THE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ARTICLE I -NAME

Section 1. The name of this Commission shall be The Veterans Assistance Commission of Jefferson County, Illinois also known as Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC) or Commission.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1. The purpose of this Commission is to promote the welfare of the veterans of the uniformed military services of the United States of America whose final discharge is honorable or general under honorable conditions, and those authorized by the board, to include their families as governed by 330 Illinois Compiled Statutes 45 et seq. (as amended by P.A. 102-0732) entitled 'Military Veterans Assistance Act' of the Illinois Revised Statutes to include revisions and future amendments thereto by providing the just, necessary, and needed services and assistance to veterans, their families, and the families of deceased veterans *meeting the aforementioned criteria and any others set by the board or superintendent*.

Section 2. The Commission will act as a central service office for all veterans, their families, and the families of deceased veterans residing in Jefferson County.

Section 3. The Commission will have oversight of the distribution of all relief and supplies and services that may be appropriated for the benefit of veterans, their families, and the families of deceased veterans.

Section 4. The Commission will administer and process all federal claims and *assist with* state government claims for veteran benefits.

Section 5. The Commission will administer all of the programs provided in Article VI and IX of the Illinois Public Aid Code, 305 ILCS 5 et seq., as commanded in 305 ILCS 5/12-3.

Section 6. The Commission will formulate such rules and regulations that will enable it to carry out the purpose set forth herein.

Article III – JURISDICTION

Section 1. The territory to be included within the jurisdiction for this Commission will be the County of Jefferson in the State of Illinois.

Article IV – OFFICE

Section 1. The headquarters and principal office of this Commission shall be in a County building, or other suitable central location.

Section 2. This office shall be provided, furnished and equipped by the County with funding for furnishings, supplies and services, including but not limited to, human resources and payroll support, information technology services and equipment, printing services and equipment, postage costs and liability insurance per public act 102-1132 (HB 2369).

Section 3. The Commission shall have in its sole discretion the location of its headquarters and principal office.

Section 4. The Superintendent and the Commission reserve the right to add equipment, furnishings, and supplies to the office of the Superintendent purchased through either personal or commission funds as they deem necessary.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The membership of the Commission will be composed of one delegate and one alternate from each of the recognized veteran organizations in the County of Jefferson, Illinois, to include, but not limited to:

a. The American Legion (AML) Post 141 Mt. Vernon, IL

b. Amvets Post 4 Mt. Vernon, IL

c. Amvets Post 148 Waltonville, IL

d. Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 28 Mt. Vernon, IL

e. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 9233 Mt. Vernon, IL

f. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 9153 Waltonville, IL

Section 2. Any recognized Veterans Organization interested in the object and purpose of this Commission and can qualify under the Statutes of the State of Illinois, subject to the rules and regulations governing admission, who are properly nominated by the Commander of any Post or Chapter and who files the appropriate delegate and alternate form with the Commission office before March 1 of each year, may

become members of this Commission. Delegates and Alternates must be submitted by *March 1* of each year.

Section 3. A current list of the eligible and Commission approved veteran organizations will be maintained by the Commission and listed on the Commission's website.

Section 4. Each recognized Veterans Organization shall be entitled to one vote. which may be cast by the member organization's delegate. In the event that the delegate is unable to attend a regularly scheduled meeting, the alternate may vote for the absent delegate. No one delegate or alternate shall be permitted to vote for any organization other than the one they officially represent, and no proxy votes are allowed.

Section 5. The delegate and alternate will be selected as determined by each member organization and will be reported in writing to the Secretary of the Commission Executive Board to include the name of the delegate and alternate within the time for delegate and alternate submission in accordance with 330 ILCS 45/9(a)(1). The appointment of the delegate and alternate shall be signed by the chief officer of the organization on a form provided by the Secretary. Each delegate and alternate must be an Honorably Discharged Veteran or a Veteran discharged Under Honorable Conditions. Delegates and Alternates have full voting rights when representing their organization.

Section 6. Should any delegate or alternate be disqualified or unable to serve, the Post or Chapter shall, upon notice of the disqualification or inability to serve, immediately notify the Secretary of the Commission Executive Board and call a vote at the Post or Chapter for a replacement to be appointed prior to the next Commission meeting.

Section 7. When a delegate misses two or more consecutive meetings, the Commission may call for a replacement from the represented post or chapter.

Section 8. The county may, at its discretion, appoint a representative to the commission who may attend any public meeting of the Commission. The appointed county representative shall be a veteran, may not have voting rights, may not hold any office or title on the Commission, and may not be present during any nonpublic meeting of the Commission, except as authorized in this Act. For matters of executive session, the non-voting county appointee may attend meetings that are closed in accordance with paragraphs (1), (3), (5), (6), or (11) of subsection (c) of Section 2 of the Open Meetings Act for litigation matters not relating to litigation between the Commission and the County.

