The regular meeting of the Veterans Memorial Commission was called to order by Commissioner Delfs, Chair, at 5:30 p.m.

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

Financials:
AD Van Dorston politely intervenes to introduce the newly formatted financial reports. The updated style is pulled directly from the budget reports supplied to the VMC by the City of Cedar Rapids’ Finance Department. With PC Woods out of the office ill, the former report was not completed for this meeting and it is hoped the new proposed format is welcomed; which many Commissioners shared their appreciation that it is. Commissioner Guckenberger asks to clarify if the VMC’s monthly approval will be on future bills instead of what was already purchased as the past reports showed. AD Van Dorston clarifies that the VMC will be approving the budget as is, not particular invoices. She continues that should any questions arise from the style; she’ll still have access to the details for clarification.

Commissioner Grant asks what the variance of the line item relating to rental of equipment/vehicles is as he notices a few accounts with large variances. AD Van Dorston clarifies that specific account was due to a boom lift rental and the budgeted amounts were determined previously for the current FY2018 budget by the former Executive Director. Moving forward, AD Van Dorston is hoping the budget will show less variances in accounts. At this time, Commissioner John Powers was warmly welcomed and joined the
meeting. Commissioner Grant made a motion to approve the bills; seconded by Commissioner Schuchmann. The motion carried with no objections.

**Acting Director’s Report:**

A. Fire Code & ADA compliance upgrades:

AD Van Dorston brings this topic with a request of the VMC’s approval to procure a Professional Service Agreement (PSA). The fire code updates come from the CRFD report dated December 27, 2017 that listed 12 failures for the VMB. The CRFD has been very accommodating as we work to develop a plan of action to rectify those failures. The three points that AD Van Dorston is project managing is the installation of the sprinkler systems in the 7th, 6th, and 3rd floors of the South Tower. While researching the best way to proceed, it has become apparent that the work would become significant and it would be best to also remodel at the same time. This would allow the VMC to follow any forthcoming ADA requirements from their inspection of the VMB.

AD Van Dorston proposes that the VMC enter in a PSA with local architectural firm, Solum Lang. Their guidance would be interior design based, assisting with the schematics of remodeling, as well as preparing the VMB and future contractors for the appropriate building permits, and preparing the project to going out for bids. Commissioner Grant asks if the PSA would include cost estimates and AD Van Dorston confirms it would. It would also include the schematics of ADA updated restrooms on 7, 6, 5, 4, 3 and 2 as they are non-compliant as well. The point of contact Teri used for field costs on the sprinkler system recommended Mr. Brad Lang, employed now by Solum Lang, who had formerly worked with the architect firm responsible for the 4th floor Chambers remodel. With Mr. Lang’s familiarity of the building, it is perceived his expertise would be quite beneficial.

Commissioner Grant moves that the VMC approves moving forward to enter into a PSA with Solum Lang. Commissioner Powers clarifies he believes the specific hired contractor would pull the actual permit. Commissioner Grant responds that Powers is correct, though Solum Lang will provide the drawings and documentation needed in order for the contractors to actually pull the permit. Commissioner Powers seconds the motion for the VMC to proceed with a PSA with Solum Lang. The motion carried with no objections.

B. Staff update: HVAC Specialist:

AD Van Dorston has verbally offered the recently reclassified position to Preston Ross. He served in the United States Army from 1977-2001. Staff members Tony Hlas and PC Woods also sat in on the interview process with candidates and all felt that Mr. Ross would be beneficial to the building’s needs. Pending the completed hiring process, Mr. Ross would begin work for the VMC on February 20, 2018. Commissioner Grant asks that we add to next month’s agenda the topic of entering into a HVAC maintenance agreement, which AD Van Dorston agrees. Commissioner Delfs asks if Mr. Ross would be a member of the local AFSCME union as our other FMS crew are. AD Van Dorston believes the local union’s steward will approach him in regards to joining.

C. Request staffing discussion: Executive Director position:

As the position has been vacant for approximately six months, AD Van Dorston requests a gathered discussion on staffing to receive guidance moving forward. Commissioner Delfs has been talking with the City of Cedar Rapids’ Human Resource Department Interim Director, Sandi Fowler. Their department will assist in formatting and general requirements. The VMC Personnel Committee will be meeting on February 12, 2018 on more specific job description details but would like contributions from the other Commissioners as well to help produce an updated job description.
Commissioner Powers believes the existing job description that he and former Commissioner Sarah Else created should still work. Commissioner Delfs shared that the description on hand may not be what was in place at the time the former Executive Director was hired. Being aware of that now requires an updated and detailed description moving forward to hire the best possible candidate.

