

Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2014

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on Tuesday, July 22, 2014 at the American Legion building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

Members Present

- Richard Anderson
- L. Max Beyer
- William Haneke
- Susan Hippen
- James Icenhour
- Johnny Johnson
- Thad Jones
- Donald Kaiserman
- Sandra Love
- William Nicholas
- Belinda Pinckney
- Toddy Puller
- Christopher Stolle
- Rich Schollmann, representing the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)
- Chip Moran, representing the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC)
- Cathy Wilson, Deputy Commissioner, representing the Commissioner of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- Mamyé BaCote
- Don Lecky
- Bryce Reeves

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General
- Leslie Frazier, Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Will Brown, Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- John Crooks, Department of Planning and Budget
- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Judy Reid, DVS
- Danielle Weaver, DVS

Others Present

- Carrie Ann Alford, Legislative Assistant to Senator Puller
- Ryan Galloway, Assistant to Delegate Anderson

Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet

- Agenda
- Reports (Agenda Item IV)
 - Benefits Committee Report
 - Care Center Committee Report
 - Cemeteries Committee Report
 - Joint Leadership Council Report
 - Veterans Services Foundation Report
 - Department of Veterans Services Report
- New Business (Agenda Item V)
 - BVS 2015 initiatives – draft position paper
 - JLC 2015 initiatives – summary
 - BVS ByLaws – proposed changes
- Other
 - BVS Contact List – July 17, 2014

Call to Order

Chairman Thad Jones welcomed the BVS members and called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Chairman Jones stated that it has been an honor to serve as BVS Chairman for the past four years. He thanked the Board for their outstanding work and support. He thanked Commissioner Paul Galanti and Deputy Commissioner Cathy Wilson for allowing him to attend the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meetings and for the outstanding work of all of the DVS team. He also thanked Mr. Steven Combs for all of his help. Chairman Jones said that even though he was stepping down as Chairman, he would continue to serve on the Board for the next three years.

Mr. William Haneke led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll was called and with 14 of 19 members present a quorum was determined. Delegate Richard Anderson and Ms. Susan Hippen arrived a few minutes later, bringing the number of members present to 16, including Mr. Chip Moran representing the JLC, Mr. Rich Schollmann representing the VSF, and DVS Deputy Commissioner Cathy Wilson representing the Commissioner of Veterans Services.

Chairman Jones asked Mr. Combs to briefly introduce the state officials and guests present. Their names and organizations are recorded above.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Jones asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Haneke made a **motion, seconded** by Senator Toddy Puller, to approve the agenda as presented.

Mr. Johnny Johnson made a **substitute motion** to move the report of the nominating committee and the election of BVS officers before Item III in order to accommodate any Board members that may have to leave early. The substitute motion was **seconded** by Ms. Belinda Pinckney. The amended agenda was approved **unanimously** with these changes. The approved agenda is included as *Attachment 1*.

Delegate Rich Anderson and Ms. Susan Hippen joined the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Chairman Jones stated that Ms. Susan Hippen and Mr. James Icenhour have been appointed to the board by Governor McAuliffe, replacing Ms. Kate Kohler and Mr. Patrick Murray. Chairman Jones noted that Mr. Haneke and Mr. Don Kaiserman have been re-appointed by the Governor. Chairman Jones asked Ms. Hippen, Mr. Icenhour, and Ms. Pinckney to say a few words about themselves, which they proceeded to do.

Approval of May 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Jones noted that the May 13, 2014 meeting minutes had been distributed electronically and could also be found on the DVS website. He asked if there were any corrections to the draft minutes. There was none, and the minutes were approved as presented by **unanimous consent**.

Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers

Chairman Jones noted that Mr. Johnson and Ms. Pinckney comprised the Nominating Committee, and thanked them for their service. Mr. Johnson delivered the report of the Nominating Committee. He reported that:

- Mr. Johnson and Mr. Kaiserman had been nominated for the position of BVS Chairman;
- Mr. Johnson, Mr. Kaiserman, Ms. Sandra Love, and Delegate Christopher Stolle had been nominated for the position of BVS Vice Chairman;
- Ms. Hippen had been nominated for the position of BVS Secretary.

Mr. Johnson reported that the Nominating Committee recommends all candidates for the nominated position, but that Ms. Love had asked that she not be considered for a Board officer position.

Chair Jones asked if there were any more nominations from the floor for Chairman, Vice Chairman, or Secretary. Hearing none, he closed the nominations.

Chairman Jones called for a vote for BVS Chairman. By a vote of 8-4, Mr. Kaiserman was elected the new BVS Chairman.

