

WEXFORD COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM

AUGUST 12TH, 2026 MEETING

CHAIRMAN – GARY TAYLOR

DIRECTOR – CARRIE PEREZ

VSO – KENT MYERS

NOTICE OF THE MEETING: Wexford County Veterans Service Committee will hold a regular meeting on August 12th, 2026, beginning at 3:00 p.m. (1500 hrs.) in the MSU Conference Room on 401 Lake Street, Cadillac, Michigan 49601.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- (A) **CALL TO ORDER** – Meeting call to order August 12th, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. (1400 hrs.) by Gray Taylor.
- (B) **ROLL CALL**- Gary Taylor present, Jack Baughan present, Joe Porterfield present, Rhonda Workman present, Greg Schmidt excused, Kent Myers present, Carrie Perez present.
- (C) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**- Everyone stood for the pledge.
- (D) **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS OF THE AGENDA:** None.
- (E) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**- Motion made by Rhonda Workman, 2nd by Jack Baughan, all in favor aye. Motion passes unanimously.
- (F) **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** Motion made by Jack Baughan, 2nd by Rhonda Workman to approve the July 8th, 2026, minutes., all in favor aye. Motion passed unanimously.
- (G) **PRESENTATION AND REPORTS: NONE!**
- (H) **PUBLIC COMMENTS**- One person here to observe!
The Board welcomes all public input and appreciates adherence to the time limits established. Each period shall be limited to 3 minutes in total. Each person shall be limited to one three-minute comment per period. A group of representatives shall be limited to one five-minute comment per period.
- (I) **AGENDA ITEMS:**
 - (1) Financial / Director's HR Report: Given by Kent Myers.
 - Veterans Service Expenditures:**
 - (a) Office Suppliers - \$0.00.
 - (b) Contracted Services - \$83,376.78
 - (c) Travel & Conferences - \$2,90.88

- (d) Vehicle Main & Operations - \$1,158.22
- (e) Memorial Wall/Expense - (\$5,434.91)
- (f) Expo/Expense - (\$9,998.01)
- (2) Operation Discussion: Reviewed! See in file the **HIGHLIGHTS AND TAKE-AWAY FROM EXPO 2026 Veterans Expo Summary! Page 6,7,8, & 9!**
- (3) Directors HR Report for July 8th, 2026: Given by Carrie Perze.
 - (a) Veterans/Families in office visits – 68
 - (b) Other communications for (email, call) - 130
 - (c) Veterans or families who applied for emergency assistance – 0
 - (d) Veterans who received emergency assistance - 0
 - (e) Veterans' ineligible/denied for emergency assistance – 0
 - (f) County Burial benefits and letters have been initiated - 2

July was a productive month with several veterans coming into imitating claims and VA Health Care. Our website has been updated. I finally have access with my PIV card to the federal side of claims (Veterans Benefits Administration), thanks to our IT working with the Enterprise contractors. The new schedule has been working well for veterans, and we accommodate as needed to get them the assistance and information that they need. We recorded a radio ad with 107.9 for the Expo that aired that morning as well as a general ad that we will release in January to bring people into the office when it tends to slow down. We had another interview with Upnorth Live the week prior to the Expo, as well.

Mainly, we have focused on setting up everything for the Expo and then the following Wexford County Salute to Service on August 17th, 2026, which is in partnership with the Northern District Fair and we will focus on claims and more outreach. The schedules' introductions at the Manton Military Museum, Cadillac VA Health Care clinic, and more. The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency Director will be stopping in*our office mid-August as well. After that, the Grant Request is due for FY 2027, which we will request wages through. I will attend 3 days of American Legion Training over at the DNR Center in Higgins Lake August 18-20 and we will work on getting our new VSO position announcement out. We expect to see a lot of veterans getting in touch with us post-Expo due to the outreach, as well. Respectfully Carrie Perez, Director

(J) **2026 Veterans/Military EXPO report:**

*** Event Overview:**

Event Name: 2026 Northwest Michigan Veterans Expo

Date: August 1st, 2026

Location: The Wex, Cadillac, Michigan

Hours: 9:00 A.M. (0900) - 2:00 p.m. (1400)

Vendors: 48 vendors attended. 54 booths were available in a straight-line configuration, 4 rows which received positive feedback,

Attendance: 426 total sign-ins, 96 Sponsors; many signs ins missed.

Veterans: 243

Counties represented: 18 counties, 2 states

Top Counties:

Wexford – 231

Osceola - 35

Missaukee – 31

Other Counties – 129

Attendee Demographics:

Youngest Veteran: 23

Oldest Veteran: 96

Largest Veteran Age Groups:

70s - 90s attendees

60s – 53 attendees

80s – 56 attendees

50 and under – 63 attendees

Positive Points:

Straight line booth layout highly favored

Opened, first come-first serve booth selection appreciated

Included vendors in raffles

Awaiting sponsor surveys for more details

Concerns:

Set up and breakdown, need larger group of volunteers

Recommendations:

Sponsor Feedback (still collecting)

Request to attract younger veterans

WCVS RECOMMENDATIONS:

K) Public Comments: None.

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(L) COMMITTEE COMMENTS: None.

(M) CHAIRMAN COMMENTS: None.

(N) ADJOURN: Motion made by Greg Schmidt, 2nd by Joe Porterfield to adjourn Motion has passed unanimously.

(N) There being no further business to come before the WCVS Commissioner the meeting was duly closed at 3:00 p.m. (1500 hrs.). Next schedule meeting is July 8th, 2026 @ 3:00 p.m. (1500 hrs.).

Gary Taylor

Chairman

Carrie Perez

Director

Jack Baughan

Secretary

Kent Myers

Veterans Service Officers