Commissioner Grant asks for a deadline on posting the position to be no more than six months with the final job description available for approval at the March 8, 2018 VMC meeting and Commissioner Delfs agrees. Commissioner Guckenberger suggests possibly utilizing an outside firm or recruiting office to hire for this position. Commissioner Ziese encourages the Personnel Committee to look at the budget for planning as well.

Commissioner Ziese begins discussion on the agreement between the VMC and the Cedar Rapids Ball Club; which Commissioner Delfs requests that this topic be tabled until the April 12, 2018 meeting. AD Van Dorston will research and provide a report at that time.

**Freedom Rock Proposal-John Mikelson & Bob James:**
Commissioner Delfs welcomes Mr. Mikelson, Midwest Military Outreach (MMO) to the meeting. After providing a brief background to the topic, Mr. Mikelson looks forward to presenting the plan. He continues, that the former executive administration that was involved in this project had offered space at the All Veterans Memorial Park (AVM) for the Linn County Freedom Rock; either next to the tank or at the bottom of the stairs to the park.

An arm of MMO registered as, “Linn County Freedom Rock Foundation“, has entered into a contract with the artist, Bubba Sorenson that begins the project. Mr. Bob James, KHAK Radio, expresses his passion for this project and shares he had some of the initial discussions with Sorenson as well as personally providing the $1,000 required project down payment. Other fundraising efforts have begun with a bank account established at the Dupaco Community Credit Union through MMO. This project has already been presented to the Metro Veterans Council as well as the Linn County Veterans Commission which showed citizens interested in assisting in this project; from fundraising to assistance in logistics as well. After a discussion with Commissioner Delfs, Mr. Mikelson is aware the VMC is concerned that the rock could present itself as a “graffiti magnet” as well as other concerns.

There has been interest from Marion and the Mt. Vernon area if the VMC chooses to pass on monument placement at the AVM. However, Mr. Mikelson would like to offer the monument first to the VMC. Commissioner Delfs states several things may not be conducive to placing the monument at the AVM Park, though no final decisions by the VMC has been made. Commissioner Grant states the biggest concern he carries is the size of the rock, which Mr. Mikelson shares it would be approximately a 30 to 50-ton rock. Commissioner Grant states the dimensions of the proposed rock would be beneficial for the VMC staff to evaluate a plan for proper placement. Mr. Mikelson expresses that Tom Watson has verbally offered a rock from his property for the project and all would be able to view it and even take the VMC to physically see it for approval; though Commissioner Grant shares that would not be inductive to the what is needed in order for the VMC to properly plan. Commissioner Ziese doesn’t believe the AVM Park itself would be the best location, though an area perhaps around the Veteran Memorial Stadium may work. More discussion on various areas within the VMC operated grounds at the VMS ensued.

Commissioner Powers would like to confirm that the area on Mays Island above the parking ramp is not plausible. Those present confirm the VMC does not have control of that grass area in between the VMB
and the Linn County Courthouse. It is known that the structural support is not in place to allow such weight on the area. The VMC doesn’t want to keep Mr. Mikelson and Mr. James in a limbo, but more details are needed in order to provide a final approval from the VMC to move forward.

Commissioner Arens asks how the project will be funded, which Mr. Mikelson clarifies the cost would be covered by their group’s fundraising efforts. However, once the Freedom Rock would be finished and put in place, it would be become the property of the VMC if placed at the AVM Park and upkeep would fall under the VMC policies and procedures of the AVM. Commissioner Delfs asks if any research has been completed to indicate approximate future budget to normal wear and tear. Mr. Mikelson believes that the sealing of the rock annually would bring a small cost to the VMC but is unaware of other costs. AD Van Dorston asks about landscaping costs being covered under Mr. Mikelson’s fundraising. To which he would prefer an area ready for the rock to avoid such costs as the fundraising is predominantly covering just the artist’s costs. It is then clarified that additional landscaping costs would fall upon the owner of the property chosen in the long run. Though Mr. Mikelson would work diligently to attempt to fundraise donations to cover those possible charges if needed also. Mr. Mikelson has spoken with the Iowa National Guard and local Army Engineers and shares they would possibly be able to assist and defray the costs as no entity is involved in this to make a profit. Any overages raised in the fundraising efforts would go back into MMO general account. The VMC thanks Mr. Mikelson and Mr. James for their time to share this proposal. Mr. Mikelson and AD Van Dorston to regroup and formalize some visual plans in April.

Public Comment:
Commissioner Grant made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Arens. The motion carried with no objections.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikkee Woods, Program Coordinator

CHAIR__________________________________________________________ Date

VICE CHAIR____________________________________________________ Date