

CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEETING
600 Gunder Road NE, Elkader, Iowa 52043
February 12, 2024 at 7:30 a.m.

Veterans Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. on February 12, 2024 at the Clayton County Office Building Meeting Room.

I.) Roll Call: Commissioners Clark, Eilers, Torkelson and Jordan, Director present.

II.) Approval of Minutes: Motion was made by Eilers to approve the minutes from January 8, 2024. Motion was seconded by Clark; Motion carried.

III.) Public Comments: No public comments noted.

IV.) Budget Review. Jordan distributed the current Fiscal Budget for 2023-2024. Costs this month included one claim for a veteran's emergency and for a burial request. The Veterans Affairs office spent \$6003.95 during the month with 65.99% remaining in the budget. A donation of \$100.00 was received and five gas cards were purchased at Kwik Star for veterans needing transportation funding. Eilers made the motion to approve the budget, Clark seconded the motion; motion carried.

V.) Old Business:

a). Jordan noted that he had investigated storage issue for possible van storage onsite. The storage building onsite is maintained by the Emergency Management Office. The Emergency Management Office is unsure at present as to how much room would be available as their office has ordered additional equipment. Jordan will follow-up with this concern.

b). An Internship for the Veterans Affairs Office will not happen during this fiscal year. The position will be filled during the 2025 fiscal year. The intern would be considered a county employee, requiring a background check and pre-employment physical. Jordan is searching for a place closer to Elkader to conduct the screening and physical. The intern would work 6-8 weeks per year as the office demands. Jordan said they are looking to create a part-time position from candidates attending NICC in Calmar.

VI.) New Business

a). Spring Schooling Dates for Veteran Service Officers are scheduled for April 16-18. More details will be forthcoming.

b). Winter weather emergency policy was utilized on January 23 cancelling the trip to the VA Center in Iowa City. Two riders cancelled on their own and the remaining rider was notified. Everyone involved agreed with the cancellations. Appointments were rescheduled. The van drivers need to be mindful of the risks during inclement weather.

c). Clark stated that he had been contacted by email regarding veterans eligible for tax exemption on their properties. He was encouraged to have veterans seeking property tax exemption information to contact the Assessor's office.

d). Clark inquired if office has been contacted by a veteran having had heart surgery and needing homecare. Veteran is service-connected with PTSD and Tinnitus. Clark will follow-up with Veteran. Office provided emergency assistance (which included temporary shelter, gas cards and food shelf referral) to a Veteran. Additionally office had a request for burial assistance, which was approved.

e). The calendars purchased for veterans have been much appreciated. Jordan is considering ordering calendars for 2025 at the price of \$5.00 each and notebooks at \$2.00 each.

f). Fliers for the Annual Community Brunch sponsored by American Legion Clay-Gar Post 723 on March 3, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Community Center at 106 W. Niagara St. were distributed.

g). The January Statistical Report was distributed. 35 total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns. 25 total office visits from Veterans, and 2 home visits.

VII. Review and approval of Claims.

VIII. Confirmation of Next Meeting. Next meeting will be on March 18 at 7:30 a.m.

IX. Adjourn. Eilers made the motion to adjourn, Clark seconded the motion; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