Section 9. All undertakings or actions shall require a vote from the majority of the full commission membership.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers of this Commission shall be PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY/TREASURER, and DIRECTOR which make up the Executive Board.

Section 2. Officers of this Commission shall serve a one (1) year term.

Section 3. Duties of Officers:

a. PRESIDENT:
   1) Preside at all meetings of the VAC.
   2) Enforce the rules prescribed in the by-laws, and other governing agencies which oversee this VAC.
   3) Ensure that all funds dispersed by the VAC have been done so properly and in accordance with decisions made by the VAC and within the approved fiscal budget.
   4) Ensure that all proper reporting between Veteran's Service Organizations (VSO's) with Jefferson County, the Jefferson County Board, the state of Illinois, and the VAC's governing body, has been properly completed and required credentialing is maintained.
   5) Must be a member of all committees created by the VAC.

b. VICE PRESIDENT:

   1) Preside at all meetings that the President cannot attend.
   2) Attend as the representative of the President at all committee meetings that the President cannot attend.
   3) Complete the proper reporting of VAC activities to the VSO's in Jefferson County, the Jefferson County Board, the State of Illinois, and the VAC's governing body.

c. SECRETARY:

   1) Preside at all meetings that the President and Vice President cannot attend.
   2) Attend as the representative of the President at all committee meetings which the President and Vice President cannot attend.
   3) Prepare all required reports of the VAC activities for the VSO's in Jefferson County, the Jefferson County Board, the State of Illinois, and the VAC's governing body.
   4) In the absence of the Vice President, submit these prepared reports to those agencies in the time which is prescribed that they are to be submitted.
   5) Keep a record of all meeting minutes. Maintain all correspondence for the VAC.

d. TREASURER:

   1) Collect and/or account for all funds budgeted or donated to the VAC.
   2) Prepare a monthly Finance Report to give a detailed accounting of all VAC expenditures.
   3) Balance the VAC bank account monthly.
   4) Ensure all bills accrued by the VAC are paid in a timely manner.
   5) Collect funds which may be due to the VAC.

e. DIRECTOR:

1) Assume the role of Secretary or Treasurer in the absence of the Secretary or Treasurer in a regular or special meeting.
2) To be of assistance primarily to the Secretary and Treasurer and help them to accomplish their duties.
3) To be prepared to act as their representative replacement at any meetings which they may not be able to attend.

The positions of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined and held by only one member when approved by the Commission.

Section 4. A Judge Advocate (as needed) may be appointed by the Executive Board and ratified by the board and need not be a member of the Commission.

Section 5. Any member of this Commission shall be eligible to hold office, provided he/she is not a member of the County Board of Jefferson County or holds any public office that may conflict with the best interest of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Jefferson County, and it is further provided that no two (2) offices are filled by persons representing the same Post or Chapter.

Section 6. A vacancy in any office shall exist when an officer is absent from regular meetings of said Commission for two (2) consecutive meetings. A vacancy of any office occurring during the current term shall be filled by appointment of the Executive Board and ratified by the Commission.

Section 7. All Board members will follow the established Code of Conduct for the Veterans Assistance Commission of Jefferson County.

ARTICLE VII – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Every year at the regularly scheduled quarterly meeting in the month of March, nominations will be opened for the election of Officers.

Section 2. All nominations shall be from the floor of the delegates present at the meeting. The candidate receiving the majority of the vote for each office shall be elected. Elections shall be by written ballot unless a position is not contested.

Section 3. All officers shall be elected at the March meeting for a term of one (1) year and all officers so elected shall assume their duties *immediately* following their election, and shall continue in office for one year or until their successors are regularly elected.

Section 4. Officers may be elected from any Post or Chapter and must be serving as a Delegate or Alternate from those organizations, or a current elected Officer of this Commission at the time of election and must be in good standing with the Commission. A Delegate and Alternate from the same Post or Chapter may not hold elected offices concurrently.

Section 5. Vacancies in any office occurring during the year shall be filled by the members of the Commission. A vacancy shall exist when an officer is absent from regular meetings of the Commission for two (2) consecutive meetings. Excused absences will not count against the office.

Section 6. In the absence of a nomination for an elected office, or a vacated elected office, the process of appointing an officer to fill the vacant office will begin with the President's appointment.

The Requirements as to the appointment of a candidate include:

a. Notice of appointment must be served to the Commission members thirty (30) days prior to the vote to approve the appointment.

b. Appointment must be approved by a majority of the Commission Members.

c. At a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission, the appointment will be voted on by the Commission Members.

d. If the candidate receives a majority vote of the Commission to approve the appointment, the candidate will assume the duties of the elected office immediately.

e. If the majority vote of the Commission is to deny appointment, the process will start again until the President's appointment is approved by the Commission members.

