

MERCER COUNTY BOARD MINUTES
June 2, 2020

Board convened at 7:05 p.m.

This meeting was held via telephone conference. Roll call showed the following members present via telephone: Board Members Flowers, Gregg, Hare, Hawn, Koepke, Moreland, and Sarabasa. Board Members DeFrieze, Frieden, and Nelson were absent. There was a quorum present. Also present were Bev Lower, Matt Voigts, Carla Ewing, Teresa Smith, Mary McClellan, George Howard, Darla Phelps, Bill McKinley, Dick Nash, Ken Rakers, Mike Connell, Kevin Kilkenny, Doug Ramer, Cala Smoldt, James Taylor, Ron Fullerlove, and Sara Blaser.

During Public Comment Doug Ramer, Kevin Kilkenny, Mike Connell, Bill McKinley, Dick Nash, Bob Haddick, and Ken Rakers spoke to the Board on behalf of the Veterans Assistance Commission and their concerns over VAC funding. Chairman Sarabasa invited the veterans to attend a future Board Meeting after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted so that this matter can be discussed in more detail. He stated that it was difficult to get into too much detail in a telephonic meeting.

Ron Fullerlove stated that he did not receive the Disaster Declaration from the Public Health department until after the meeting agenda had been posted. Therefore, a motion to amend the agenda was needed. Motion to amend the Consent Agenda by Chairman Sarabasa seconded by Board Member Hare was approved by vote of the Board. Motion to accept the Consent Agenda by Board Member Koepke seconded by Board Member Moreland was approved by vote of the Board.

George Howard reported on the VAC fund. He stated that he had received an email from the Treasurer stating that the VAC fund was depleted at the end of May. He stated that in 2015 the VAC fund had \$70,000 in reserves and that those reserves have been used up in the last 5 years. He asked the Board to review the State statute for the VAC, cover the VAC expenses until the first distribution is made, and to levy the amount listed in the VAC budget in the future. Board Member Hare asked what the minimum amount would be that the VAC would need in order to maintain business as normal. Ron Fullerlove questioned the VAC budget and was advised by George that he was not reading it correctly. The two agreed to meet on June 3rd to discuss it. Chairman Sarabasa requested that minutes be taken at the June 3rd meeting. Ron stated that he would also have a Board Member and/or Department Head present as well. Chairman Sarabasa stated that if the matter was not resolved at the June 3rd meeting, he would like it placed on the Agenda for the next in-person General Board meeting (July?) so it can be discussed in more detail. All parties were in agreement. Board Member Moreland asked George about an account at Bank Orion. George had no knowledge of that account. Darla Phelps said that account is for Mercer County Emergency Assistance, which is a separate entity from the VAC.

Ron Fullerlove spoke on the matter of the Mercer County Senior Center. He reported that there has never been anything officially given to the Senior Center. In the past, the Board “passed the hat” and took up a collection to give to the Senior Center. The matter was tabled until an in-person meeting can be held.

Jenny Garner from the University of Illinois Extension had submitted her reports, but she did not call in to speak on those reports.

Motion to approve the claims paid in May by Board Member Gregg seconded by Board Member Sarabasa. Motion was approved by Roll Call vote of the Board – 7 ayes, 0 nays.

The Board entered into closed session at 7:41 p.m.

The Board re-entered open session at 7:58 p.m.

Discussion focused on options for in-person meetings without violating the COVID-19 restrictions set by the State. Sara stated that she and Ron had been discussing options of venues large enough to accommodate the Board and members of the public without violating social distancing requirements.

Motion to adjourn to Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. by Board Member Hawn seconded by Board Member Gregg was approved by vote of the Board at 8:04 p.m.