

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
VETERANS' RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 19.84, Wis. Stats., a regular meeting of the **Brown County Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee** was held on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 4:30 pm in Room 200 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

PRESENT: Vice Chair Ed Koslowski, Jerry Polus, Jim Haskins, Louise Dahlke, Duane Pierce

1. **Call Meeting to Order.**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Ed Koslowski at 4:31 pm.

2. **Approve/Modify Agenda.**

Motion made by Jim Haskins, seconded by Jerry Polus to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **Approve/Modify Minutes of January 21, 2020.**

Motion made by Jerry Polus, seconded by Duane Pierce to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **Invocation.**

Jim Haskins gave the invocation at this time.

5. **Update re: Honor Rewards Program.**

CVSO Joe Aulik informed several new businesses have enrolled in the program, including a veteran owned business and several attorneys.

6. **Discussion Regarding Veterans Appreciation Day at the Fair.**

Koslowski informed that at this time the Fair is still planning to go forward and asked Louise Dahlke what modifications the Fair has made due to COVID-19. Dahlke informed a final decision on the Fair will be made on July 19. At this time, the Fair Association is asking that nothing be printed until the final decision is made. Plexiglass will be added to the buildings and office at the Fair to provide barriers for judging day and will remain in place at the information booth. Lemonade, cookies and water will not be served if the vets event moves forward, but Dahlke noted something like wrapped candy and bottled water may be an option. She will continue to keep this subcommittee advised of developments regarding the Fair.

Aulik informed he has reached out to Brown County's Public Health Officer regarding the Fair. Due to the older population that attends the event and not knowing what the COVID situation will be in August, Aulik recommended that the Appreciation Day event be cancelled. He continued that people are pretty close in the tent and social distancing would be difficult. He has already heard from several vets who have indicated they would not attend the event this year as they are not comfortable. Dahlke added that if the event were to move forward, everyone attending would have to sign something that would allow them to be contacted if there were an outbreak tied to the event. Aulik noted almost all summer events have been cancelled and reiterated that the vets event at the Fair deals with primarily older people.

Koslowski agreed with Aulik that the event should not be held this year. He does not feel the event is worth the risk to the health of attendees. He said this subcommittee could possibly still do some sort of event later in the year if the COVID numbers decrease. Aulik added that veterans could still be offered free admission to the Fair

on the day the event would have been held and Dahlke informed she will verify with the Fair Board that veterans will still have free admission.

Jim Haskins agreed that the event should be cancelled for this year for the reasons stated by Aulik. Dahlke was also in favor of cancelling the event. Duane Pierce added that the Pearly Gates ride has not been cancelled in 14 years for any reason, but this year the ride will not be held and he agrees with cancelling this year's event at the Fair. Aulik informed that he had received an e-mail from Joan Brusky who is in favor of cancelling the event. Jerry Polus added that he is also in favor of cancelling the event. The final decision made was to cancel the event for this year.

Dahlke mentioned that the subcommittee has paid for the stage in the tent in the past, but she is going to cancel the stage for this year. If the Fair intends to do something else in that tent, they will have to get a stage, but she does not want this group to have to pay for the stage.

7. **Appointment of Ed Koslowski as Interim Chair of Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee.**

Koslowski indicated he will gladly act as Interim Chair of this Subcommittee. It was questioned if there was a requirement that the Chair had to be a member of the Board of Supervisors, but the opinion of Corporation Counsel is that it is not necessary for the Chair to be a Supervisor as there was nothing stating this when the Subcommittee was formed. Aulik will reach out to the Board Chair to see if there are any veterans on the County Board who would like to act as Chair and we can re-visit this after he talks to the Board Chair.

Motion made by Duane Pierce, seconded by Jim Haskins to appoint Ed Koslowski as Interim Chair of Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. **Report from CVSO Joe Aulik.**

Aulik informed all office staff began working remotely without missing a beat when COVID started. They are able to answer all phone calls and voice mails through their e-mail. There has been an increase in activity since this all started, especially with stress and mental health issues as well as with veterans who have lost their jobs. Access to the Northern Building is still very restricted so a lot of the work being done in Aulik's office is being done over the phone and they have electronic means to encrypt things and the VA is now accepting electronic signatures. They will see veterans in person in the office when necessary, but that is done by appointment only. Working electronically has created a lot of efficiencies, but the VA still has problems and are currently 150,000 compensation exams behind. They have contracted all of their compensation exams and one of the contractors still is not doing tele-exams. Aulik foresees claims taking eight to nine months to complete.

At this time the office is at about \$1.8 million dollars in retro cash payments. Last year they did about \$2 million dollars for the year so if 2020 stays on the current track, they could do \$4 million dollars in retro cash payments by the end of the year.

As far as staffing, they are currently down two positions, but they are doing interviews and will get those positions filled soon.

9. **Report from Committee Members Present (Brusky, Corry, Dahlke, Haskins, Koslowski, Metoxen, Pierce, Polus).**

-Dahlke did not have anything to report other than what she talked about earlier regarding the Fair. She did ask Koslowski if he intended to put up his veterans display and Koslowski responded that he will still likely do that.

-Haskins noted that Jess was set to sing the National Anthem this year and has indicated that she is honored to be part of the event and she will do it in the future as long as this group wants her to.

-Koslowski mentioned honoring former Chair Bernie Erickson with a plaque or something similar. This was discussed and it was suggested that this be done at a future County Board meeting. Koslowski will look at getting something from Global Recognition and will report back to this group.

-Duane Pierce did not have anything to report.

-Jerry Polus did not have anything to report.

10. **Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law.**

Haskins gave a closing prayer at this time.

11. **Adjourn.**

Motion made by Jim Haskins, seconded by Duane Pierce to adjourn at 5:02 pm. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio
Administrative Specialist