



**Veteran's Assistance Commission
Cheryl Walker, Superintendent**

**Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 6:00 PM

**Location: Bennett Administrative Building, Shields-Carter Room
102 E. Main Street, Urbana, Illinois 61802**

Call to Order

President Timothy T. Tyler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Because guests were present, introductions were conducted in lieu of a traditional roll call. Attendees included Timothy T. Tyler, Bob Tyler of the Macon County VAC, Greg Collins, Superintendent of the Macon County VAC, Jennifer Ingram, Superintendent of the Kankakee VAC, David Murphy, James M. Lueth, Sarah Smith, Jan M. Puo, Robbie Walker, Mattie Gray, Leonard Gray, and Superintendent Cheryl Walker.

Approval of Minutes

The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission reviewed the minutes from the prior meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried by voice vote without opposition.

Approval of Agenda

The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission reviewed the agenda as presented. A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Nomination and Election of Officers for 2026 to 2027

The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission opened nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two At Large Members. During discussion, the body clarified that an At Large Member must be a person in good standing with the post and a delegate serving on the Commission.



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The final officer slate selected by the Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission was:

President: Timothy T. Tyler

Vice President: David Murphy

Secretary: Mattie Gray

Treasurer: John Dwyer

First At Large Member: Mike Lueth

Second At Large Member: Ray Elliott

The officer slate was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Treasurer Report

Because the Treasurer was not present, Superintendent Cheryl Walker presented the report. Superintendent Cheryl Walker advised the Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission that budget materials would be emailed and posted.

Superintendent Cheryl Walker further reported that current county financial displays did not accurately reflect the budget as previously discussed and that the issue appeared to be related to the county's computer system rather than the absence of approved funds. Members discussed the concern that funds not appearing in the system could not be readily expended even if previously approved. No formal action was taken.

Superintendent Report

Superintendent Cheryl Walker reported that the office served 22 veterans or veteran families during the reporting period. Superintendent Cheryl Walker reported approximately 5,500 dollars in rent assistance, 250 dollars in mortgage assistance, and approximately 4,000 dollars in utility assistance, for a total monthly assistance amount discussed as 10,000 dollars. Superintendent Cheryl Walker further reported that no emergency expenditures were made during the period and that six applicants were denied based on character of discharge.

Superintendent Cheryl Walker raised a legal and policy question regarding discharge-based denials and whether current local language aligned with the Military Veterans Assistance Act. During discussion, participants noted that the Military Veterans Assistance Act governs eligibility and that local bylaws should be consistent with state law. The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission agreed that legal review should be obtained and that the bylaws should mirror state law.



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Superintendent Cheryl Walker also addressed concerns arising from a prior training session in Peoria and described comments made during that training as offensive, disrespectful, and accusatory. President Timothy T. Tyler emphasized the importance of integrity and stated that concerns should be brought directly to the Board President. The discussion concluded with an apology from Greg Collins, Superintendent of the Macon County VAC, and a shared commitment to move forward constructively in service to veterans.

Approved Discussion Summary

A substantial portion of the meeting involved an informational discussion on the statutory and operational framework governing Veterans Assistance Commissions. Participants explained that Veterans Assistance Commissions operate under the Military Veterans Assistance Act and within guidance and best practices associated with the Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions. The discussion emphasized that the Military Veterans Assistance Act creates empowers, and funds Veterans Assistance Commissions, while also defining the relationship between a county and its VAC. Participants further stated that the Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission holds statutory authority regarding VAC functions and funding requests within the legal levy structure.

The discussion also emphasized that the Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission is responsible for ensuring that Superintendent Cheryl Walker has the resources necessary to serve local veterans. Visiting representatives stated that counties do not have unlimited discretion to deny support when requests are within the statutory framework and discussed the importance of board awareness regarding budget authority, operational independence, and support responsibilities.

The discussion further addressed the importance of claims work and benefits access as part of the VAC mission. Visiting representatives noted that Champaign County VAC serving approximately 7,500 veterans should be positioned to provide claims support in addition to emergency assistance and stated that stronger claims capacity, additional Veteran Service Officers, and administrative support would strengthen long-term service



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delivery. Participants discussed the broader local economic impact of bringing federal veterans benefits into the county through effective claims work.

Participants also discussed the importance of collaboration among VAC personnel, government Veteran Service Officers, and related service organizations. The discussion reflected a consensus that organizations serving Illinois veterans should work cooperatively and remain focused on the shared mission of helping veterans rather than allowing personalities, bureaucracy, or competition to interfere with service.

New Business

Superintendent Cheryl Walker reported that the National Association of County Veterans had partnered with State Farm to offer scholarships for high school students. Superintendent Cheryl Walker stated that all Champaign County school districts had been contacted and that scholarship information had been distributed because the application period began on March 1 and would close at the end of April. The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission noted the report. No formal action was required.

Old Business

The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission discussed a discrepancy between the bylaws and the current meeting schedule. The discussion noted that the bylaws refer to a different meeting date than the schedule currently being used. Members agreed that the bylaws and current practice should be brought into alignment. The agenda listed the next meeting date as June 10, 2026.

Public Comment and Good of the Commission

President Timothy T. Tyler stated that those present were united by concern for veterans and emphasized the importance of remaining mission-focused, especially when serving veterans who are struggling. Bob Tyler added that most veterans continue to make meaningful contributions in business, civic life, and service, while also recognizing the importance of supporting veterans facing difficult transitions. Additional comments emphasized cooperation, support for Superintendent Cheryl Walker, and continued focus on helping veterans in Champaign County.



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Follow-Up Matters

The meeting discussion identified the following matters for follow-up:

- A legal review should be obtained regarding eligibility language and consistency between local bylaws and the Military Veterans Assistance Act.
- The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission should review the bylaws and current meeting schedule for alignment.
- The Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission should continue discussion regarding long-term claims capacity, staffing, and administrative support for Superintendent Cheryl Walker's office.

Adjournment

Following concluding remarks, the Champaign County Veteran Assistance Commission proceeded to the Salute to the Flag and adjourned.

Prepared by: _____ Mattie Gray, Board Secretary

Review by: _____ David Murphy, Board Vice
President

Approved by: _____ Timothy T. Tyler, Board President