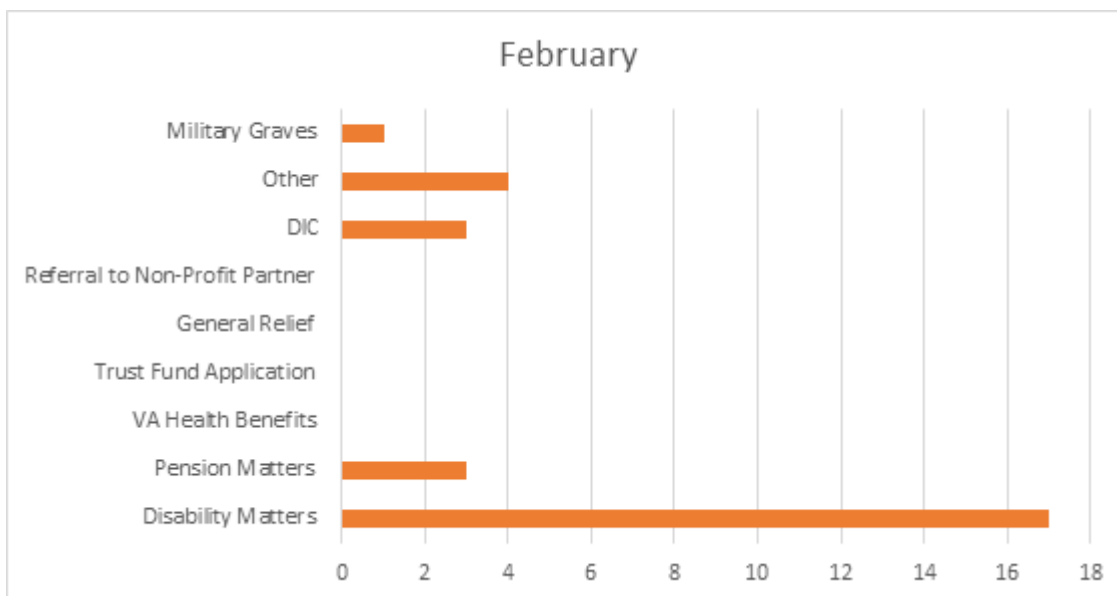
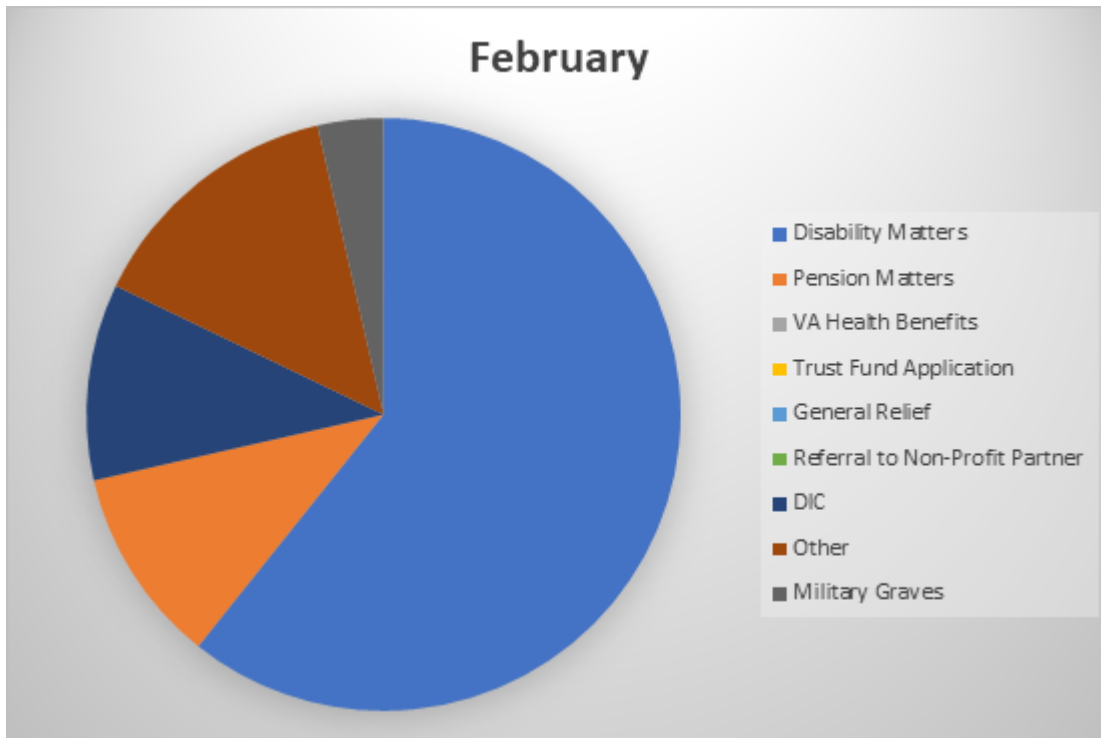
Respectfully submitted by Gerrie Torkelson

