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To: Amy McEwan, Deputy County Administrator
Thru: Ryan Horne, Deputy Finance Director
From: Anthony Cooling, Budget Analyst
Date: 3/26/2018
Subject: **Lake County Veteran's Affair's Commission (VAC)**

The impetus for this analysis is a request by Mr. Tangen for additional staff member to support the efforts of the VAC. Mr. Tangen shared his legal interpretation of Illinois Compiled Statutes, and a limited comparison of Lake County's VAC to our Northern Illinois peer counties. After an initial review of the applicable statutes and conversations with SAO this memo presents our understanding of the statutes, and secondly, presents comparison of the Lake County VAC to northeastern Illinois VACs.

Comparison of the Lake County VAC to other Northeastern Illinois VACs

Comparing VACs is not a simple matter for the following reasons: 1) There is a lack of quantifiable metrics; 2) For those metrics that can be quantified, statistics are not collected, stored or reported by some counties; and 3) Each VAC is measuring output metrics differently. Nevertheless, based on budget size the Lake County VAC is comparably funded when compared to its Northern Illinois peers.

The most consistent measure of VAC funding is the amount of money that a VAC receives divided by the number of veterans in a county per capita, as captured in the chart below. This chart shows that Lake County is in the middle of the pack, both in budget size, and budget size per the number of veterans in the County.

EXPENSES	FY2016 Actuals	FY2017 Budget	FY2018 Budget	FT	PT	County Pop.	Veteran Pop.	per capita vets	\$ VAC budget per vet	\$ VAC budget for each vet per capita
Will	\$ 875,602	\$ 875,184	\$885,334	6	1	689,529	31,953	46	\$ 27.71	\$ 19,105
McHenry	\$ 449,295	\$ 397,875	\$671,037	5	0	307,004	15,499	50	\$ 43.30	\$ 13,292
Lake	\$ 447,089	\$ 570,089	\$498,678	3	1	703,047	31,834	45	\$ 15.66	\$ 11,013
DeKalb	\$ 509,275	\$ 499,100	\$532,300	6	0	104,528	5,402	52	\$ 98.54	\$ 10,300
DuPage	\$ 409,759	\$ 409,152	\$405,397	3	0	929,368	37,131	40	\$ 10.92	\$ 10,147
Kendall	\$ 240,675	\$ 341,100	\$369,735	3	1	124,695	5,500	44	\$ 67.22	\$ 8,383
Kane	\$ 293,517	\$ 331,071	\$331,071	4	0	531,715	22,363	42	\$ 14.80	\$ 7,872

Lake County has the third highest funding compared to the six other comparison counties. If we assume that the needs of vets in all counties are the same, and that all counties have competing demands for their tax dollars.

In the area of staffing, the Lake County VAC is on the lower end if you consider the ratio of the number of services officers as compared to the number of vets in Lake County. Staffing levels vary by county based on the type of services provided by the office. Specifically, how much of the VAC's budget goes to direct aid to veterans as compared to helping veterans complete claim forms to the federal Veteran's Administration.

For example, DuPage County does not do any claim paperwork (they refer clients to a nearby state office) and most of their budget goes to direct aid to vets, so even though there are more than 37,000 vets in DuPage they are fine with only three employees. Their staff is not overburdened with claims paperwork. However, Kane County spends less than 10% of their budget on direct aid, and the majority of their 4 service officers time is dedicated to assisting veterans in completing claims paperwork for the 22,000 vets in their county.

There are 31,000+ vets in the county and only three employees able to assist Veterans in processing claims. An additional service officer would assist the VAC in serving the claims assistance needs of the veterans. Additionally, based on the indirect rate cost study, the value of the services provided to the VAC from the County's central services amounts to approximately \$34,000. At this time one additional full-time service officer is recommended. One full-time veteran services officer (grade S4), with pay and benefits, would cost approximately \$60,000. I do not recommend the VAC budget be increased for purposes of direct aid because we are spending a comparable amount to our northeastern Illinois peers.

Below are performance measures, for counties that keep them, that are comparable metrics. The **Forms Filed** measure is the most solid production measure as a single VA claim can be relatively easy, with filing one form, or fairly complex, with filing six or more forms in a single claim.

VAC Performance Measures*								
	VA Claims Processed	Total Forms Filed	Phone Calls Fielded	Outreach Visits	Applications for Financial Assistance	New VA \$ Received by Clients Due to VAC help	Avg Claim Processing Time in Days	Interviews
Will	458	4,517	1,825	140	330	\$ 7,800,000		1,030
Lake	1,716	4,963	16,010	53	2,141			
Kendall	95	1,129	1,173	18	6	\$ 790,980	119	
Kane	642	2,150			14	\$ 3,309,056	120	

* For some counties, only FY16 data was available, for others FY17, so they are provided together.

The Forms Filed history for the Lake County VAC, as far back as we have been recording this data, indicates an increase in form filings. FY17 – 4,963; FY16 – 4,840; FY15 – 3,479; FY14 – 2,552; FY13 – 1,975; FY12 – 1,358