


Kenosha



County

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Subject: REQUEST TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF JENNIFER BLASI AS DIRECTOR OF VETERANS SERVICES			
Original <input type="checkbox"/>	Corrected <input type="checkbox"/>	2nd Correction <input type="checkbox"/>	Resubmitted <input type="checkbox"/>
Date Submitted: October 30, 2023		Date Resubmitted:	
Submitted By: Human Services Committee			
Fiscal Note Attached <input type="checkbox"/>		Legal Note Attached <input type="checkbox"/>	
Prepared By: John T. Jansen, Director Department of Human Services		Signature: 	

WHEREAS, pursuant to County Executive Appointment 2023-24-27, the County Executive has appointed Jennifer Blasi to the position of Director of the Division of Veterans Services. This is an appointment; and


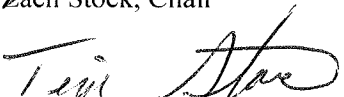
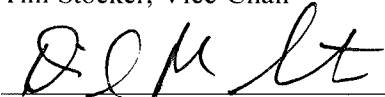
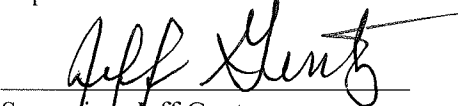

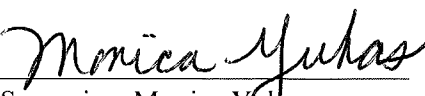
WHEREAS, Ms. Blasi was hired by Kenosha County in 2013 as a Senior Office Associate. In February of 2016, she was appointed to Assistant Director of Veterans Services. Ms. Blasi is a U.S. Army veteran and holds a Masters of Arts Education degree; and

WHEREAS, the Human Services Committee of the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors has reviewed the request of the County Executive for confirmation of the above-named to serve as the Director of the Division of Veterans Services and is recommending to the County Board the approval of the appointment;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors confirms the appointment of Jennifer Blasi as the Director of the Division of Veterans Services at an annual salary of \$85,000. Ms. Blasi's appointment shall be effective immediately.

Approved by:

HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Excused</u>
 Zach Stock, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Tim Stocker, Vice-Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Supervisor Dave Geertsen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Supervisor Jeff Gentz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Supervisor Ed Kubicki	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Supervisor Amanda Nedweski	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Supervisor Monica Yuhas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Samantha Kerkman, County Executive

1010 – 56th Street, Third Floor
Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140
(262) 653-2600

APPOINTMENT 2023/24-27

APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF VETERANS SERVICES

TO THE HONORABLE KENOSHA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Placing special trust in the judgment and based upon the qualifications thereof, I hereby submit to the Honorable Kenosha County Board of Supervisors for its review and confirmation the name of:

Jennifer Blasi
Kenosha, WI 53142

to serve as the Director of the Kenosha County Division of Veterans Services.

Ms. Blasi was hired by Kenosha County in 2013 as a Senior Office Associate. In February of 2016, she was appointed to Assistant Director of Veterans Services. Ms. Blasi is a U.S. Army veteran and holds a Masters of Arts Education.

Ms. Blasi will fill the position vacated by Aloysius Ali Nelson. Her appointment as the Director of the Division of Veterans Services will become effective upon confirmation by the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Blasi will receive \$85,000 as an annual salary.

Respectfully submitted this 30th day of October, 2023.

Samantha Kerkman
Kenosha County Executive

JB

Jennifer Blasi

September 15, 2023

Kenosha County

RE: Director Division of Veteran Services

Dear Clara Tappa,

I am writing to apply for the position of Director Division of Veteran Services with Kenosha County. With over 14 years of professional experience serving veterans, most recently as an Assistant Veterans Service Officer, I feel confident that I possess the skills and qualifications necessary for the position.

I am passionate about serving the veteran population and believe that my experience as an Assistant County Veterans Service Officer has provided a firm foundation for success in the position.

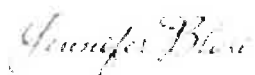
I am independently motivated, yet I appreciate and thrive in team efforts and collaborate productively within groups. In a small, fast paced Division that provides such a variety of services and demands a level of emotional intelligence and technical expertise, teamwork and collaboration throughout the division are essential to the success of the employees and of the mission.

