

Gratiot County

Department of Veterans Affairs

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April 26th, 2024

Gratiot County Veterans Committee
Ithaca, Michigan

RE: Minutes, Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Meeting April 25th, 2024

The regular meeting of the Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) was held Thursday, April 25th, 2024, at the Gratiot County Courthouse Commissioners Room, Ithaca, Michigan. The meeting was called to order by Committee Member Tim Aplin at 1501 hours. Roll call was held with Ken Davis, Tim Aplin, Brandon Simmett, Autumn Leonard, and Kayla Webster. Also Present via Zoom was GCDVA Director Monte Malek.

Approval of Addition/Modifications to the Agenda was motioned by Brandon Simmett and seconded by Ken Davis.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting February 15th, 2024, was motioned by Ken Davis and seconded by Brandon Simmett.

Director's Report

Director Monte Malek presented the 2nd Quarter numbers for the Fiscal Year 2024.

Fiscal Year 2024	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Pending Actions	92	83		
Awaiting VA Decision	50	71		
Awaiting BVA Decision	18	16		
New Claims	29	43		

The current number of Awaiting BVA Decision is currently lower than listed now as several veterans have received favorable decisions from the BVA.

Fiscal Year 2024	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Total
Closed Claims*	48	29			
Personal Interviews/File Reviews/Status Checks/Misc. General Contacts	915	571			
Support Services**	64	109			
Self Service	0	0			
Out-Reach	8	9			
New Client Intake	11	22			

The Closed Claims tallied up following April was 29 total. This included 13 Approvals and 5 Denials along with 11 listed as other. The "other" would be considered claims that have been cancelled, withdrawn by veteran, or transferred. **The current Support Services includes Michigan Veteran Trust Fund, Veteran Relief Fund, CBB, Champ VA, Health Benefits, COE, ITF, Evidence, and Support Statements.

"Duty, Honor, Country"

Currently the GCDVA have 47 Elks Lodge gift cards left along with 7 Food4Vets cards. Both cards available to eligible vets at the veteran's affairs office located in Ithaca at Court House.

Our CVSO Kayla Webster began working for Veterans Affairs January 8th, 2024. Kayla has currently obtained all of her Cross-Accreditation approvals and is currently waiting on her background check along with PIV Card access with the VA. Gratiot County former Officer Susan Edmund retired March 22nd, 2024. The GCVAAC conducted a retirement party for Susan, which also included some service organizations AND Co-Workers. Gratiot county informed Susan, we as a county could not thank her enough. The party had a great turn out.

Director Monte Malek was recently able to attend some Veteran Service Organizations surroundings locally. Director Monte was able to see the strengths and challenges facing the community. Monte received excited feedback from locals to have a representative for veterans who are less likely to receive care to encourage them to visit the VSO and receive the help and care they need and deserve.

The VSO will be closed on June 19th, 2024, for Juneteenth.

Old Business

The Monthly Veterans Breakfast at the Heroes Center is the First Saturday of Every Month between 9 am and 10:30 am, attendance has increased every month. April, 80+ Veterans had attended. The Heroes Breakfast has also received another sponsor from Wal-Mart, RICs Supermarket, Commercial Bank, and Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan, all of which are Annual Supporters. Several Service Organizations and Businesses have been providing Support/Sponsorship.

New Business:

The GVSF Grant Status for the FY25 Grant Award Intent has been filed to participate. The last amendments for the FY24 Grant Changes are scheduled for the middle of June. The GCDVA is currently using the emergency funds when needed and hope to use the full \$2,000.00 authorized before September 30th.

The next scheduled VAAC meeting will be at 3:00 pm, Thursday, June 20th, 2024. Motion to adjourn by Ken Davis, 2nd by Brandon Simmet. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 1521 hours.

Respectfully,

Autumn Leonard, Secretary
Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee