

## **Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC)**

### **Mission Statement/Operational Guidelines**

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#### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

“To ensure that Gratiot County Department of Veterans Affairs office connects Veterans with benefits they deserve and to provide transparency to build a bridge between Veterans of Gratiot County and the Community.”

#### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC)**

The duties and responsibilities of the VAAC shall be set forth in enabling and mandating legislation, including Public Act 214 of 1899 (Veterans’ Relief Fund Act), Public Act 235 of 1911 (Funeral Expenses of Veterans Act), and Public Act 192 of 1953 (County Department of Veterans’ Affairs Act), as amended and supplemented.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities enacted by law, the Gratiot County VAAC may:

1. Advise and consult with the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners through the Veterans Affairs Office and its County Administrator on such issues as:
  - Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Office Program Priorities
  - The success of the Office in meeting stated objectives
  - Addressing issues and concerns which may develop in relationship to the Gratiot County Veterans Affairs function within the veteran community
2. Solicit feedback from the veteran community to identify critical issues related to the welfare of veterans and the provision of services to veterans in Gratiot County. Communicate all relevant issues to the Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Director with support of the VAAC Chair.
3. Serve as ambassadors to the veteran community regarding the resources available through Gratiot County Veterans Affairs Office.
4. Discuss (as appropriate) changes in policy, procedures, or staffing that may adversely affect Gratiot County Veterans Affairs work within the veteran community. Communicate discussion points to the appropriate County administrative and Director staff, Committee Chair, or Gratiot County Commissioners.

### **OVERSIGHT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – County Administrator/Controller**

The Board of Commissioners of Gratiot County has designated the County Administrator to provide support (as it determines is appropriate) to the VAAC by fulfilling the following duties and responsibilities, subject to future Board of Commissioners' action and funding:

1. The Administrator shall appoint a staff person in the Administrator's Office to assist the VAAC in the process of selecting and hiring a Veterans Affairs Director and/or Veterans Service Officer/Administration Assistance to carry out the responsibilities of the Veterans Affairs office.
2. The Administrator shall assist the Director in requesting the resources and support necessary for those expectations and standards to be met.
3. The Administrator/Controller shall review the service needs of Gratiot County veterans as presented to them by the Veterans Affairs Director on an annual basis and shall appropriate an annual budget sufficient to meet those needs within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.

### **MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

The VAAC shall consist of six members, one of which may be a member of the County Board of Commissioners, should a Commissioner fit the criteria for membership (i.e., is a veteran who has served honorably on active duty in the United States Armed Forces, or who served actively in the United States Armed Forces in a war or received an Armed Forces campaign or service medal).

Members will be appointed by the Board of Commissioners for a four-year term.

The VAAC shall analyze the current composition of the committee as required by term expirations and/or unplanned vacancies and identify a desired profile for new members. The committee chair may assist with the promotion of vacancies and identify potential members to recommend for consideration to the Board of Commissioners to improve the overall composition of the VAAC.

VAAC members shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners through the recommendation from the VAAC. The selection shall be based on the respective qualifications and experience of each recommended candidate, and upon their ability to contribute effectively to the VAAC and shall be within the discretion of the Board of Commissioners.

All vacancies occurring for members with unexpired terms of service shall be filled as required by law, which provides that the Board of Commissioners shall provide notice of that opening to one or more newspapers within the County and to veteran service organizations within the County. The selection of members for vacancies with unexpired terms shall then proceed in the same manner as the original appointment.

## **OFFICERS OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The officers of the VAAC shall consist of a Chair and Secretary. Officers of the VAAC shall be elected by the VAAC each February. Officers shall be elected to one-year terms and there is no limit on the number of times a member can hold the position during their 4-year term.

## **MEETINGS**

A meeting schedule shall be established by the VAAC at the first meeting of each Fiscal year. The Chair and Veterans Director shall jointly prepare the agenda for each meeting. The Secretary shall take minutes of each meeting or appoint a recording secretary. Minutes from the previous meeting shall be reviewed and approved at each subsequent meeting. Meetings may be canceled at the direction of the Chair, but the VAAC must meet at least four times per year.

For any decision of the VAAC to be considered binding, a quorum of members shall be present and shall vote. A quorum shall be defined as a majority (4 out of 6 members) of VAAC members. A vote shall pass if the majority of quorum support it.

While meetings may be used to propose funding certain veterans for certain services, it is the intention of the Board of Commissioners to serve each veteran requesting service as promptly as possible. The Veterans Affairs Director, through the counsel of the VAAC shall set forth clear policies that allow enough latitude that all veterans can be served expeditiously. In the case where a legitimate emergency request exceeds the authority of the VAAC to grant, a majority vote will be necessary to approve the request. In the interest of expediency, the VAAC may canvas members via personal communication (i.e., telephone or email) to obtain a vote outside a regularly scheduled meeting.

## **ATTENDANCE**

All members are required to attend at least 75% of all committee meetings and should not be absent for more than three consecutive meetings without a good cause and without prior excuse from the respective board chair. The chair or any other member of the committee may seek that the County Board remove a member due to excessive absence or other good cause.