

**Board of Veterans Services
Cemeteries Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2015**

DRAFT

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Cemeteries Committee was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, 10300 Pridesville Rd, Amelia.

Committee Members Present

- L. Max Beyer, Cemeteries Committee Chairman
- Thad Jones, Cemeteries Committee Vice Chairman
- Donald Kaiserman, BVS Chairman

Committee Members Absent

- None

Commonwealth of Virginia Employees Present

- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Tammy Davidson, DVS
- Dan Kemano, DVS

Materials Distributed

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the July 8, 2014 committee meeting
- State veterans cemeteries interment numbers
- State veterans cemeteries organizational chart
- State veterans cemeteries building and property maintenance, equipment phase replacement, and planning & improvement plans: Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 – FY 2026
- FY 2015 – FY 2020 Cemeteries workload, resources, and expenditures estimate

Call to Order, Quorum Determination, and Agenda Approval

Chairman Max Beyer called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Three committee members were recorded as present and a quorum was determined.

The meeting agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Approval draft minutes of the July 8, 2014 committee meeting

Mr. Thad Jones made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Don Kaiserman, to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2014 committee meeting as presented. The motion carried **unanimously**.

State Veterans Cemeteries – Update on Current Operations and Projects

DVS Cemeteries Director Dan Kemano reviewed the interment numbers at the state veterans cemeteries and the state veterans cemeteries organization chart. He discussed the role of each

position and compared the workload and staffing requirements at the three cemeteries. He noted that 23 of 26 authorized positions were currently filled; Position 24 (burial team employee at the Suffolk cemetery) is currently vacant and will be filled soon, while Position 25 (Assistant Cemeteries Director – to be located at the Amelia or Dublin cemetery) will be filled by the end of Fiscal Year 2015.

The committee members noted the outstanding job that Mr. Kemano was doing as Cemeteries Director, but stressed the importance of filling the Assistant Director position in FY15 to facilitate continuity and to plan for future operations. At Chairman Beyer's request, Mr. Combs and Mr. Kemano reviewed the state hiring process and procedures.

State Veterans Cemeteries Building & Property Maintenance, Equipment Purchase & Replacement, and Planning & Improvement Plans, FY15-26

Mr. Kemano reviewed the cemeteries Building & Property Maintenance, Equipment Purchase & Replacement, and Planning & Improvement plans for FY15-26, covering the FY15 and FY16 plans in great detail. The members asked for additional or clarifying information about some of the plans, which Mr. Kemano provided.

FY15-20 Anticipated Workload and Funding

In conjunction with the review of the building & property maintenance, equipment purchase & replacement, and planning & improvement plans, Mr. Combs, Ms. Davidson, and Mr. Kemano provided an in-depth review of the spreadsheets showing budget and workload projections for FY15-20. The members asked many questions about the budget projections.

The committee members wholeheartedly supported the Department's conservative approach to asset and resource management at the cemeteries, especially given the uncertainty of non-general fund revenues. The members emphasized the importance of maintaining a cash reserve for emergencies; of projecting future workload, expenditures, and resource levels; and of requesting additional resources to ensure that the cemeteries are always able to meet all requirements without compromising services or appearance.

Mr. Combs, Ms. Davidson, and Mr. Kemano reviewed the Department's priorities regarding cemetery funding, noting that current operations took priority, followed by building & property maintenance, equipment purchase & replacement, and planning & improvement plans. It was noted that it was sometimes possible to push some costs, such as equipment replacement, into a future fiscal year, but that this could not be done for current operations.

The committee members stressed the need to plan for the projected appropriation shortfall in FY19-20 and to request additional funds when needed.

Cemetery master plans

Mr. Kemano reviewed the master plans for the Suffolk and Amelia cemeteries, concentrating on the Amelia cemetery. He reviewed projected future development of in-ground pre-placed outer burial containers and columbariums.

The members asked several questions regarding the acquisition of land adjacent to the Amelia

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and Suffolk cemeteries. Mr. Kemano, Mr. Combs, and Ms. Davidson noted that DVS had temporarily suspended talks with local landowners because of price and the limited availability of DVS funding. The members discussed several options for future land acquisition, and recommended that the Department of Veterans Services meet one more time with local landowners to discuss options for property acquisition by or donation to the state. Mr. Combs agreed that the Department would do this.

Discussion and preparation for the May 12, 2015 BVS meeting

Chairman Beyer gave Mr. Combs and Mr. Kemano guidance on content for the Committee report for the May 12 BVS meeting. Mr. Combs and Mr. Kemano will prepare a draft review for Chairman Beyer's approval.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.