

WEXFORD COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM

JUNE 15TH, 2026 MEETING

CHAIRMAN – GARY TAYLOR

DIRCETOR – KENT MYERS

VSO – CARRIE PEREZ

NOTICE OF THE MEETING: Wexford County Veterans Service Committee will hold a regular meeting on JUNE 15th, 2026, beginning at 2:00 p.m. (1400 hrs.) in the MSU Conference Room on 401 Lake Street, Cadillac, Michigan 49601.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- (A) **CALL TO ORDER** – Meeting call to order June 15th, 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 excused, Greg Schmidt present, 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 Greg Schmidt, 2nd by Joe Porterfield, all in favor aye. Motion passes unanimously.
- (F) **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**: Motion made by Joe Porterfield, 2nd by Greg Schmidt to approve the April 8th, 2026, minutes., all in favor aye. Motion passed unanimously.
- (G) **PUBLIC COMMENTS**- None currently!
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.
- (H) **AGENDA ITEMS**:
 - (1) Financial / Director's Report: 62 office visits in May.
 - (2) Operation Discussion:
 - (a) Facebook page chang. Archive/preserve old ones, create new, maintain FOIA standards, and free-speech preservation.
 - (b) Transfer of Carrie to Wexford:

- * NACVSO Annual Training virtual online has been completed for CEU for Cross accreditation and applications maintained/completed for VFW, AL, NACVSO, MVAA AND DAV.
- * PIV Card updates on access through Citrix.
- * American Legion training in August 18-20-Laws and procedures update often, this keeps us current of required CEUs as well.
- * New Laptop set up, biz cards ordered.
- * Digital signature and Direct Submit for claims being used to process claims with fewer visits, Canva and Adobe for marketing and claim processing.
- * New VSO discussion: NACVSO Basic Benefits course in November for any New VSO, August American Legion. Motion made by Greg Schmidt 2nd by Joe Porterfield to hire another VSO part time – motion passed.
- * Meal Gift Cards for Veterans – We would like to purchase from Meijer.
- * Upcoming Events:
 - (a) Wexford County Fair, Women's Conference, Salute Service.
 - (b) Expo August 1st, 2026.
 - * Lisa Myers Contract is signed; Kassie is no longer working on it. Motion made by Joe Porterfield 2nd by Greg Schmidt to have Lisa Myers work 20hour a week for the Expo – motion passed.
 - * Signs are ready
 - * Billboards will be up June 22nd, 2026
 - * Food is handled - \$13 a plate – need quote's
 - * Posters are ready.
 - * Swag items-need to order ideas?
 - * Grant update will be ready July 10th, 2026, for 3rd quarter!
 - * MVAA Trust Fund Committee training date 06/16/2026, 0930 to 1430 (9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.)
- (3) Directors HR Report for June 12th, 2026: Given by Kent Myers.
 - (a) Veterans/Families in office visits – 62
 - (b) Other communications for (email, call) -
 - (c) Veterans or families who applied for emergency assistance – 2 started process one incomplete
 - (d) Veterans who received emergency assistance - 0
 - (e) Veterans' ineligible/denied for emergency assistance – 0
 - (f) County Burial benefits and letters have been initiated - 0

May has been steady, and summer tends to be busier in our region with veteran filling claims and other needs. (Carrie) was able to transfer her

accreditations to the office and is waiting for the PIV Card to be reassigned through the OGC (Federal Office of General Counsel).

NACVSO basic benefits course is available for virtual training in November American Legion is in Houghton Lake August 18-20 for CEU credits to maintain accreditation. Ideally, a new VSO part-time and possibly a full-time job may be hired prior to those dates (November, ideally) to get their training started immediately. **Motion made by Greg Schmidt, 2nd by Joe Porterfield to hire another VSO part-time, all-in favor aye: motion passed unanimously!**

Staffing and access to a veteran claims file are the most important parts to helping veterans and their families, so this is a top priority now. The flow of veterans in our office has been constant. It is difficult to process paperwork with walk-ins with just two people in the office, especially when one is part-time. Wexford County census identified **2,500** veterans. Comparable counties with less Veterans typically have 3 employees with a combination of directors to have 3 employees with a combination of director, VSO positions, full and part-time. We want to ensure that staff is available for outreach, but office availability as a priority special events that may require days out of the office during regular hours, Staff retention due to costs of training and value of experience demonstrates a need of a wage that will retain good employees in this field, as it is mentally demanding and stressful. Wage is something we need to research with comparable countries and attrition of VSOs, which tends to have a high turnover rate. It is a demanding occupation and takes at least 2 years to become proficient and requires annual education and certification to maintain accreditation. We would like to continue outreach, but we need to ensure the office is kept running, documents are processed, and veterans have access to services. We serve as a liaison for homelessness connections, burials, deaths and other emergency needs and direction or information that veterans need. Wexford County Fair Committee is having Salute to Service on Wednesday, Aug 17th. We are trying to coordinate since Kassie has stepped back from the Expo and other outreach. I will do my best to help fill in where Kassie was involved. Thank you to all Wexford County Veteran Service Board members for all you do and done for our veterans. Respectfully Kent Myers & Carrie Perez. Motion made by Greg Schmidt, 2nd by Joe Porterfield to approve both the Financial and HR report, all in favor aye; motion passed unanimously.

- (I) Public **Comments:** None.

The Board welcomes all public input and appreciates the limits established. Each period shall be limited to 15 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.

(J) **COMMITTEE COMMENTS:** None.

(K) **CHAIRMAN COMMENTS:** None.

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

(M) **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