VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMISSION (VMC)  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 12th, 2019 5:30 p.m.,  
Veterans Conference Room-4th Floor  
Veteran's Memorial Building  
50 2nd Avenue Bridge  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  

Commissioners Present: Sherri Schuchmann – Vice Chairperson  
Greg DeWolf  
Mike McElmeel  
Constance Arens  
Kristin Delfs  
John Fowers  

Commissioners Absent: Darrell Andersen - Chairperson  

Staff Present: Paul Pestel, Facility Director (FD)  
Teri Van Dorston, Assistant Director (AD)  
Claire LeMay, Program Coordinator (PC)  

Guests: Mike Chismar  
Matt Evans  
Phoebe Trepp  

The regular meeting of the Veterans Memorial Commission (VMC) was called to order by Commissioner Schuchmann, Vice Chairperson, at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner Schuchmann asked PC LeMay conduct a role call following the Pledge of Allegiance.  

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:  
Commissioner Delfs made a motion to approve the minutes of the August meeting; seconded by Commissioner DeWolf. The motion carried with no objections.  

Financials (Budget report/Bills):  
Commissioner DeWolf inquires about the levy and requests FD Pestel to explain the numerical difference between the [Property tax levy-Current] budget and the adjusted budget. FD Pestel explains that property taxes are fully credited at the end of each fiscal year, and each December, the budget will reflect receipt of approximately half. FD Pestel also notes that current FY2020 expenditures are at 20% of the year, when traditionally the VMC is at 16%. The difference is due to three factors: 1. $100K has been transferred to the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) fund, 2. a portion of the insurance policy fee has been paid, and, 3. there was the 50% payment to the Cedar Rapids Ball Club. Commissioner Schuchmann asks for any other comments or questions. Commissioner Delfs inquires if the aforementioned transfer of CIP funds is going towards the card reader system expense or a separate project? FD Pestel responds by sharing that the current CIP fund is over $800K, and yes- expense of the upcoming [building wide] card reader installation will be charged to the CIP fund. In addition, future building renovation expenses can come out of this fund too. It is his intent to make the annual $100K transfer from the current VMC budget to a VMC CIP fund in anticipation of future capital improvement needs Commissioner DeWolf questions the written difference between the current “Net Revenues over/(under) Expenditures” and seeks an answer to why we appear “under.” FD Pestel explains that the “under” expenditures are funds that were an overage or carryover from FY2019 budgeting efforts. The roughly $275K is money that is mixed in the FY2020 budget. If by the end of this fiscal year there is still unused funds (or an overage), the remainder will go in to a CIP fund. Going forward it is FD Pestle’s goal to balance the budget.  

Commissioner Delfs made a motion to approve the financials; seconded by Commissioner Powers. The motion carried with no objections.
Presentations:
Matt Evans from TrueNorth Companies Insurance Agency introduces himself and presents on a section of the VMC's new insurance policy with the Travelers Companies. Evans' specialty is professional liability and executive liability; he oversees the risk management program for the City of Cedar Rapids. Evan notes, during the initial review of the previous insurance policy the Commission carried, there was not a line for executive liability. The executive liability policy with Travelers became effective July 1, 2019. The coverage is for legal expenses in the event that someone files a suit against the Commission or Commission staff. Commissioner McElmeel asks if it is an annual policy, which Mr. Evans confirms, yes. Commissioner Schuchmann inquires if the coverage is per individual or for all members. Mr. Evans confirms it covers all members. The policy with the City of Cedar Rapids is fee based, and not commission based. FD Pestel adds that since moving to TrueNorth, the VMC is getting better insurance coverage as a whole.

Phoebe Trepp from Willis Dady Homeless Services (WDHS) presents to the Commission and requests a reduced rate [specifically asking $500] to rent the Coliseum for the annual WDHS fundraiser, “Hops for Housing” (HOH for short). WDHS serves people who are at risk or are experiencing homelessness. HOH is WDHS’s largest fundraiser and the proceeds fund shelter operations. Trepp shares, WDHS launched a new veterans program in October 2018, that partners with Veterans Affairs to provide added services to veterans experiencing homelessness including: setting aside 10 beds for veterans specifically at the shelter, a dedicated case manager, and an opportunity for extended stay. Commissioner Delfs inquires about the date the event is scheduled, and if WDHS is seeking a one year or multiple year reservation. Trepp replies, that the event is typically the first Saturday in April and yes. They would like to secure the Coliseum every year. Commissioner Powers interjects and asks, what is the percentage of veterans that WDHS serves, as compared to the standard homeless population in the area? Trepp answers, each year the percentage of veterans experiencing homelessness that they serve is between 15% - 20%. Powers comments, that is 85% then- is general population of homeless. Trepp continues by acknowledging Powers comment, adding that single men and families make up the majority, although half of that majority are children. Trepp continues by sharing that another new commitment of WDHS is serving single female population, three of which this year have been veterans. Commissioner McElmeel inquires about the amount of time Trepp thinks WDHS would need for the event. She responds, the event runs three hours- with an hour set up and an hour tear down, would be five hours. Commissioner Schuchmann asks what the entrance fee is, to which Trepp reports $25 in advance and $30 at the door. FD Pestel comments that the current [inclusive] facility operational cost the Veterans Memorial Building (VMB) would incur on a Saturday is approximately $100 per hour. After some discussion, that was the rate that was determined for this event. Commissioner Powers voices concern about children attending the event, and who carries the DRAM [shop liability] to which Trepp assures the Commission that their volunteers will card at the door and this will be a clean event. FD Pestel adds that due to the nature of the event [beer tasting] this does not fall under the purview of the building liquor license holder that partners with the VMB on such legal details, however WDHS will be required to provide proof of insurance per VMC and City of Cedar Rapids standards.

