



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
April 20, 2026, at 1800hrs
Tazewell EMA Building

1. Call to Order:
2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Invocation given by Tom Neeley and Pledge of Allegiance with Shannon Saal.
3. Roll Call:
 - Chairperson: Bob Dant - Present
 - Vice-Chair: Adam Sterling – Excused Absent
 - Interim Superintendent: Shannon Saal - Present
 - Admin Assistant: Amanda Gillinger - Present
 - County Liaison: Jon Hopkins – Present
4. Attendees: Dan Swift from Military Ord. Purple Heart 175; Jim Wheat from American Legion Post 607; Joe Weghorst from American Legion Post 382; Danny Haley from Vietnam Veterans of Illinois; John Harris from American Legion Post 382; Rick Otey from Tremont FB Vets (Guest); Todd Bong (Tremont Vet, Guest); Roger Williams from American Legion Post 1236; Bryon Hasty from VFW Post 2078; Brian Farlin from VFW Post 4835; John Ackerman (Guest); Bob Hotkevich from VFW Post 9016; Sam Armbrust (Guest); Doug Bohm from American Legion Post 1236 (Guest); Michael Brooks (Guest); Hal Mcezhaney from VFW Post 1232 (Guest); Michael Ragan from American Legion Post 100; Larry Tanner from American Legion Post 100; Troy Phillips from Morton (Guest); William Clark from Marine Corp League; Jim Pate from American Legion Post 318; Devin Mitchell from Tremont (Guest); Jon Hopkins (Guest); Rich Dansizen

from American Legion Post 44; Tom Neeley from American Legion Post 607; Tom Stewart from Forty et Eight Voiture 1170; J.D. Ashton from VFW Post 9016; Charles Dudley from Tremont (Guest); Robert Nichols from AMVETS Post 169. Gil Gravitt (Guest); Jim Chism (Guest); Mike Haerr (Guest); Ron Babb (Guest);

5. Introduction of Delegates, Guests and First-time Attendees
6. Public Comments: Michael Brooks, Superintendent of the Peoria County VAC commented that Bob Hotkevich and Tom Neeley did an amazing job during the hiring process for a new Superintendent of the Tazewell County VAC. Tazewell County Clerk and Recorder John Ackerman commented on the Illinois State Historical Society having an upcoming event on Saturday April 25th, recognizing the Tazewell County Board, Tazewell County Clerk and Recorder of Deeds, and the Tazewell Veterans Assistance Commission on 2 projects from last year: 1) organizing the special project “The 75th Anniversary of the Korean War Remembrance Event at the Tazewell County Courthouse.” Marking the 75th Anniversary of the start of the Korean War, the event featured the 8 surviving Tazewell County Korean War Veterans, all between the ages of 92-97 years old. 2) Also receiving recognition is the Educational Program “USS Tazewell Display.” After discovering the World War II Navy Ship USS was named in honor of Tazewell County Illinois and Tazewell County Virginia, a permanent display featuring a portrait of the ship and the remnants of the vessel, the port and starboard navigational lights. John Ackerman also reported that on Saturday May 30th, the America 250 Celebration will be held at Antioch Cemetery in Tremont, recognizing the 5 Revolutionary War Veterans who are buried in Tazewell County. The Tazewell County Genealogical & Historical Society commissioned new stone Memorials featuring the Revolutionary War Veteran's



TAZEWELL COUNTY VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

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

name, biography, and that they are buried within 5 cemeteries in Tazewell County. John Ackerman also provided information on the Medal of Honor Monument, which was approved by the Tazewell County Board and is in the works. Delegate Michael Ragan commented about the River Plunge on the 22nd of each month at noon at the East Peoria Boat Club to raise awareness of veteran suicide. Rick Otey talked about Operation Last Watch which he started several months ago. They've done 5 missions going into a Veteran's home or Hospice facility to hold a short ceremony recognizing the veteran's service, read their military records if available, and a symbolic relieving of the veteran's watch.

7. Approval of March Minutes: Dispense of reading of March 2026 minutes, motion to accept by Bryon Hasty, 2nd by Bill Clark, motion accepted via voice vote.
8. Enter Closed Session by Section 2(c)(3) for the Selection of a Person to Fill the Position of TC-VAC Superintendent: Motion to enter closed session by Bill Clark, 2nd by Dan Haley, motion passed via voice vote.
9. Move Out of Closed Session as per OMA Subsection Section 2(c)(3): Motion to move back into open session by Tom Neeley, 2nd by Bill Clark, motion passed via voice vote, reentered open session at 7:21 p.m.
10. Action on Closed Session Discussion: Dan Swift made motion on closed session: "I move to act on recommendation of Selection Committee, to offer employment to Clarence Pulcher as the TC-VAC Superintendent. Allowing the TC-VAC Selection Committee to

negotiate start date, salary, coordinate on-boarding with Tazewell County HR, and any other pertinent employment items that may arise, pursuant to the terms discussed in closed session, the MVAA and Tazewell County VAC By-laws.” Motion was seconded by Dan Haley, 11 votes yes by the Commission to approve motion. The Motion was approved via voice vote.

11. Superintendent’s Report: (Shannon Saal),

- Monthly Budget Report for April given
- Pantry Report 96 Veterans and 173 Dependents in March.
- VSO Report
March
- INT 12
- POA 11
- 526ez 7
- Appeals 0
- 27 Walk-ins and 54 Office/Phone Appointments
- Interactions 504
- Calls 356
- VAC Bills Read
- Updates and News
- New Money \$48,629.46
- Total Money \$106,556.08
- Veterans getting monthly benefits from our office 38
- Active Claims Waiting for a Decision 12
- Appeals Waiting on Decision 2
- Total Active Claims 29



TAZEWELL COUNTY VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

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

- Motion to approve Superintendent's Report by Bryon Hasty, 2nd by Dan Haley, motion approved via voice vote.

12. Unfinished Business –

- Read and Discuss Audit: Discussion of Tazewell County Audit that was performed on the VAC, and the Auditor's recommendations for the VAC on the report were discussed.
- Discuss Gift Cards: Gift cards given to the VAC from individuals were turned over by Shannon Saal to the Tazewell County Treasurer, Hannah Clark.
- Revising of the By-Laws Still in the Works: Bob Dant discussed revisions to the By-Laws and possibly having an attorney review the updates.
- Discuss Food Pantry: Bob Hotkevich gave a motion to transition the food pantry within 90 days of new Superintendent taking office. Motion was seconded by Bill Clark and approved via voice vote.
- Discuss Rent Assistance and Monthly Dollar Amount Cap for a Veteran to Qualify for Rent Assistance: Held discussion.

New Business –

- Power Restored at Cemetery, New Flags Ordered.

Good of the Commission/Post Reports:

Benediction/Adjournment: Tom Neeley gave Benediction. Meeting adjourned.

SHANNON M. SAAL
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT
Tazewell County VAC