



Together Always

**AVVA - AT LARGE NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 9
JANUARY, 2020**

I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I attended the State Council Christmas party on Friday (12/6)--the food was delicious and the white elephant gift exchange was so much fun! Here are my notes from the Saturday (12/7) State Council quarterly meeting and the AVVA meeting.

AVVA Meeting

Pat discussed the 2020 AVVA elections (the complete guidelines can be found on the AVVA.org website in Section 5 of the Policies and Procedures Manual).

AVVA Chapter representative elections must take place in April 2020 in order for those representatives to vote at the 2021 National Convention. The process includes the following steps:

- Appoint an elections Chair (a VVA member who also belongs to AVVA and can't vote in the election or the VVA Chapter President can perform this function).
- Submit a letter of your intent to run at least 30 days prior to the election (a sample can be found at avva.org, Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 5, XVII A)
- A sign-in sheet and ballot are required even if there is only 1 person voting or 1 person running for the position. The forms can be found at avva.org under "forms/governing docs" and "election forms" (the sign in sheet is form F-ELE05.09; ballots are form F-ELE05.04)
- After the election, you must send Pat a copy of the sign-in sheet (form F-ELE05.09) and the election results within fifteen (15) days of the election. Pat must then send copies of these documents to the regional director, who sends copies to the National Elections Committee chair and the national data base coordinator. The regional director will keep this information for a minimum of ninety (90) days.

The State Representative election will be held at the June 2020 quarterly meeting. The process is very similar to that for AVVA Chapter representative elections.

- Appoint an elections Chair (a VVA member who also belongs to AVVA and can't vote in the election or a VVA member can perform this function).
- Submit a letter of your intent to run at least 45 days before the election to the current state elections committee Chair or the person who has been assigned to oversee the election. You can find a sample of the letter of intent to run in the Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 5, XVII A.
- A sign-in sheet and ballot are required even if there is only 1 person voting or 1 person running for the position. The forms can be found at avva.org under "forms/governing docs" and "election forms" (the sign in sheet is form F-ELE05.09; ballots are form F-ELE05.04)
- After the election is concluded, a completed Election Results Form (F-ELE5.06) and the sign-In sheet (form F-ELE05.09) used at the election meeting must be sent to the AVVA regional director within twenty-one (21) days of the election. The regional director (Fran Davis) will send copies of these documents to the National Elections Committee chair and the national data base coordinator and will hold them for a minimum of ninety (90) days.

The State AVVA At Large Representative election process is as follows:

- The AVVA state representative (Pat) or her designee, will contact all At-Large members by January 15th in even-numbered years and give each At-Large member who is qualified the opportunity to run for the position of at-large representative. At-Large members living outside of the state or who are incarcerated may not run for at-large representative and are not required to be notified.

- This notice must be verifiable and will be sent by US Postal Service or group e-mail cc'd to the regional director (Fran Davis). The group email notice may be used for any members who have supplied an email address for the most recent national roster. A group email can be "cc'd" to Fran to serve as verification. A list of persons to whom letters were mailed will be sent to Fran via USPS or by e-mail.
- Candidates wishing to run must respond to the notice within twenty-one (21) days of the date of the notification. Candidate responses must be received by Pat no later than February 5th.
- If after the twenty-one (21) day time limit, no candidate has come forward to run for the position of at-large representative, the position will remain unfilled until the next election cycle.
- If Pat, or her designee, receives only one (1) qualified candidate letter of intent, that individual will be the at-large representative.
- Within (10) ten days of the decision regarding the winner of the at-large election, Pat, or her designee, shall complete and submit an Election Result Form (F-ELE05.07) and the list(s) of the persons who were mailed a letter via USPS, to the regional director (Fran Davis).
- Pat will notify the at-large members of the name and contact information for the at-large representative no later than May 15th of the election year.
- Fran will verify that all steps in the at-large election process have been satisfied, and will notify the national elections chair, and the national data base coordinator of the election results no later than May 15th of the election year, even if the report states that there is no elected at-large representative for that cycle.

State Council Notes

President's Report (Richard Lindbeck):

- Richard shared that there was an update on VVA National finances and that a new flow chart for responsibilities was discussed at the October meeting of the Council of State Presidents.
- He reminded everyone that Chapters need to have a Point of Contact included in the annual reports they send to National.
- The "rebate" each Chapter receives goes away in 7 years since the funding for it will be gone as a result of reducing life membership fees to \$50.
- The attendance at the State veterans program in November at the Executive mansion was very small attendance.
- Richard travelled to Prairie du Chien in early October to discuss a May, 2020 Agent Orange/Town Hall meeting there.
- Chapter #1141, Marinette, is the newest Chapter to receive a charter.

Secretary's Report (Jim Mullarkey)

- The following Chapters are missing reports (to State only): #351 (election report missing); #529 (election and financial reports missing) and #767 (financial report missing). Reports for all the Chapters have been submitted to National.
- Chapter #618 (Sheboygan) is in the process of dissolving.
- If your e-mail changes, please let Jim know so you continue to receive information from him.

Treasurer's Report (Pat Craney):

Pat has an excused absence. Pat Furno reported on what checks were processed since the last quarterly meeting.

