



## **TAZEWELL COUNTY VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

Shannon M. Saal, Interim Superintendent  
414 Court Street, Pekin, IL 61554  
Phone 309-477-2271

Tazewell County VAC Meeting Minutes  
March 16, 2026, at 1800hrs  
Tazewell EMA Building

1. Call to Order:
2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Delegate Lenny Gray gave Invocation followed by Vice-Chair Adam Sterling reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call:
  - Chairperson: Bob Dant - Present
  - Vice-Chair: Adam Sterling - Present
  - Interim Superintendent: Shannon Saal - Present
  - Admin Assistant: Amanda Gillinger - Present
  - County Liaison: Brett Grimm – Present
  - Attendees: Lenny Gray from VFW Post 1232; Samuel Armbrust (Guest); Doug Bohm from American Legion Post 1236 (Guest); Robert Nichols from American Legion Post 44 (Guest); Craig H. Cooney (Guest); Rick Otey (Operation Last Watch, Guest); Ron Clark from VFW Post 1232; Bryon Hasty from VFW Post 2078; Jerry Porter from Vietnam Veterans of Illinois; Dan Swift from Military Ord. Purple Heart 175; Ronald Babb (Guest); Bob Hotkevich from VFW Post 9016; Dennis Mitchell (Guest); John Harris from American Legion Post 382; Jim Wheat from American Legion Post 607; Joe Weghorst from American Legion Post 382; Tom Neeley from American Legion Post 607; Stephan Hetz from American Legion Post 466 Eureka (Guest);

Jon Hopkins from the Tazewell County Board (Guest); Charles Dudley (Guest); Michael Ragan from American Legion Post 100.

4. Discuss Delegate Stating Their Name/Post During Motion/Seconding Motion: Bob Dant discussed the matter as well as mentioning that we are missing Delegate/Alternate sheets for the current term from some of the Posts and need the sheets turned in at the VAC office.
5. Introduction of Delegates, Guests and First-time Attendees
6. Public Comments: Rick Otey, Navy Veteran from Tremont and Operation Last Watch commented that he sent out letters regarding a new mission he has begun called Operation Last Watch. They are a group of veteran and non-veteran volunteers that go into a veteran's home or facility in hospice and perform a ceremony recognizing them for their service to our country and a symbolic relieving of their watch. Brett Grimm discussed that the Tazewell County Board is looking into different facilities to move the VAC office in the future.
7. Clarification of Chair/Vice Chair Positions: After discussion, it was determined that Bob Dant (Chair) and Adam Sterling (Vice-Chair) are Chair and Vice-Chair until the next election of said positions.
8. Consider and take action to adopt 2026-3-16 Rules for Public Comment: Bob Dant did a reading of the document. Motion to accept by Lenny Gray, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Adam Sterling via voice vote.
9. Approval of February Minutes: Dispense of reading of February 2026 minutes, motion to accept by Tom Neeley, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lenny Gray. Motion passed via voice vote.
10. Superintendent's Report: (Shannon Saal),
  - Monthly Budget Report for March given
  - Pantry Report 80 Veterans and 134 Dependents for February.



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- VSO Report given for January and February.
- January
- INT 5
- POA 10
- 526ez 9
- Appeals 1 higher level appeal
- 27 Walk-ins and 20 Office/Phone Appointments
- Interactions 84
- Calls 283
- VAC Bills Read
- February
- INT 11
- POA 11
- 526ez 7
- Appeals 1 supplemental appeal
- 53 Walk-ins and 25 Office/Phone Appointments
- Interactions 88
- Calls 366
- VAC Bills Read

### Updates and News

- New Money \$0
- Total Money \$46,016.20
- Veterans getting monthly benefits from our office 38

- Active Claims Waiting for a Decision 12
- Appeals Waiting on Decision 2
- Total Active Claims 29

11. Update on TCVAC Superintendent Search: Bob Hotkevich gave an update recognizing Brett Grimm, Mindy Darcy and Roger Workheiser from the County for their efforts during the process as well as insights on the role of a Superintendent from Peoria VAC's Superintendent Michael Brooks. The Selection Committee of Bob Hotkevich, Tom Neeley and Adam Sterling received 23 applications. The Committee will have a documented rating and ranking of the specific competencies of the Superintendent position and are hoping to select 3-5 applications for interviews. Interviews are planned to be scheduled by March 20<sup>th</sup> with a goal to complete first interview by March 27<sup>th</sup>. A 2<sup>nd</sup> interview is planned to be conducted to discuss expectations and answer any questions. The Committee will coordinate with Tazewell County for background checks and the onboarding process. Bring 1-3 recommendations before the commission for vote on April 20th Meeting. Planning on having prospective candidate(s) address the Commission prior to voting.
12. Unfinished Business – Discuss Food Pantry Funding:  
Discussion was held on gift cards donated to the VAC to fund the food pantry from individuals to fulfill community service requirements. Delegate Michael Ragan proposed a motion to turn over the gift cards to the Tazewell County Board, the motion was seconded by Lenny Gray, motion passed via voice vote.
13. New Business – Discuss Getting Attorney to Represent VAC:  
Bob Dant discussed the VAC getting an Attorney per request and as needed. To be determined with a budget amount determined by the next Superintendent. Discuss Meeting Notice/Agenda/Minutes



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mailings: Members of the Commission discussed continued mailings vs. sending the information to the Delegates and Alternates via email in the future. Sending via email can save the County money on paper and postage. Michael Ragan proposed a motion to continue the mailings. Motion seconded by Jim Wheat. Motion passed via voice vote.

14. Good of the Commission/Post Reports: Bob Dant reported that AMVETS Post 169 will be having tenderloins Friday March 20<sup>th</sup> with corn on the cob and French fries for \$13. Michael Ragan reported that the Washington American Legion Post 100 will have an Easter Egg Hunt on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Michael Ragan also reported that on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the East Peoria Boat Club will have a River Plunge at noon to raise awareness of Veteran suicide by Not-for-Profit Group 22VA. It happens on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month and has for the past 4 years. The VFW in Peoria Heights and Washington will have corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day. AMVETS Post 169 will have corned beef and cabbage for free. The Pekin Township will have mulligan stew from 4-6 p.m. on St. Patrick's Day for free.
15. Benediction/Adjournment: Lenny Gray gave Benediction followed by Adam Sterling retired colors. Meeting adjourned.

SHANNON M. SAAL  
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT  
Tazewell County VAC