



TAZEWELL COUNTY VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Shannon Saal, Interim Superintendent
414 Court Street, Pekin, IL 61554
Phone 309-477-2271
Tazewell County VAC Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2026, at 1800hrs
Tazewell EMA Building

1. Call to order:
2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll call:
 - Chairperson: Bob Dant-Present
 - Vice-Chair: absent
 - Interim Superintendent: Shannon Saal
 - Admin Assistant: Deja Owens-Colley
 - County Liaison: Jon Hopkins-Present
4. Attendees: Brian Farlin from VFW Post 4835; Dan Swift from Purple Heart post 175; Rick Otey from Operation last Watch Tremont (guest); Dan Haley from VVI; Joe Weghorst from American Legion Post 382; Robert Nichols from AMVETS Post 169; Keith Mckeeser (guest); Doug Bohm from American Legion Post 1236; Ryan Richardson from VFW Post 1232 (guest); Gary Heriford from American Legion Post 1236 (guest); David Labetl from VFW Post 2078; Carl Lehman from VFW Post 9016; Dennis Mutzel (guest); Jim Wheat from American Legion Post 607; Tom Moore from American Legion Post 1236; Jon Harris from American Legion Post 382; Michael Ragan from American

Legion Post 100; Hal McElhaney from VFW Post 1232 (guest); William Clark from Marine Corp League; Danny E. Watkins from Marine Corp League;

5. Introduction of Delegates, Guests and First-time attendees
6. Public comments; Guest Speaker Rick Otey started the group- “Operation Last Watch” a small group of individuals that does a short ceremony for veterans on hospice. During ceremonies, they perform a symbolic event relieving veterans of their duties. Rick stated if anyone is interested in helping their organization, please reach out, may find out more information on their Facebook page. Any help will be useful, as they are starting to have a higher volume and it’s becoming a bit overwhelming. Keith McKeever, Rep from the United Way (211) offered services if we needed help or getting rid of anything regarding the Food Pantry and its closing.
7. Approval of April Minutes: Dispense of reading of April 2026 minutes, Bill Clark made a motion to accept April’s Minute’s: Motion passed via voice vote.
8. Jim Wheat made a motion to enter closed session IAW Section 5 ILCS 120/2(c) for the appointment, employment and compensation of a person to fill the position of TC-VAC Superintendent: Motion passed via voice vote.

9. Dan Swift made a motion to resume open session and appoint Clarence Pulcher as Superintendent: Motion passed via voice vote.
10. Dan Swift made a motion to remove Interim Superintendent, Shannon Saal: Motion passed via voice vote.
11. Tom Neely made a motion to vacate Interim Vice-Chairman Position: Motion passed via voice vote.
12. Bob Nichols made a motion to nominate Dan Swift as Vice Chairman: Motion passed via voice vote.
13. Superintendent 's Report-Shannon went over numbers-informed all of Pekin Township picking up on slack from the food pantry closing.
 - a. Monthly Budget Report
 - b. Pantry Report: 69 Vets and 127 Dependents in April
 - c. Food Pantry- Closed: Shannon Saal addressed Pekin Township will pick up any leftover food. Will not only serve veterans but the whole community, and neighboring communities, including Peoria. Pekin Township food bank is on Wednesdays and is negotiating another day to add possibly Fridays due to no food pantries being open on the weekend. TAC-VAC has a list on the counter advising everyone of where they may find the 13 food banks throughout Pekin.

- d. VSO Report: 38 claims for VETS getting VA benefits
 - i. INT - 10
 - ii. POA - 11
 - iii. 526EZ - 6
 - iv. Appeals - 0
 - v. Walk-ins # # Office/Phone Appointments – 29/37
 - vi. Interactions - 403
 - vii. Calls – 266
- e. Updates and News
 - i. New Money - \$85,698.78
 - ii. Total Money - \$202,295.67
 - iii. Veterans getting money from our office – 38
 - iv. Active Claims waiting for a decision - 13
 - v. Appeals waiting on a decision - 1
 - vi. Total active claims – 37

14. Danny Haley made a motion to approve Superintendent's Report: Motion passed via voice vote.

15. Unfinished Business-

- a. By-Laws- By-laws were given to the commission to be read and discussed for the next meeting, asked to bring in all questions if have any. Wants to take away what's underlined.
 - i. Bob expressed if a post missed 3 consecutive meetings they will be dropped from the commission- was questioned by guests, will it be

easy to get back in the commission once dropped- was explained in detail if the post is to resubmit the application, they will be able to rejoin the commission.

- b. Subpoena Issued- Shannon went over the received Subpoena in detail with the committee, some of the committee also received subpoenas. Gift Cards are no longer accepted.
 - i. Was expressed that this office needs policies, procedures, protocols, and or guidelines in place for this office. Only policies we have are the ones we used in the Subpoena from Tazewell County policies.

16. New Business- Tom Neely-Tammy Duckworth will be here on Memorial Day to have breakfast with the area's Gold Star Families and speak at the Mackinaw Memorial Day Ceremony.

17. Good of the Commission/Post Reports

- a. Ceremony to change headstones and a police escort.
- b. Will be putting out 5 new stones for rededication to the service members.
- c. Mike Ragan reports the Patriot Plunge, #22VA Illinois River Jump and Ice Water set

18. Benediction/Adjournment: A motion was made to adjourn:
Motion passed via voice vote.