeting materials. Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Jennerman motioned to approve February and April meeting minutes. Sager seconded and the motion carried. Sager signed the minutes. Sager motioned to approve the agenda. Jennerman seconded and the motion carried. All reviewed the stats for the 30-60-90 day active Intents to File for the office. All reviewed and discussed the April Financial Report. Motion by Sager to approve the Financial Report, seconded by Jennerman. A brief review of *What Every Veteran Should Know* by all present.

All reviewed the April Office Report. There have not been any new General Assistance applications submitted. The April Van Report was reviewed by all. Miller asked about the VFW representative coming to the WAVP on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month. Heidemann was asked to make contact to see who the representative is and if the office needs to attend.

Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the months of April and May.

Assistant Director Heidemann informed the Commission that HF2663 was signed into law. Heidemann informed the Commission that the allocation funds are meant to be used for training, now that it has been a few years after implementation. The state expects the county veterans affairs offices to be funded by the county and use the allocation funds for expenses related to training, per information from Spring School. Sager motioned for the additional \$3,000.00 in allocation funds from the state, shall be used for the Bremer County Veterans Affairs staff/CVSOs to go to national/NACVSO conference every year moving forward. He added that the \$10,000.00 currently allocated from the state will be used for the office staff/CVSOs and Commissioners to attend all state/IACCVSO trainings every year moving forward. This was approved unanimously.

Bonzer asked if the BCVA's GA funds could be used to assist with the repair of a roof. Sager motioned, if the individual meets the financial eligibility requirements and provides two quotes, the commission would approve up to \$800.00 in GA funds to be paid to the company hired to complete the repair. Miller seconded and the motion carried.

Heidemann discussed various VA updates. Heidemann was asked by the commission to email the requested information from her updates to include; information from IDVA, Governor's letter, Employee Evaluation form, and the information provided by Commissioner Jennerman for Coffee and Comradery held in Waterloo.



The Commission informed all present that they plan to meet at the WAVP as a group in order to complete Bonzer's evaluation. They informed Heidemann that they will notify her of the date and time in order to comply with Iowa Code Chapter 21. There was discussion on whether it should be an open meeting or closed. Heidemann stated she would send the code and the contacts for both Bremer County Attorney and Bremer County HR.

Commissioner Jennerman informed all present that she will be resigning from her position, ending her term on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Heidemann was asked to contact the Auditor next steps for Jennerman in order for her to resign. All old business was reviewed and discussed as needed. Heidemann reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events scheduled for the office during the months of June.

Motion by Commissioner Sager to adjourn, seconded by Chairperson Miller, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:13p.m. The next regular meeting will be on June 25, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room, unless otherwise decided by the Commission in accordance to Iowa Code Chapter 21.

Respectfully Submitted,

JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary

Handwritten signature of JP Sager in blue ink.

Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director

Handwritten signature of Kailey Heidemann in black ink.



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### Commission Meeting Minutes June 18, 2024

The Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs met in regular session on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 4:30 pm in the Annex Conference Room. Present: Commissioner Chairperson, Rich Miller; Commissioner Secretary, JP Sager; Commissioner, Sara Jennerman; Director, Daniel Bonzer; and Assistant Director, Kailey Heidemann. Guest present in-person: Bremer County Board of Supervisor, Corey Cerwinski. Guests present via Zoom: President of the Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veteran Service Officers, Patty Hamman and Veterans Benefit Specialist with the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, Ben Dales. Unless otherwise noted all actions were approved unanimously. All topics on the Agenda were reviewed and/or discussed.

Heidemann distributed meeting materials. Chairperson Miller opened the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Introductions by all present in-person and online. JP motioned to approve the agenda. Miller seconded and the motion carried.

IACCVSO President, Patty, presented an in-depth explanation of the requirements a CVSO is bound to follow. Hamman discussed the policy and procedure CVSO job description from NACVSO, information from 38 CFR, and her experience as a CVSO in Cedar County. Along with Hamman's handouts, Heidemann included IACCVSO's CVSO job description and both position's Bremer County Veterans Affairs job descriptions. All questions presented to Hamman and Dales were answered. Hamman and Dales exited at 5:48pm.

Sager motioned to approve May meeting minutes. Jennerman seconded and the motion carried. Sager signed the minutes. All reviewed and discussed the May Financial Report. Motion by Sager to approve the Financial Report, seconded by Jennerman. Bonzer gave a brief review of the June *What Every Veteran Should Know*. Cerwinski exited at 5:57pm.

Discussion on the information from the Bremer County Auditor's office regarding the veteran memorial wall/s and the corrections that need to be made. Heidemann and Bonzer will review further and get the corrections to the Auditor's office. It was a unanimous decision that the Bremer County Veterans Affairs office will not pay for the the memorial that was provided by Bremer County. It will be Bremer County's responsibility, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Supervisors. All reviewed the May Office Report. There were no General Assistance applications submitted. The May Van Report was reviewed by all.

Assistant Director Heidemann briefed all present on the FY23 GDY. Employee evaluations will be completed when Sager and Miller return from their trip.

Heidemann initiated the discussion regarding the new commissioner appointment. There were two application's submitted to take over Jennerman's term. Miller applied for re-appointment to start a new term. Sager motioned to recommend option number two (the second individual to apply in chronological order). Miller seconded this motion. There was a vote, all three commissioners were in favor, with no one opposed, and the motion carried. Sager made the suggestion to ask option number one (the first individual to apply in chronological order) if they would be interested in becoming the VA Van Volunteer Coordinator. All were in favor.

Miller left the room for the vote to reappoint him. Sager motioned to reappoint Miller. Jennerman seconded and the motion carried. Heidemann will inform the Auditor of the Commission's recommendation, and get verification as to whether a formal letter is needed.

The remainder of the agenda was covered. Director Bonzer reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events attended by the office during the months of May and June. Heidemann discussed various VA updates.

Commissioner Sager and Chairperson Miller officially thanked Jennerman for her seven years of service as a Commissioner on the Bremer County Commission of Veterans Affairs. Heidemann will get contact the IACCVSO Historian for a certificate to signify Jennerman's seven years as a commissioner.

All old business was reviewed and discussed as needed. Heidemann reported on all meetings, outreach events, and training events scheduled for the office during the months of June.

Motion by Commissioner Sager to adjourn, seconded by Chairperson Miller, motion carried. The meeting concluded at 6:30p.m. The next regular meeting will be on July 16, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. in the Annex Conference Room, unless otherwise decided by the Commission in accordance to Iowa Code Chapter 21.

Respectfully Submitted,

JP Sager, Commissioner Secretary

Handwritten signature of John-Paul Sager in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Written by: Kailey Heidemann, Assistant Director

Handwritten signature of Kailey Heidemann in black ink, written in a cursive style.