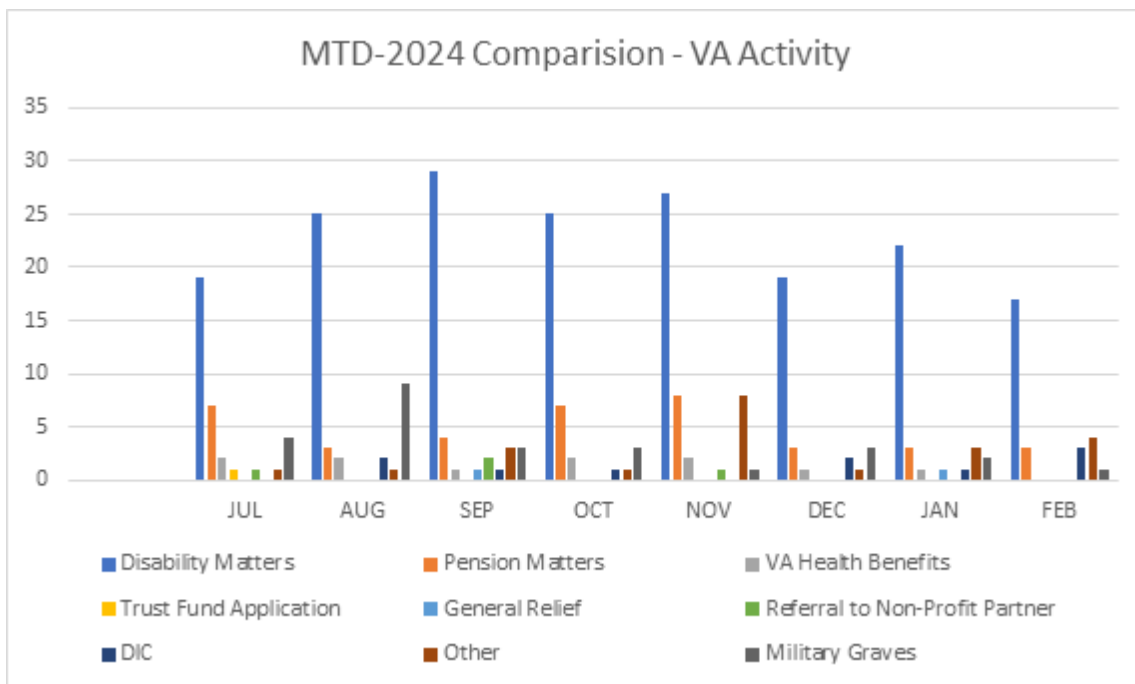
February Report

31 total number of calls received this month re: Veteran related concerns.

37 total office visits from Veterans.

4 home visits





VA & State Updates:

VA Now Offers Online Ordering for CPAP Supplies

The VA recently added on its VA.gov platform a feature that allows Veteran – who use CPAP machines to manager sleep disorders- to order CPAP supplies. Previously, supplies were processed through mail and/or over the phone processed from VA Denver Logistics Center. In 2022, that center shipped approximately 5.5 million products (i.e., masks, tubing, filters). Veterans using the online method should receive email confirmation within 1-2 days of placing order. The confirmation will include a tracking number that allows Veterans to monitor status of their order. Online orders usually arrive within 7-10 business days.

Air Force See Retirees to Return to Active Duty

The Air Force recently announced the reopening of its recall program to fill mid-careered commissioned and enlisted jobs – that includes pilots, combat systems technicians, air traffic controllers and recruiters. This announcement was made to address critical staffing issues. Retirees interested om the Voluntary Retired Return to Service Program must submit applications by January 31, 2026, to serve on active duty for no more than 48 months. The program is limited to commissioned officers who held the rank of captain through lieutenant colonel and formers enlisted staff sergeants through senior master sergeants. **Retirees who served in the medical, legal and chaplain corps are not eligible to return.** Retirees who meet these criteria can apply regardless of the job they previously held while in uniform; however, the Air Force will prioritize commissioned roles from pilots, combat systems officers and cyber specialists. Selected retirees can expect to return to uniform between 4-6 months after applying.

Airmen who return under this program are not eligible for aviation bonuses and will only deploy if they volunteer or are assigned to a combat unit. Retired service members must meet performance standards – which include physical fitness requirements and could be subject to a permanent change of station. Additionally, retired service members are not eligible for an extension of their service or sign up for the Skillbridge* job transition program. Retirement benefits will end the day before the retiree is reactivated. Retirees who were medically retired or retired because of administrative/adverse action are not eligible. Applicant must be under 60 years of age and able to obtain security clearance that meets the requirements of the role. Former pilots seeking re-entry must have been certified on an Air Force aircraft withing that last 1- years.

*SkillBridge transitional programs that connects transitioning service members with industry partners so that service members gain civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships. The program usually takes place during the last 180 days of service. <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/program-overview.htm>