Delegate Stolle explained that he thought it better that a citizen member serve as Vice Chairman, rather than a member of the General Assembly. He asked that his name be withdrawn from consideration for the position of Vice Chairman.

By unanimous consent, Mr. Johnson became the new BVS Vice Chairman.

By unanimous consent, Ms. Hippen became the new BVS Secretary.

Chairman Jones thanked each of the nominees for being willing to serve in a leadership role, and congratulated the new Board officers, noting that they would assume their positions at the conclusion of the meeting.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Nominating Committee had prepared recommendations for the new Chairman to consider as Committee Chairs, as follows:

- Benefits Committee: Ms. Pinckney;
- Care Centers Committee: Mr. Don Lecky;
- Cemetery Committee: Mr. L. Max Beyer.

Chairman Jones thanked the Nominating Committee for their work.

Board orientation presentation

Mr. Combs delivered a board orientation presentation covering DVS history, organization, programs, and services, and BVS organization, powers, and duties.

Note: Mr. Combs' presentation is not included in these minutes, but was distributed to the members electronically following the meeting. The presentation is available upon request.

Reports

Benefits Committee

Mr. William Nicholas, Benefits Committee Vice Chairman, delivered the committee report. See *Attachment 2*.

Chairman Jones thanked Mr. Nicholas for his report.

Care Centers Committee

Mr. Combs delivered the committee report in the absence of Care Centers Committee Chair Don Lecky. See *Attachment 3*.

Chairman Jones thanked Mr. Combs for the report.

Cemeteries Committee

Ms. Sandra Love, Cemeteries Committee Chair, delivered the committee report. See *Attachment 4*.

Chairman Jones thanked Ms. Love for her report.

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations

Mr. Chip Moran, Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations gave the JLC report. See *Attachment 5*.

Chairman Jones thanked Mr. Moran for his report.

Veteran Services Foundation

Mr. Rich Schollmann, Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees, delivered the VSF. See Attachment 6.

Chairman Jones thanked Mr. Schollmann for his report.

Department of Veterans Services

Deputy Commissioner Wilson delivered the DVS report. See Attachment 7.

Chairman Jones thanked Deputy Commissioner Wilson for her report.

New Business

Review, discuss, and approve BVS 2015 initiatives

Chairman Jones presented a proposed BVS 2015 initiative related to the recognition of centenarian veterans. Several members asked clarifying questions, which Chairman Jones answered. Several changes to the proposed initiative were suggested, and Chairman Jones agreed to incorporate all of the proposed changes in the BVS position paper.

Mr. William Nicholas stated that he felt it critical that the Board adopt an initiative to support the hiring, training, and retention of DVS Benefit Services section staff. He noted that this was the Board's top priority in 2014, but that funding had not been included in the final budget. He noted that he did not have a position paper, but suggested that the 2014 position paper be used, updated to reflect that it was a 2015 initiative. He recommended that this be the Board's top recommendation.

Mr. Haneke made a **motion, seconded** by Senator Toddy Puller, that the BVS adopt the two proposals as BVS 2015 initiatives, with the initiative for DVS Benefit Services section hiring, training, and retention ranking first. The motion carried **unanimously**.

The position papers for the two BVS 2015 Initiatives, as adopted at the July 22, 2014 meeting, are included as Attachment 8.

Review, discuss, and support JLC 2015 initiatives

Mr. Moran reviewed the JLC 2015 initiatives (see Attachment 9). Mr. Moran made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Kaiserman, that the Board endorse and support the JLC's 2015 initiatives. The motion carried **unanimously**.

BVS ByLaws Review

Chairman Jones stated that he had asked Mr. Kaiserman and Mr. Combs to review the BVS ByLaws and present recommended changes for consideration by the Board. Mr. Kaiserman and Mr. Combs briefly reviewed the proposed changes. Mr. Combs noted that the proposed changes would also be distributed electronically to the members. He requested that the Board members review the proposed changes and to be prepared to vote on them at the October meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Prepare for Next Meeting

Chairman Jones turned the meeting over to the Chairman Kaiserman.

Deputy Commissioner Wilson presented Mr. Jones with a plaque in recognition and honor of his service as BVS Chairman.

