

ARENAC COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS  
AFFAIRS

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Arenac County Department of Veterans Affairs, hereinafter referred to as the "Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee (ACVAC)". (1953 Public Act 192, Act 192 is an Act to create a County Department of Veterans Affairs in certain counties and to prescribe its powers and duties, and to transfer the powers and duties of the Soldier and Sailors Commission (Public Acts 214) in such counties).

The County Department of Veterans Affairs will operate under Act 192 as amended and will carry out the intent of Public Act 214 as well. The department shall perform such duties and shall exercise such powers as shall be necessary in carrying out the provisions of the Act and all other benefits to which Veterans may be entitled as prescribed by the County Department of Veterans Affairs.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The Veterans Affairs Committee is a non-profit, non-sectarian, non-political county department which coordinates' services, public and private, promoting and safeguarding the independence and wellbeing of the veterans, surviving spouse and family members of Arenac County, Michigan.

The purpose of the Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee is to establish a forum for all Arenac County Veterans of military service; to maintain coordinated communication with County and local governments, businesses, and Veterans of the county; to provide assistance, guidance, and information to the business and academic communities of the County and various levels of government to ensure adequate consideration of Veterans in employment, education, training, and public programs; and to insure that veterans services are available and accessible to the citizens of Arenac County.

ARTICLE III

Mission Statement

The mission of the Arenac County Department of Veterans Affairs is to obtain the maximum veteran benefits available to you and your family while making the process as simple and understandable as possible. To assist veterans and their families in obtaining all County, State, and Federal benefits to which they are entitled.

## ARTICLE IV

### Membership

(A) Public Act 192 states: Sec 1. The County Board of Commissioners may create a county Department of Veterans Affairs. The department shall be under the administration of a committee of 3 to 6 Veterans, appointed by the county board of commissioners, who shall be residents of the county and who have served honorably on active duty in the United States Armed Forces or who served actively in the United States Armed Forces in a war or received an Armed Forces Campaign or service medal, to be appointed upon recommendation of the posts of each chartered Veterans Organization within the county. Each member appointed shall have demonstrated knowledge, skills and experience in public service, business, or finance. If an opening on a committee of Veterans Affairs occurs, the county board of commissioners shall provide notice of that opening to one or more newspapers within the county and to Veteran service organizations within the county. Notwithstanding the provisions of any law of this state, to the contrary, a member of the board of commissioners of a county shall be eligible for appointment. Members appointed by the board of commissioners shall be appointed for a term of 4 years each. However, the terms for members first appointed shall be staggered so that no more than two (2) vacancies are scheduled to occur in a single year. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments for the unexpired terms.

The Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee shall consist of no more than six (6) Veterans appointed by the Arenac County Board of Commissioners per Public Act 192; The Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee will strive for at least 1 member to represent each Congressionally chartered Veterans organization with in the county and appointed from each geographical area of the county for a total of six (6); one person from each community (Au Gres, Omer, Standish, Sterling, Turner and Twining).

(B) Term. Members of the Veterans Affairs Committee shall be selected for terms of four (4) years and shall initially be appointed in such a manner and for such periods of time that re-appointments will be staggered. Any member whose term expires will remain until a new member is appointed.

(C) Absence. Members absent for more than three meetings in a calendar year are subject to removal by a majority vote of the committee and approval of the County Board of Commissioners.

(D) Vacancy. When a vacancy occurs on this Committee either by death or resignation, the Arenac County Board of Commissioners shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

(E) Compensation. Compensation may be provided in accordance with Act 192 of 1953, MCLA 35.623, Sec 3. Members of the Veterans Affairs Committee shall be volunteers and will not receive compensation for their services except for per diem. Per Diem shall not exceed those set forth by the Arenac County Board of Commissioners.

(F) Location: The principal office of the Arenac County Veterans Affairs shall be located within the County Building in Arenac County.

## ARTICLE V

### Members of the Committee and Duties

#### A. Chairperson:

At the first regularly scheduled meeting of the year, the Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee shall, by majority vote, elect one of its members to be the Chairperson of the Committee. A vacancy in the office of the Chairperson shall be filled by a majority vote of the Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee members present at the scheduled meeting.

