

March 31, 2026

To: Nancy Clark – Vice President – VACWC
Michael J. Phillips – VACWC Attorney

From: [REDACTED] – Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County

This is very difficult for me to write, as I am embarrassed by the leadership of the VACWC. In the three years I've been with the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County, I've had six Interim Superintendents and Superintendents total, and this is now the third new staff.

I am writing this statement because the current Interim Superintendent of Winnebago County, Willie Borden, has been engaging in inappropriate conversations with me. I also want to note that he has been administering what I feel to be unfair and unwarranted verbal corrective actions.

Inappropriate Personal Comments and Conduct

During his first week working at VACWC as a GVSO, Willie Borden told me he had thought about privately texting me to see if I wanted to hang out after work. He said this in front of former employee [REDACTED]. At that time, all I knew was that he was married and staying in a hotel near the casino. I responded that he should ask the current Superintendent, Jesus P., to hang out. After he made this comment to me, it was important that I immediately put up very clear boundaries to discourage any additional advances.

Willie Borden later shared with me that when he first started working at VACWC, he was trying to get my attention. While sitting on my desk, he said, "Yeah, I'd come up here like this to talk to you," and mentioned that I could have been "Mrs. Borden." This comment has been made more than once, including once in front of a client. Mr. Borden is a married man, and I am offended by these statements, especially since his wife is a current visitor to our office and I have met her several times.

A few weeks ago, he also told me that when he first arrived, he and his wife were going through a divorce, that he had already signed the papers, and that he had his eye on me. I feel like he was using that situation to see if I would respond to him in that way, and again, this topic and level of personal conversation is very uncomfortable to me.

Willie Borden has also made inappropriate comments about other staff. On [REDACTED]'s first day, he commented on her body in a sexual way, stating that she has "big titties." He has also said that all of the women at the VACWC, including former employees, have nice shapes. He mentioned that his wife has "checked out" the women at the VACWC and is not worried about any of them, and then pointed toward the office manager's office saying "that one might be a problem because of her body," but then said he lost interest because of her hair.

Boundary Issues and Workspace Concerns

There are times when I need to ask questions about or for our clients. Previously, Willie Borden would stand in front of my desk while providing answers and assistance. Since becoming Interim Superintendent, he routinely comes into my space by walking around to the and standing directly beside me. This began happening so often

that I told him I would let him know if he needed to come around to look at my screen; otherwise, he should remain at the front of my desk. While this has somewhat subsided, there are still times when he comes halfway around or attempts to come fully behind me.

He has also admitted that he used to come to my desk frequently when he first started because he was trying to get my attention.

Treatment, Criticism, and Reprimands

Since being named Interim Superintendent, I have noticed a significant change in his behavior. He has become more comfortable having inappropriate conversations with me, while also increasing micromanagement, criticizing me unfairly, and constantly finding fault. He shares personnel information with me that should not be shared and has tried to engage me in conversations that I do not wish to have.

Out of the blue, he said, "I think you are mean too." It is the word "too" that stands out to me. It makes me feel like there are conversations happening about me with staff. Since the new staff started, I have made the decision to set boundaries and keep to myself. I do not wish to engage in non-work-related conversations or gossip. I have also noticed that for the majority of the day, all employees other than myself are gathered in the back of the office. I can often hear loud laughing and conversations that do not appear to be work-related.

On one occasion, while I was on a private phone call, Shara I. approached my desk area. I indicated that I was on a private call. Shortly after, Willie Borden came to my desk and told me he was going to have to ask me to be nicer. I asked what I had done that was mean, and he could not give me a definite answer. I explained that I always remain professional, answer all VACWC-related questions, but do not engage in small talk. I also explained that I may open up over time, but not immediately. The new staff has only been with VACWC for approximately one month, and I do not know them personally. It will take time to learn their work structure and ethics. My position keeps me busy throughout the day, and I do not have time for non-work-related chatter or gossip.

On another occasion, Willie Borden advised me that [REDACTED] said I had "snapped" at her. At that exact time, I was on the phone with Debbie Crozier from Winnebago County HR. I do not understand how I would behave inappropriately while on a call with HR in real time. Instead of verifying the situation and asking me for my perspective, he chose to reprimand me. He immediately returned to the back of the office, where I observed him speaking with team members. If Mr. Borden speaks with me about my performance, he should not be returning to staff to share details of that conversation. While he later admitted he may have used the wrong wording, he never apologized or retracted the verbal warning he gave me.