Adjourn

Chairman Kaiserman stated that there was no further business before the Board, and the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1

**American Legion Building
1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond
July 22, 2014
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

AGENDA (Approved)

- I. Opening, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call and Quorum Determination, Approval of Agenda, and introduction of BVS members, DVS Staff, and Guests – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:10)
- II. Approval of May 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)

Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers

- a. Nominating Committee – *Johnny Johnson and Belinda Pinckney*
- b. Elect BVS Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary

- III. Board orientation presentation – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman and Steven Combs, DVS Director of Policy & Planning* (10:15 – 11:15)

IV. Reports (11:15 – 11:50)

- a. Benefits Committee – *William Nicholas, Committee Vice Chair*
- b. Care Centers Committee – *Don Lecky, Committee Chair*
- c. Cemeteries Committee – *Sandra Love, Committee Chair*
- d. Joint Leadership Council – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman*
- e. Veterans Services Foundation – *Rich Schollmann, VSF Chairman*
- f. Department of Veterans Services – *Cathy Wilson, Deputy Commissioner*

V. New Business – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman* (11:50 – 12:50)

- a. Review, discuss, and approve BVS 2015 initiatives
- b. Review, discuss, and support JLC 2015 initiatives
- c. BVS ByLaws Review – *Don Kaiserman*

VI. Public comment (12:50 – 12:55)

VII. Prepare for Next Meeting – *Thad Jones, Chairman* (12:55 – 1:00)

VIII. Adjourn (1:00)

Lunch to follow

ATTACHMENT 2

BENEFITS COMMITTEE REPORT July 22, 2014

Chairman Jones and members of the Board:

The Benefits Committee has not met since the last Board meeting. Operational highlights from the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) sections under the purview of the Committee include:

Benefit Services

- In FY14, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) adjudicated 14,868 claims submitted by DVS on behalf of Virginia veterans and their eligible dependents.
- The USDVA granted 10,157 of these claims, or 68%.
- While the number of adjudicated claims is up slightly from FY13 (14,354 claims adjudicated by the USDVA in FY13) the percentage of claims granted is down (10,978 claims granted in FY13 – 76%).
- However, the number of retroactive awards over \$5,000 made by the USDVA to Virginia veterans and eligible dependents is up almost 35% from FY13 to FY14 (from 5,298 to 7,133) and the total amount of these retroactive claims is up over 25% (from \$65.8 million to \$82.5 million).
- DVS has been provided with six slots at the American Legion National Service Officer Training scheduled for July 31 – August 2 in Indianapolis, IN. The American Legion Department of Virginia will cover the costs for two DVS staff members.

Veterans Education, Training, and Employment (VETE):

- The VETE section of DVS is responsible for a myriad of programs, including the approval of programs of post-secondary instruction, which enables veterans and eligible dependents to use GI Bill benefits at over 1,000 approved programs in Virginia.
- VETE also assists enrolled students when a school/program ceases operations. When VETE is notified that a school/program will cease operations, VETE determines if any veterans are enrolled in the school/program and works with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), the school, and the veterans to help make arrangements for transfer to another school/program.
- VETE's goal during a closure is to "make the veteran whole" by helping the veteran complete their program of instruction prior to the school/program ceasing operation, or to transfer to another school/program.

Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP)

- Peer support can play an important role in the willingness of veterans to seek behavioral health treatment. An example of this recently occurred in VWWP Region II (Northern Virginia):
 - A VWWP Peer Specialist worked with an Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) combat veteran coping with post-traumatic stress from his time as a helicopter gunner.

- At initial contact, the veteran was in active relapse from alcohol abuse, and had recently lost his job.
- Since VWWP intervened in a peer support capacity, the veteran is sober and has attended individual counseling and AA groups.
- When treatment needs are met, veterans can focus on other goals, and this veteran recently received a new job position at an increased salary.
- In June, Governor McAuliffe became the 4th Governor to sign the National Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, sending a clear message that ending veteran homelessness is a priority for the Commonwealth.
- VWWP welcomed the new Regional Director for Southwest Virginia (VWWP Region III) on June 12. Debra Weir comes to the VWWP with a long and full career in the Army, serving on active duty and in both the National Guard and Army Reserve.
- The Virginia Public Health Association's *Health on the Homefront* conference was held in Hampton on June 17.
 - The conference focused on increasing awareness to the healthcare and supportive services needs of transitioning service members with special emphasis on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Available treatment and supportive resources were highlighted.
 - VWWP Executive Director Brandi Jancaitis presented an overview of VWWP services during the general session and on housing issues for transitioning service members during an afternoon break-out session.
 - Approximately 120 people attended – most were public health/mental health practitioners.

Respectfully submitted,

William Nicholas
Vice Chair

ATTACHMENT 3

CARE CENTERS COMMITTEE REPORT

July 22, 2014

Chairman Jones and members of the Board:

The Care Centers Committee of the Board of Veterans Services has not met since the last Board meeting.