As an Assistant Veterans Service Officer, I have had the opportunity to develop my problem-solving, planning, time management, and communication skills. My people-centric nature and compassion have afforded me client service and decision-making skills.

Lastly, as an employee who has moved up through the ranks in the Division, I am quite knowledgeable regarding the scope of tasks, duties, roles and responsibilities carried out by the Division and have established relationships with local, state and federal agencies, institutions, veterans service organizations, and non-profits that serve our veterans.

I appreciate your evaluation of my credentials and welcome an interview to further discuss my qualifications and vision for the future of Kenosha County Division of Veterans Services.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Blasi

JENNIFER L. BLASI

Assistant County Veterans Service Officer – Kenosha County Veterans Service Office February 2016-Present

Responsible for the Division Director duties necessary to support a veteran population of 8,800+ in Kenosha County in the absence of the Director. Provides administrative and instructional guidance to the subordinate staff. Supervise all office staff, assigned, and monitor work, and provide appropriate feedback. Responsible for public relations, to include outreach efforts and speaking engagements to inform County residents of the availability of Federal and State veteran's benefits for which they may be eligible. Coordinated and organized veteran events to include standdowns, town hall meetings, and celebrations to support our veteran community. An active partner with state, local, and non-profit agencies addressing employment, housing, and food insecurity in the veteran population. Perform complex claims processing from initial interview through the appellate process. Serves as an active member of the Kenosha County Caregiver Coalition, Emergency Services Network, Kenosha County Veterans Memorial Park Committee, and the Dept. of Veterans Affairs Kenosha Case Conference Coalition.

Senior Office Associate – Kenosha County Veterans Service Office April 2013-February 2016

Counsels, advises, and assists over 12,000 veterans, their dependents and survivors on a variety of matters including applications and claims for compensation, pension, insurance, hospitalization or out-patient care, education and rehabilitation, death benefits, housing loans, homeless assistance programs, subsistence and medical grants. Research and gather supporting evidence, such as military and medical records and individual statements to develop claims. Maintains grave registration records of deceased veterans and coordinates distribution of flags to local service organizations for Memorial Day. Authorizes and distributes food and transportation cards to eligible veterans. Updates and maintains the database of monetary assistance provided to veterans with county funds.

Owner – RJ Apartments, Kenosha, WI 2001-Present

Manage the operation of the business to include financial, legal, insurance, and maintenance costs. Developed a plan and budgeted for both routine and capital maintenance expenditures. Schedule and conduct viewings, lease signings, and inspections. Document and resolve customer and public complaints. Analyze market conditions to determine fair market rates and screen applicants in accordance with Fair Housing Guidelines.

Administrative Clerk – U.S. Census Bureau (CCM), Kenosha, WI 2009-2010

Provided administrative support in the collection, control, review, processing, and reporting of personnel and payroll data for employees. Carried out employee selection and hiring functions. Maintained confidential personnel and administrative records. Assisted in the processing of accident forms, travel vouchers, and resolution of time and attendance records.

JENNIFER L. BLASI

Administrative Assistant \ Special Events – Paterno Imports, Lake Bluff, IL 1998-1999

Generated and tracked client itineraries for publicity trips within the United States. Scheduled travel arrangements for staff and clients as needed. Maintained databases for large trade shows. Created and maintained client publicity files. Compiled and distributed promotional materials to sales staff and distributors.

Legal Specialist – US Army, Vilseck Law Center, Germany 1993-1997

Provided Legal Assistance support to a large military community in a friendly and positive manner. Interviewed defense clients, analyzed and interpreted aspects of military law, and wrote letters of appeal and rebuttal on clients' behalf. Conducted legal briefings for service members facing charges. Prepared confidential legal documents in an accurate and prompt fashion. Recorded and transcribed formal investigations. Created and maintained an office procedural manual. Answered a large volume of incoming calls; took messages, transferred callers, dealt with general inquiries, made appointments and/or redirected callers to appropriate agencies.