The Chairperson's duties and powers shall include the following:

- (1) He/She shall preside over all ACVAC meetings.
- (2) He/She shall appoint all ACVAC standing and special committees, with such appointments being confirmed by a majority of the ACVAC. He/she shall call special meetings of the ACVAC, as necessary.
- (3) He/She shall be the ACVAC representative and shall perform such other duties as specified by law, custom, or the ACVAC. He/She shall have overall responsibility in directing and coordinating the activities and services of the ACVAC in accordance with these by-laws.
- (4) To see that all orders and resolutions of the Veterans Affairs Committee are carried into effect all authorized instruments are signed by any member of the committee.
- (5) He/She shall prepare the monthly agenda for the ACVAC.

#### B. Vice Chairperson:

At the first regularly scheduled meeting of the year, or as soon thereafter as possible, the ACVAC shall elect an individual from among its membership to be the Vice-Chairperson. He/She shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson in his/her absence and shall perform such duties as may from time to time be assigned.

#### C. Recording Secretary:

At the first regularly scheduled meeting of the year, or as soon thereafter as possible, the ACVAC shall elect an individual from among its membership to be the Recording Secretary of the ACVAC. The Recording Secretary shall keep the minutes of each ACVAC meeting. In addition, the Secretary shall be responsible to oversee staff in posting appropriate notice of upcoming ACVAC meetings and take actions necessary to insure the ACVAC meetings comply with the Open Meetings Act, MCLA 15.261 et. Seq.

#### D. Veteran Service Officer:

The Veteran Service Officer (VSO) cannot be an officer or committee member of the ACVAC. They will not vote on any matters that could be a conflict of interest.

The Veteran Service Officer works under the supervision of the Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee and is responsible for the administration, direction, and management of the department. This position provides direct counseling and assistance to our county Veterans. In addition, the VSO shall:

- (1) Attend various federal, state and county conferences and seminars to remain currently informed regarding Veteran benefits, legislation, specific entitlements, and methods for dealing with Veteran's problems.
- (2) Prepares annual budget and approves all expenditures for the Department. To deposit or cause to be deposited in the name of the Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee all monies or other valuable effects in such banks, trust companies or the depositories as shall be selected by the Veterans Affairs Committee. To render to the ACVAC, whenever requested, an account of the true financial condition of the Committee and arrange an independent audit of the agency, if need be.
- (3) Hires and trains department employees and coordinates services with volunteers.
- (4) Analyzes and interprets new and pending legislation pertaining to Veterans, prepare reactions to or information about such legislation as appropriate and disseminates to all members of the ACVAC, County Commissioners, if applicable, and other parties/service organizations within the county.
- (5) Reviews Veterans Administration claims decisions to ensure that the Veteran, surviving spouse or dependents was awarded proper benefits as established by current legislation and/or VA policies. Prepares and directs appeals, as necessary.
- (6) Advises and counsels Veterans and or dependents concerning the benefits to which they may be entitled and other concerns.
- (7) Administers the County Veterans Relief Fund, formerly known as Soldiers Relief Fund and the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund.
- (8) Assist Veterans who are addicted to drugs and or alcohol in getting proper guidance.
- (9) Assist veterans who have psychological problems making arrangements for proper guidance.
- (10) Develop new programs for the Department for the benefit of Veterans and or their dependents within the county (with emphasis/consideration on the population base of the county).
- (11) Maintains active caseloads.
- (12) Conducts daily interviews with applicants for emergency grant assistance from the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund and or the County Veterans Relief Fund.
- (13) Represents the ACVAC at various interdisciplinary committees, including but not limited to; the Arenac County Human Services Collaborative Committee, Saginaw VA monthly Service Officers meeting and the Arenac County Commission on Aging and community centers, ensuring the needs of Veterans and or their dependents are addressed.

- (14) Maintain and encourage regular contacts with all the service organizations within our county and offer these organizations assistance as needed. This may also include referring Veterans to their organizations when deemed appropriate.
- (15) Maintain proficiency with Veterans Administration software applications, Vetra Spec, VBMS and other applications required to address the needs of Arenac County Veterans. This also includes becoming nationally accredited with the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) and cross accredited with the Service Organizations most chosen by our Veterans.
- (16) Perform related duties as required or assigned.

## ARTICLE VI

### Conflict of Interest

If a member conflicts with a matter before this committee, they will abstain from voting on that matter.

## ARTICLE VII

### Quorum and Procedure

A quorum for a regular or special meeting of this Committee shall be at least fifty percent (50%) of the non-vacant seats. All meetings of the Committee will be governed by the most current revision of "Robert's Rules of Order".

