

**Board of Veterans Services  
Meeting Minutes  
December 9, 2015**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at the American Legion Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

**Members Present**

- Richard Anderson
- Mamyé BaCote
- Max Beyer
- Joana Garcia
- Susan Hippen
- James Icenhour
- Johnny Johnson
- Thad Jones
- Donald Kaiserman
- Nick Kesler
- Sandra Love
- Laurie Neff
- William Nicholas
- Belinda Pinckney
- Toddy Puller
- Bryce Reeves
- Christopher Stolle
- Brad Antle, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- Bart Barton, Chairman, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
- John Newby, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services

**Members Absent**

- William Haneke

**Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present**

- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Carrie Ann Alford, DVS, also Legislative Assistant to Senator Puller
- Jack Hilgers, DVS
- Glendalynn Glover, DVS
- Brian Pickral, DVS
- Leslie Frazier, Policy Director to the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Ryan Galloway, Chief of Staff to Delegate Anderson

**Others present**

- None

### **Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet**

- Agenda
- Reports (Agenda Item IV)
  - Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
  - Veterans Services Foundation
- Review of the Board of Veteran Services structure and member engagement (Agenda Item V)

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Don Kaiserman welcomed the BVS members and called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. He opened the meeting by thanking Mr. James Icenhour, DVS Policy Director Carrie Ann Alford, and DVS Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs for their hard work on a memorandum to the Board on restructuring the Board of Veteran Services, and stated that the Board would have an opportunity to address the memo later in the meeting.

The roll was called and a quorum was determined with 16 members present. Four members arrived shortly after the roll was called, for a total of 20 members present. Because there were three new members in attendance, the Chair had everyone present introduce themselves.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Icenhour made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Chris Stolle, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried **unanimously**.

### **Approval of May 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

Delegate Stolle made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Rich Anderson, to approve the May 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion carried **unanimously**.

### **Presentations**

Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs gave a presentation covering the Department of Veteran Services' history, accomplishments, and goals through 2018. He reviewed each DVS service section and covered budget priorities for each during the upcoming session. A copy of the presentation was provided to the members electronically after the meeting.

Mr. Bart Barton, Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC), provided the Board with a copy of the JLC Chairman's 2015 Annual report to the Commissioner and the Board. The report had also been provided to members electronically prior to the meeting. Chairman Barton gave a few quick highlights of the report, after which he entertained questions from the members on the role of the JLC in the legislative process.

In addition, as part of the JLC report, Mr. Jack Hilgers invited the Board members to attend the 2016 JLC Conference at the General Assembly, which will be held January 14, 2016. He noted that the Conference is an all-day event and allows the JLC to hear from legislators, the Governor, Secretary Harvey, the Commissioner, and other officials. It also gives the attendees a chance to visit legislators' offices and to discuss policy initiatives.

Chairman Kaiserman thanked Mr. Barton for his report.

Mr. Brad Antle, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Veteran Service Foundation, provided the VSF report. He applauded the efforts of Secretary Harvey and Commissioner Newby in the V3 Program being selected as the recipient of the Dominion Resources charity classic golf tournament for the next five years.

Mr. Jim Icenhour led a discussion regarding potentially restructuring the board. The Board had a productive discussion about improving outreach and communications, the current structure of BVS with its' three committees and how to be more flexible in the future.

Deputy Commissioner Combs gave a brief synopsis of the board's origins and how it came to be organized as it is currently. The goal of restructuring of the Board is for it to have more flexibility in organizing itself to carry out its Code-mandated mission, while at the same time becoming more visible and effective in working with our veterans and communities. This could involve amending the Code to change the requirement that the Board be organized into three standing committees (for Benefits, Care Centers, and Cemeteries) to a requirement that the Board organize itself in such a manner as to effectively fulfill its mission. This could involve both standing committees (such as for Benefits) and ad hoc work groups (ex. Entrepreneurship). Board members were in general agreement that the Code could be amended to give the Board more flexibility in organization, while continuing to work on issues regarding outreach and communications. There was general agreement that even if the Board was granted to flexibility to organize itself differently, it should retain at least one standing committee (Benefits) and have specific Board members assigned to monitor the care centers and cemetery programs.

The meeting ended with Mr. Jack Hilgers presenting a certificate from the US Department of Defense to Senator Toddy Puller, who is retiring at the end of the year. The certificate acknowledged her work on behalf of all veterans and Vietnam veterans in particular. She thanked Mr. Hilgers and the Board and made a few remarks saying farewell to the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 pm by motion of Ms. Susan Hippen, seconded by Ms. Belinda Pinckney.