National VVA At-Large Report (John Margowski):

John spoke about numerous items:

- If a VVA member wears items with the VVA logo or campaigns as a VVA member/Chapter for **ANY** candidate, the Chapter could lose their non-profit status.
- John gave an update on Panel/Working Groups I and II. He reminded us of the basic tasks assigned to each group, the results from each group and what was presented at the National Convention. He also shared that President Rowan was supposed to appoint a committee to review the recommendations for review at the October meeting but that hadn't been done at the date of our State Council meeting.
- VVA may lose its funding source (the household goods program) depending on VVA's future path.

- All current VVA programs could be “transitioned” to another organization except for the veterans benefits. That program requires attorneys to handle the veteran’s claims while they are completed and needs to be funded during the transition process.

Agent Orange/Town Hall (Mike Demske):

A motion was made to “donate” a portion of the money in the Town Hall budget for a program to be presented in August. Heather Bowser (of Manawa) of the Children’s Alliance/Vietnam Veterans Health Alliance will be doing the presentation; the focus will be on descendants of Vietnam Veterans. The motion was passed.

Convention/Meetings (Mike Demske):

Mike provided the meeting schedule for 2020:

- 3/21: Quarterly meeting, Waupaca (date changed to unavailability of hotel rooms)
- 6/20: Quarterly meeting, picnic and elections, Camp Victory
- 9/19: Quarterly meeting, Waupaca
- 12/5: Christmas Party (white elephant gift exchange)
- 12/6: Quarterly meeting, Waupaca

Council on Veterans Programs (Vern Larson)

- The John Moses building is scheduled to open at the Milwaukee VA in 2022.
- The Wisconsin DVA Veterans Outreach program will help with town hall and/or local meetings.
- Any bills that pass both State houses must still go to the Joint Finance Committee in order to become a law. Current bills include: SB205 (transferring credits from the military to UW/state schools) has passed both State houses and is in Joint Finance; SB334 (to address college students called to active duty) has passed both State houses but not Joint Finance yet; AB76 (reduces number of hours of instruction for certification of nurses/CNA’s from 120 to 75 to address the nursing shortage); SB446 (addresses POW/MIA recovery program). Be sure and let Vern know if you have specific programs you would like him to advocate for.
- Vern discussed grants that are available for programs supporting veterans; eligibility for the grants is based on servicing veterans rather than the organization being veteran owned. The Wisconsin Non-Profit Grant program is available to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations and includes a maximum total of up to \$250,000 annually to non-profit organizations with no more than \$25,000 to each grant recipient. The Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Grant is available to 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) non-profit organizations that provide entrepreneurship training, or technical, business or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes. Please visit dva.wi.gov/Pages/benefitsClaims/Financial-Grants.Applications for more information. You may contact WDVA Grants Unit at 1-800-WIS-VETS or by email at vetsbenefitsgrants@dva.wisconsin.gov.
- Vern’s next Council on Veterans Programs meeting is in February at King.

Public Relations (Jim Mullarkey)

- The vwawi.org website has been updated so you can click on links rather than searching for information.
- The State Council now has a Facebook page. Information, excluding political information, can be posted on the Facebook page.
- There have been 15,707 visits to the website in the last quarter.
- The “short” version of State Council minutes (2 pages or less) will be posted on-line; additional details can be found in other locations on the website.

New Business:

- The Dane County Sheriff’s Department recently made an announcement about a Veterans Behind Bars housing program. Richard asked if anyone at the meeting had heard about the program since he hadn’t until he received an e-mail shortly before the announcement was made.
- Effective 1/1/20, **any** veteran can use the PX system.
- Jon Rybar (Racine Chapter) cautioned Chapters to carefully read any contracts they enter into with respect to bringing in displays. His Chapter experienced some “glitches” with a moving wall they brought in. While they were able to resolve the issues, it could have been avoided if the contracts had been reviewed more carefully.

- There was a discussion regarding the recent resignation of the Executive Director, Jon Weiler, at The Highground. Greg Foye, Highground Liaison, was able to share some details, however, some information is protected by Federal privacy rules. Concern was expressed regarding the ability of The HighGround to survive financially with the changes that are occurring. We were assured The Highground Board of Directors continues to work diligently to ensure the long-term solvency of the organization.

Upcoming Events:

March 21, 2020:

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting; Ramada Inn, Waupaca (please note change in date)

June 20, 2020:

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting, annual picnic and elections; Camp Victory (now a part of The Highground; directions will be provided); a block of rooms will be reserved at the Super 8 in Neillsville

September 9, 2020:

Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting; Ramada Inn, Waupaca

December 5-6, 2019:

Wisconsin State Council holiday party (12/5) and quarterly meeting (12/6); Ramada Inn, Waupaca

May I send you this newsletter by e-mail instead? If so, please contact me at jlfoye@frontier.com with a subject line of "AVVA At-Large Newsletter" or by phone at 715-842-9197 (we don't have caller ID so please leave your phone number so I can contact you). If you have any suggestions on what (or how much) information to include in the newsletter, please let me know. Thank you!



Joy L. Foye

Wisconsin AVVA At-Large Representative