Education:

Masters of Arts Education

National-Louis University, Milwaukee, WI, GPA 3.62

Bachelor of Arts History

Minor in Political Science University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, WI

Paralegal Certificate

Carthage College, Kenosha, WI

Licenses/Certifications:

Living as a Leader

VA Accreditation

National Association of Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO)

Veterans of Foreign Wars

American Legion

Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs

Notary Public

**Letter of Reference for Jennifer Blasi
for the Kenosha County Veterans Service Officer position**

I have known Jennifer Blasi for ten years in her position as Assistant Kenosha County Veterans Service Officer.

Jennifer Blasi is a team player. She is fair and impartial to everyone. She has a high level of work performance in assisting Kenosha County veterans to obtain their needed veteran benefits. Overall, she is also a kind person.

I have observed her representing the Kenosha County CVSO office at State meetings in a very capable manner. She is very knowledgeable in rules and regulations of the Veterans Administration which contributes to her high level of helping veterans obtain their needed benefits.

Jennifer has good supervisory skills. I know she would lead the Kenosha County CVSO office to a high level of performance benefitting the veteran population in Kenosha County.

For these reasons I support and endorse Jennifer Blasi for the position of County Veterans Service Officer for Kenosha County.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Erickson, Kenosha County Veterans Service Office Commissioner

September 15, 2023

September 5, 2005

To: Samantha Kerkman
Kenosha County Executive

Re: Vacant Kenosha County Veteran Service Officer Position

Dear Ms. Kerkman:

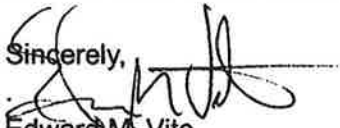
I write to you today to ask that you strongly consider and appoint Jennifer Blasi to the above mentioned position.

I am a disabled VietNam veteran and over the years, I have dealt with the Lake County Veteran Service office, the American Legion and The Kenosha County Veteran Service office.

For the last two years Jennifer Blasi has taken over my file and I will tell you that she has what it takes to do the job right. I have never had such a representation with the other organizations.

Every Kenosha County veteran deserves such representation and I can assure you that with Jennifer Blasi as the leader, every veteran will get the service that they expect and deserve.

Sincerely,


Edward M. Vite

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Bradley Behling

Kenosha County
HR manager

Dear Kenosha County:

I was the Veteran Service Officer for Racine County from September 2015 until January 2019. I also had the honor of working for Kenosha County as a Veteran Service Representative from October 2021 until April 2023. Between those two times I served the Veteran community at the University of Wisconsin Parkside and as the Interim Executive Director of Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin. I understand fully the challenging and demanding role that surrounds being a Veteran Service Officer.

Kenosha County is blessed to have two great candidates that I can solidly recommend for this position. The first being the current interim director Jennifer Blasi, and Zachary Zdroik who was my protégé from 2017 until 2019 and then held the position as Veteran Service Officer from January 2019 until November 2021. Each bring years of experience and knowledge to the position, and both are well respected and well known in the Veteran community.

Jennifer is an Army Veteran who has been an advocate in Kenosha for the past 10 years, she is well skilled at multitasking, training and has a familiarity with the ways through the VA system expressing a definite empathy for each of the Veterans that she helps. Zach is a Marine Veteran with combat experience, he has a passion to serve the Veterans being 100% service connected disabled himself he knows the processes and contacts to reach out to while possessing a singular drive to ensure no Veteran is left behind. There are specific platforms that take years to become familiar with, VBATS, Vetraspec, and the Veteran database through the Veterans Administration that both are experts in navigating guaranteeing that the Veteran who sees them are getting the right answer the first time.

Kenosha County cannot go wrong with either choice and I am certain any other candidate will pale in comparison to either of these two.

I can be reached for further questions at [REDACTED], or on my email [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Bradley Behling

Vice President Operations

Dousman Transport

JB

Jennifer Blasi

REFERENCES

James Schmidt

[REDACTED]

Bradley Behling

[REDACTED]

Oscar Rodriguez

[REDACTED]

William Erickson

[REDACTED]