Facilities Director Report:
FD Pestel begins his report by going over goals of the draft “VMB policy-procedures manual.” The manual shall exist under the VMC bylaws that were put in place on June 13, 2019. Per the bylaws, the VMC is required to have such a manual. Therefore, he asks the Commission for a vote on section 1.01, which gives us the right to (begin and) make adjustments to the policy-procedures as necessary. Copies were handed out. The overall goal of the manual is to summarize Building staff responsibilities and outline how certain tasks can be accomplished- including but not limited to, cost of renting the building, how non-profits request a reduced rental rate, short and long-term agreement language, how to facilitate rentals, etc. Pestel then requests the vote on section 1.01.

Commissioner Powers digresses by stating, as a courtesy VMC staff should share any information with the Metro Veterans Council (MVC) that could be construed as “radical” especially enacting any policy or policy
changes. FD Pestel and Commissioner Delfs clarify that if an update or policy may affect the MVC, it will be communicated to that group. The policy manual being discussed does not impact the MVC, rather shall exist under VMC bylaws to benefit transparency of staff/crew responsibilities.

Commissioner Delfs moves to adopt section 1.01 as is, seconded by Commissioner McElmeel. The motion carries unanimously.

FD Pestel continues his report by sharing current long and short-term facility rental rates, and acknowledges the intention to share the rate sheet publicly on the VMC website. Pestel shares hard-copies of the information being discussed. He continues by stating that these rates will stay current through the end of the calendar year, and that rates can be reviewed yearly each December. Pestel then brings Commission attention to the last two pages, one of which is a form that will be utilized [for rate discounts] to verify military/veteran status. A discussion follows regarding at what point in the rental process, family members that are military or veterans can or cannot receive a discount; in particular grandparent status was considered. The second page concerns long-term rentals in the building, and what percentage of rental space is allocated to veteran groups, civic groups, and local government. Pestel breaks down the offices in to the various aforementioned groups that are current lease holders. The goal is to have a balanced variety of building space allocated to the different types of groups. Commissioner McElmeel inquires about the non-profit rate and if it will be captured in a different section. Pestel responds that any organization seeking a rental would be handed the standard rates, unless they request and present the case to the Commission. Commissioner McElmeel asks where that will be stated in the policy manual. Pestel answers that information will be included in section 2.02, C of the policy.

FD Pestel concludes his report with a brief update on sixth floor [south tower] renovation.

**Assistant Director Museum Report:**
AD Van Dorston reports on a project that will involve stabilizing heat-fractures occurring on the Grant Wood stained glass [permanent collection] piece. She explains, over the past year or so- staff have noticed new cracks in the glass and reached out to Glass Heritage LLC [Davenport] to recommend best course of action. Since then, we have moved forward and contracted Glass Heritage (GH) for the work. Van Dorston opens the floor for questions. Commissioner Powers inquires if we know the cause of the fractures. She explains, the hairline cracks are being caused by a microclimate environment that is naturally created due to the [weather generated] heating and cooling on the exterior and interior protective panes of glass. Further, the venting on the interior [that was added in 2010] is proving to be insufficient. GH lead technician recommended removing the interior protective glass, so the window will naturally maintain proper temperature. Van Dorston continues, and shares her concern about removing the interior protective panes of glass- because by design the panes prohibit people from touching the work of art. Van Dorston went so far as to question other colleagues in the field, to understand how similar installations would react. Specialists in the field concurred with GH recommendation of removing the interior panes. Therefore, that is the plan. Plus a planned addition of a reading rail will be ordered and installed in the lobby at a 2’ length from the window to enhance the learning opportunity that doubles as a barrier for visitors “not to touch.” Commissioner Delfs inquires about the number of fractures and their location. AD Van Dorston replies they are high and low. The two-phase contract with GH is not to exceed $6,900. The first phase is to remove the internal protective panes, clean the stained glass, and stabilize the fractures. The second phase that will commence [weather appropriate] in the spring will consist of: removing the external protective glass, cleaning the exterior stained glass, inserting external vents, and finally replacing the external protective panes. Commissioner McElmeel asks if this is the same company doing the repair as did the original restoration in 2010, what type of warranty or guarantee the original agreement had with it? He wonders if they have any liability over their original work. Van Dorston cannot answer that question but will look in to it.
Program Coordinator Events Report:
PC LeMay begins by reporting that on September 17th there is an opportunity for the public to take liquidated excess furniture that has been culled from the [south tower] third and sixth floor. Commissioner Powers asks if the VMC is allowed to sell the furniture. PC LeMay answers, that we [including the Purchasing department] worked together to secure a local auctioneer to manage an auction for us, however we received no final bids. After that, we were allowed to liquidate the furniture. FD Pestel interjects that in the end, it was more cost effective to offer it to the public for free, and then target local non-profits that can utilize what is left. PC LeMay then reports on a fundraising concert that is booked for September 21st by the Linn County Freedom Rock foundation (LCFRF). All proceeds from the concert go to the LCFRF. LeMay concludes her report by sharing that she represented the YMB by holding a table at this year’s Stand Down with the women from Heroes and Friends Social Club.

Public Comment:
Mike Chismar comments that the VA in partnership with DAV concludes its sports adaptive clinic at Riverside Casino and Resort. The event includes 12 adaptive sports for veterans who experience disabilities, and they would like to expand next year.

Commissioner Powers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 pm; seconded by Commissioner Delfs. The motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

>Editied by Teri Van Dorston, Assistant Director
Original submitted by Claire LeMay, Program Coordinator

CHAIRPERSON

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Date 10/29/19