## ARTICLE VIII

### Schedule and Notice of Meetings

1. Regular meetings:

The Committee shall have regular scheduled monthly meetings with not less than six (6) such annually. The date, time and place of all regular meetings shall be determined in advance by the Committee. The meetings shall be scheduled for the convenience of its members and the public.

2. Special meetings:

Special meetings can be called by the Committee Chair, the Co-Chair or two Committee members.

3. Annual meetings:

During such an annual meeting, at least the following business shall be transacted.

- a. Election of Chair and Co-chair.
- b. The establishment of dates of the Committee's meetings for the ensuing year.

4. Meeting Notice:

Written notice of every meeting, time and place will be mailed (this would include electronic transfer), to every Committee member at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting. Any meeting may be conducted in person or by a conference call or electronic means, (i.e., Zoom or suitable meeting format).

5. Order of Business:

ACVAC meetings shall be conducted by way of an established agenda. There shall be at least one place on the agenda for citizen participation.

6. Adjourned meetings:

Any legal meeting of the ACVAC may be adjourned from time to time as a majority of the ACVAC members deem it necessary.

7. Voting:

Each appointed member shall have the right to one (1) vote. Voting by proxy IS NOT allowed. Except as otherwise provided in these by-laws, by statute or Robert's Rules of Order, all questions requiring a vote shall be determined by a majority of the ACVAC members appointed and serving.

8. Citizen Participation:

Any citizen may comment upon agenda items during the public comment period. Citizens, after being recognized, shall identify themselves by name and address and shall limit their presentation to 5 minutes, unless time is extended by the Chairperson or by vote of the ACVAC.

9. Rules of Order:

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, shall govern the procedures of the ACVAC. However, when those rules of procedure are inconsistent with these bylaws or any special rules of order adopted by the ACVAC, the bylaws or special rules of order shall prevail over Robert's Rules of Order.

## ARTICLE IX

### Open Meetings

The provisions of the "Open Meeting Act," Act 267 of 1976 (R.s.) being MCLA 1970 Sec. 15.261-275: MSA 4.1800 (11) through (25) are hereby acknowledged and incorporated by reference as Arenac County Veterans Affairs Committee bylaws and shall take precedence over any rule to the contrary:

1. All meetings of the Committee shall be held in the committee's boardroom. All persons shall be permitted to attend any meetings.  
All decisions of the Committee shall be made at a meeting open to the public.
2. All deliberations of the Committee constituting a quorum of its members shall take place at a meeting open to the public.

3. No person shall be required, as a condition to attend a meeting of the Committee, to register or otherwise prove his/her name or other information or otherwise to fulfill the conditions precedent to attendance, unless that person is requested to speak.
4. A person shall be permitted to address a meeting of the Committee under three conditions.
  - a. Upon requesting entry onto the agenda.
  - b. Upon being recognized by the chairperson.
  - c. During a period set aside at the initiation for such meeting for discussion by the general public.
5. No person shall be excluded from a meeting of the Committee except for a breach of the peace committed at the meeting.
6. The Committee shall meet at closed sessions for the following purposes:
  - a. To consider the dismissal, suspension, or discipline of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a member of this committee, employee or volunteer, when the named person requests a closed meeting.
  - b. To consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by State or Federal statute.

## ARTICLE X

### Minutes

The Committee shall keep for each meeting written minutes which include a record of votes on all motions. Minutes of the previous meetings shall be distributed to all members before the next meeting and shall be made available to the public upon request. Minutes will be taken and maintained by staff.

## ARTICLE XI

### Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Committee shall be the same as set by the Arenac County Board of Commissioners.

## ARTICLE XII

### Amendments

These bylaws may be amended from time to time by a simple majority vote of the Committee at a regular meeting, or at a special meeting called for such a purpose. Notice of any such meeting where an amendment is to be submitted to the Committee must specifically state the nature of the amendment to be considered and such notice shall comply with the notice of meeting provision of these bylaws. In no event shall an amendment be placed on the agenda of a regular or special meeting unless the members of the committee have been notified of such proposed amendment ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which consideration of the proposed amendment shall be brought before the Committee.

This is to certify that the above by-laws were accepted and ratified at the May 9th, 2024, meeting of Arenac County Department of Veterans Affairs held at the Arenac County Building, 120 N Grove St., Standish, Michigan and that its' policies and objectives will remain in full force until amended.

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KENNETH ADRIAN

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MARY BAKER

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CLIFFORD DUNEC

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BILL DANIELS

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PATRICK SHANNON

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VICTOR DANIELS JR.

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JAMES HERGOTT