On March 24, 2026, at the end of the day, Willie Borden called me into his office and told me I had been rude to [REDACTED] has a habit of saying "Hey [REDACTED]", when she says this, I cannot tell if she needs assistance with a work-related issue or something else. After one occurrence, I simply said that "excuse me" would be more appropriate and would help me understand that she needs my attention. I said this directly to her in front of Willie, who did not say anything at the time. However, when he later approached me, he used this situation as an example of me being rude. I can confidently say that I was not rude. I am professional at my core and expect to be treated with the same level of professionalism.

Since the new staff started, I have chosen to stay to myself and maintain boundaries. However, I feel that has been interpreted negatively.

There have been comments made toward me, including being described as "ghetto" instead of assertive, which I found insulting. Willie Borden should not be allowing this type of language in a professional environment.

Willie Borden has shared that [REDACTED] said she needs to rebuild trust with me, but that statement came after a larger conversation about me. [REDACTED] has previously admitted in a commissioners meeting that she followed the lead of others and made untrue statements about [REDACTED]. I am aware that she has done the same regarding me and my presence at VACWC.

I feel that Willie is not showing support toward me as the most tenured employee at VACWC, with a solid reputation for my work and knowledge of veteran issues. Staff appear comfortable reporting minor concerns about me, and those reports are accepted without my input.

Specific Incident – March 9, 2026

On March 9, 2026, at 1:20 p.m., a client came into the office who had a very strong body odor. This is not uncommon, as we often serve clients who are homeless or going through difficult circumstances. The office manager came out and commented on the smell and asked if she could spray. This is typically something I handle. When this situation occurs, after the client leaves, I not only spray the area but also sanitize surfaces using Clorox wipes.

I informed [REDACTED] that I would take care of it. She appeared upset by my response, went into Willie's office, and then Willie sprayed the area anyway without speaking to me.

I then sent Willie Borden a Teams message stating:

"Please, please Interim Superintendent Willie, let me spray my area. This is too much, and now I have a slight headache and I'm feeling nauseous. I told the office manager that I would spray, as the smell was not bothering me. I was going to spray once I got to a stopping point."

While this situation may seem minor, I feel it was unnecessarily escalated. The outcome not only made me physically ill, but also made me feel uncomfortable. I feel that her response was hostile and that Willie facilitated it by allowing her to proceed. It could have been handled simply. Everyone else had the ability to leave the area, but I could not, as I work in a wall-less office.

Leadership and Professional Concerns

Willie Borden does not hold himself accountable. He has misinformed clients and allowed them to believe he is the Superintendent, even before being officially appointed as Interim. Both clients and individuals within the health department have shared with me that he has referred to himself as Superintendent for several months. He often attempts to take credit for work he did not do, and when mistakes occur, he does not take responsibility, instead shifting blame or providing inaccurate explanations.

I also have concerns about the recent hiring process. Mr. Borden has stated that his wife conducted research and background checks on candidates. There were multiple instances where he was unaware of interviews until the

CC: [REDACTED] AL

night before, which suggests he was not fully involved. I do not understand how or why his wife would be involved in this process.

He has also stated that he ensured that none of the newly hired employees would be a threat to him replacing him as Superintendent. He does not refer to himself as Interim Superintendent. It is also important to note that none of the newly hired employees are veterans or male. Given that his wife was involved in reviewing candidates, I cannot confirm whether veteran applicants were properly considered. If they were, they should have been given priority in accordance with standard hiring practices. I am confident that veteran status was not properly taken into account.

Impact and Ongoing Concern

Overall, I feel there is a pattern of behavior that is creating a hostile work environment. I do not feel supported. Staff appear to be pitted against me and are comfortable reporting minor issues, while my perspective is not being requested.

Willie Borden has come to the defense of others without speaking to me first, which makes me feel he has chosen sides. I have, on several occasions, heard him tell me one thing and then tell the rest of the office staff something different. It is confusing and has been making my job more difficult. Willie does not seem to have a clear strategic plan for the VACWC. Since his appointment, we have not had a proper staff meeting until this week, and that only occurred after I mentioned it should be a regular practice.

I believe I am being treated differently because I set boundaries early on. I am concerned about the direction of the workplace and do not want to be part of a pattern where professional, hardworking women are pushed out.

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