



SANGAMON COUNTY  
COUNTY BOARD OFFICE

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April 16, 2024

Shawn Miller  
Chairman, VAC of Sangamon County  
Via email only to: [vacsangamon@gmail.com](mailto:vacsangamon@gmail.com)

RE: VAC demand for \$730,000 annually

Dear Chairman Miller:

This letter is in response to your April 8, 2024, letter demanding that Sangamon County provide roughly \$730,000 annually to the VAC and threatening litigation if Sangamon County does not satisfy the demand. Your letter includes no explanation as to why the VAC needs such an exorbitant increase in funding, and I am aware of no valid reason for such an increase.

Instead, to support the demand, your letter states that the Illinois Military Veterans Assistance Act mandates such annual payments. Your letters also states that Sangamon County agreed that \$730,000 is needed to “adequately support” services provided by the VAC. Neither of these statements is true.

Despite the County’s many meetings with the VAC to address its concerns, including meetings you attended, you and other VAC representatives keep claiming that the VAC is entitled to .02% of the assessed value of all real estate in Sangamon County to spend each year. Who, if anyone, provided this interpretation of the Act to the VAC remains unknown to Sangamon County. ASA Benoit has explained to VAC representatives that this interpretation is incorrect. ASA Benoit directly asked you to provide him with any law supporting the VAC’s interpretation and to have any lawyers who agree with and can support the VAC’s position contact him. ASA Benoit has received no written material from anyone, nor has he received any calls from lawyers in response.

Your interpretation of the Act is not supported by the language of the Act and, in fact, is wholly inconsistent with a multitude of Act provisions mandating that funds be spent on reasonable and necessary items related to VAC’s mission. Your view that the VAC is entitled to a set amount of money regardless of the VAC’s reasonable and necessary needs makes no sense on any level (i.e., Why do you want to spend more than what is reasonable and necessary? Why would the legislature provide for wasteful spending above what is reasonable and necessary?) and places the VAC in a bad light (i.e., What unreasonable and unnecessary expense items does the VAC desire? Why?).

Historically, and prior to the recent amendments to the Act, Sangamon County has always adequately funded the VAC, and I reject all contrary suggestions in your letter. At all times, though, Sangamon County has required that the VAC justify its expenditures of taxpayer dollars. For example, as to salaries, the county examines salaries others are paid for similar work as a guide to setting VAC salaries. This is the same process used when the county sets its employees' salaries. Even after the recent amendments to the Act, the VAC must follow the county's procurement and employment rules, which again highlights the inherent weakness in your position that the VAC is entitled to a set payment each year regardless of reasonable need.

You refer to Josh Herman in your letter. Apparently, he is an attorney who shares your interpretation of the Act. As stated earlier, ASA Benoit is available to speak to Mr. Herman or any other lawyer who wishes to explain their interpretations of the Act. As things stand now, however, and especially as outside counsel agrees with ASA Benoit's interpretation, Sangamon County remains convinced that ASA Benoit is correct.

Sangamon County remains committed to supporting veterans in accordance with the Act by paying the VAC's just and necessary expenses. Unless and until you convince Sangamon County of the merit of your interpretation of the Act, for the reasons set forth above, the county will continue to approve and pay only VAC expenses that are just and necessary. Finally, if the VAC chooses to litigate this issue, the VAC and its counsel must understand that just and necessary VAC expenses do not include expenses arising from the pursuit of baseless VAC claims brought against Sangamon County.

Sincerely,



Brian McFadden, County Administrator

cc: Sangamon County VAC Board Officers ([vacsangamon@gmail.com](mailto:vacsangamon@gmail.com))  
Ashti Dawson ([Ashti.Dawson@sangamonil.gov](mailto:Ashti.Dawson@sangamonil.gov))