ARTICLE VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall be composed of the Elected Officers of the Commission.

Section 2. The Executive Board shall meet annually at a location, date and time set forth as determined by the Delegates of the Commission or at the request of three (3) members of the Executive Board.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall provide oversight of the Superintendent in the interim between the regular meetings of the Commission.

Section 4. The Executive Board shall review the budget, and proposed levy, prepared by the Superintendent before being submitted to the full Commission and the Finance Committee of the County Board.

Section 5. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of at least half of the members of the Executive Board plus one, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1.02.

Section 6. Notice of an Executive Board meeting shall be made at least 48 hours before the meeting by the Secretary. The President or three (3) members of the Board may call for a meeting and the Secretary shall call the meeting as directed, and notice shall be posted within 48 hours as required under the Open Meetings Act.

Section 7. The Executive Board during a bona fide emergency has the authority to take action ordinarily requiring Commission approval, without prior approval of the Commission. The Board will notify the

Commission of the emergency action taken within 48 hours and will brief the emergency and action taken at the next regular meeting of the Commission.

ARTICLE IX – STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. A Finance Committee composed of the Treasurer and two (2) other members shall be appointed by the President promptly after each annual meeting. It shall be the duties of this committee to prepare a budget for the fiscal year beginning December 1. The committee will meet annually in June, prior to the County annual budget submission process to provide guidance on budget recommendations to be submitted to the Veterans' Assistance Commission for approval at the Quarterly Meeting.

Section 2. The President shall, with the consent of the Executive Board, appoint such other Committees as shall be deemed advisable to carry out the purpose of this Commission.

Section 3. No committee or subgroup of the commission may be granted any power or authority to act in place of the full commission membership.

Section 4. No committee or subgroup of the commission may bar any delegate or alternate from attending or otherwise being present during any closed meetings or sessions of the committee or subgroup.

ARTICLE X – THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Section 1. The Board of Appeals of the Veterans Assistance Commission consists of five (5) voting members, and the Veterans Assistance Commission Judge Advocate and Secretary. The Veterans Assistance Commission Judge Advocate and the Secretary are non-voting members of the Board of Appeals. The Judge Advocate and the Secretary are to ensure procedural protocol and keep record of the appeal process. All members of the Board of Appeals must be Honorably Discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces and provide the Superintendent with a copy of their DD214 or Honorable Discharge Certificate.

Section 2. The President of the Commission shall be the President of the Board of Appeals.

Section 3. The remaining four (4) members shall be elected from the Post or Chapter to the Commission, by the Commission. If a member is unavailable from the above, the vacancy will be filled from an at-large Post or Chapter.

Section 4. The term of office is for one (1) year, except, the President of the Commission shall serve on the Board of Appeals while holding the Office of President.

Section 5. The Board of Appeals is created to hear any appeals of the Superintendent's rulings; to ensure that the policies and procedures of the appeal process of the Commission are adhered to.

ARTICLE XI – MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meeting of the Commission shall be held at least once every quarter, with meetings typically falling in the months of March, June, September, and December, at the hour of 6:00 P.M., at a suitable location, and shall transact such business as may be properly brought before it.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President, Superintendent, or by three (3) members of the Executive Board. The Secretary shall inform all members of the Commission at least three (3) days prior to the date of said meeting. The call for the meeting shall state the purpose of the special meeting, and no other business than that for which it is called shall be transacted. The special meeting agenda, date,time and location must be provided to the members of the Commission by text message or email, and posted on the Commission's website 48 hours before the meeting.

Section 3. At a minimum, half of the members of the Commission plus one, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1.02 shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business at any annual, regular, or special meeting, but a less number may adjourn any meeting from day to day.

Section 4. Proceedings for all business meetings shall be governed by the Illinois Open Meetings act and Roberts Rules of Order, Revised.

Section 5. The *September* meeting shall be the final fiscal year meeting and the fiscal year of Commission shall begin December 1 of each year.

Section 6. The Commission shall conduct all meetings in accordance with 5 ILCS 120 “Open Meetings Act”, including all amendments to the Act.

Section 7. Each delegate and alternate of the Commission must *comply with all Open Meetings Act training requirements*. Each elected member of the Executive Board of the Commission shall be the registered Open Meeting Act Designees and shall comply with all requirements of the Open Meeting Act.

Section 8. The Officers, the Delegates, and Alternates shall be allowed travel expenses, not to exceed what may be authorized by the County Board Personnel Travel Regulations.

ARTICLE XII – SUPERINTENDENT

Section 1. The Executive powers of this Commission shall be vested in the Superintendent, who shall be selected and recommended by the Executive Board to the full Commission and shall be elected by at least a majority of the full Commission and shall take office on the date designated by the Board.

Section 2. The Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission has the sole authority to appoint Veteran Service Officers, assistants, and other employees as needed to carry out the mission of the Commission, with preference given to veterans and/or their families.

Section 3. Neither the Superintendent nor any employees of the Commission shall be allowed to hold any elected office in a VAC member veteran’s organization or in Jefferson County government.

Section 4. The office of the Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission shall be under the direction of the duly elected Superintendent, who shall investigate and report to the Veterans Assistance Commission all claims for relief under the law, and shall be responsible for the daily operations of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Jefferson County; and will additionally annually report to the Governor, on or before the first day of January each year, such portions of the transactions of the aforementioned Veterans' organization and the people of the State. A copy of that report shall be provided to the president or chairperson of the county board and shall be made publicly available online.

Section 5. The Superintendent shall, under the direction of the Commission, maintain an office in the County Administration Building or other central location. Said office is to be used solely by the Commission for carrying out its purposes. Said office shall be provided by the County of Jefferson with all necessary equipment, furnishings, supplies, and services as needed provided by funding from the County of Jefferson.

Section 6. The mission of the office shall be to provide service and assistance to the military veterans and their *dependents* and families of deceased veterans *residing in Jefferson County*, who are in need of assistance, and for rendering of such other services as may be considered reasonable for carrying out the purposes of the Commission. *The office may also provide assistance with VA claims to any veteran or their dependents, regardless of residence.*

Section 7. The Superintendent is an employee at will and shall be answerable to, and report to, the full commission. The Superintendent shall be evaluated yearly prior to the end of the Fiscal Year. The Superintendent may be removed from office by a majority of a vote from the full commission and on written request and motion from three delegates or alternates from three different veteran service organizations. (Removed "and shall come before the Executive Board and Commission for reappointment every year")

Section 8. In the event of the resignation of the Superintendent, he/she must provide the Commission with a formal written notice ninety (90) days prior to the date of his/her resignation.

Section 9. Vacancy in the Superintendent's office due to death, retirement, or discharge, shall be temporarily filled by the Assistant Superintendent until such time as the Commission has selected a new Superintendent. During the temporary absence of the Superintendent due to illness, vacation, or business travel, the duties of the Superintendent shall be administered by the Assistant Superintendent if applicable.

Section 10. The Superintendent cannot have other employment that conflicts with the performance of his/her duties as the Superintendent. The said conflict will be determined by the Commission.

Section 11. The Superintendent and all members of the Executive Board shall be bonded in an amount prescribed by The Military Veterans Assistance Act.

Section 13. The Superintendent must be an Honorably Discharged Veteran.

ARTICLE XIII – ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Section 1. The Assistant Superintendent if the position is fiscally possible, shall be nominated by the Superintendent, and appointed by the Executive Board, duly elected by at least a quorum of the full Commission and shall take office on the date designated by the Board.

Section 2. The Assistant Superintendent shall report directly to the Superintendent.

Section 3. The Assistant Superintendent shall be the primary supervisor of staff, interns, and volunteers.

Section 4. The Assistant Superintendent shall manage the office, develop and submit standard operating procedures, and train staff, interns, and volunteers.

Section 5. The Assistant Superintendent is an employee at will and shall be answerable to, report to, the Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent shall be evaluated yearly and shall come before the Executive Board and Commission for review every three (3) years. The Assistant Superintendent may be removed from office by a majority of a vote from the full commission and on written request and motion from three delegates or alternates from three different veteran service organizations.

Section 6. In the event of the resignation of the Assistant Superintendent, he/she must provide the Superintendent with a formal written notice ninety (90) days prior to the date of his/her resignation. Upon receipt of said resignation, the Superintendent will immediately inform the Commission.

Section 7. Vacancy in the Assistant Superintendent's office due to death, retirement, or discharge, shall be temporarily filled at the discretion of the Superintendent until such time as the Commission has selected a new Assistant Superintendent. During the temporary absence of the Assistant Superintendent due to illness, vacation, or business travel, the duties of the Assistant Superintendent shall be administered by an employee designated in writing by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting by a vote of two-thirds majority of all membership attending such regular meeting, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted in writing, or through any electronic communication, and read at the last preceding regular meeting, and provided further that written notice shall have been given to all members of the Commission (Delegates and Alternates) at least three (3) days in advance of the date when such meeting a proposal to amend the Bylaws is to be voted on.

Respectfully submitted,

The Veterans Assistance Commission of
Jefferson County, Illinois