At the last meeting, the committee reported on planned construction Project FAI (Federal Application Identifier) 51-010, the installation of a new fire alarm system, security system, and communications system at the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC).

- DVS/VVCC applied for and was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) of \$261,300 (65% of project costs) to match the state commitment of \$140,700 (35% of project costs, with funding coming from VVCC).
- However, after re-evaluating the scope of project, evaluating information from contractors and vendors, and in consideration of other factors, VVCC is modifying the plans and approach to this project.
- Due to these changes, the costs involved decreased significantly, which in turn resulted in the overall project cost falling below the USDVA State Home Construction Grant Program's \$400,000 threshold.
- DVS/VVCC notified the USDVA that the state will withdraw from federal grant funding.
- One component of the project was replacement of the fire alarm system. VVCC is instead proceeding with an upgrade to the current system, which will ultimately accomplish the same outcome, but with less disruption and expense.

The Combat Veterans Motorcycle Club donated a wheelchair accessible bus to the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC). The bus will be used by the Activities Department and to transport residents to medical appointments at the McGuire VA Medical Center. The Combat Veterans Motorcycle Club has been an active volunteer group at SBVCC for a number of years.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Lecky
Chair

ATTACHMENT 4

CEMETERIES COMMITTEE REPORT

July 22, 2014

Chairman Jones and members of the Board:

The Cemeteries Committee of the Board of Veterans Services met on July 8, 2014 at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. At the meeting, the Committee:

- Reviewed current operations and projects at the three state veterans cemeteries.
- Reviewed FY14 interment numbers, equipment purchase, maintenance reserve projects, and expenditures at the cemeteries. The Committee held in-depth discussion on the forecast workload and expenditure levels for FY14 (made in August, 2013) versus the actual workload and expenditures.
- Received a thorough briefing on the preparation of master plans for the Amelia and Suffolk cemeteries. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that DVS continue to actively pursue the process of acquiring property (or the development rights thereto) adjacent to the Amelia cemetery for future expansion.
- Reviewed and approved the state veterans cemeteries building and property maintenance, equipment purchase and replacement, and planning & improvement plans for FY15-26, with the understanding that the plans are subject to change and will be reviewed annually by the Committee.
- Reviewed and approved the budget and resource plans for FY15-20, with the understanding that the plans are subject to change and will be reviewed annually by the Committee.

I wish to thank Chairman Thad Jones; BVS members Susan Hippen, Jim Icenhour, and Belinda Pinckney; and JLC Vice Chairman Chip Moran for joining me and Committee members Max Beyer and Don Kaiserman for a very informative meeting. Draft minutes of the July 8 Committee meeting have been distributed electronically.

The Committee does not have any budget or legislative initiatives for consideration by the Board as recommendations for the Governor and General Assembly for the 2015 session, but does request that the Board support the Committee's recommendation that DVS continue to pursue the purchase of property adjacent to the Amelia cemetery for possible future expansion.

A special thanks to DVS Cemeteries Director Dan Kemano and the cemetery team for working so hard to honor our veterans and their families.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra D. Love
Chair

ATTACHMENT 5

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Report to the Board of Veterans Services July 22, 2014

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) has met twice since the last report to the Board of Veterans Services (BVS).

At the May 21 meeting, the JLC received reports on:

- *Virginia Solicitation of Contributions Law*, by Michael Menefee, Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;
- *Department of Motor Vehicles Military/Veterans Programs and Services*, by Christina Lipin, Military and Veterans Programs Manager, Department of Motor Vehicles;
- *Virginia War Memorial Phase 2 design and construction*, by Jon Hatfield, VWM Executive Director.

At the July 16 meeting, the JLC:

- Adopted six initiatives for consideration by the Governor and General Assembly for the 2015 session.
- Held elections for JLC Chairman and Vice Chairman:
 - Mr. Chip Moran, representing the National Association for Uniformed Services, was elected Chairman;
 - Mr. Brett Reistad, representing the American Legion, was elected Vice Chairman;
 - They assumed their new roles at the conclusion of the meeting.
- Outgoing Chairman Don Kaiserman was presented a plaque to recognize his outstanding service to the JLC as its Chairman from 2012 to 2014.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the BVS in support of Virginia's veterans in 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas "Chip" Moran
Chairman

ATTACHMENT 6

VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION REPORT TO Board of Veterans Services July 22, 2014

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees has not held any meetings since last BVS meeting. The VSF Report to the BVS on 13 May remains valid. The end of FY14 VSF Financial Report is not as yet available.

The Board has gained two new members appointed by the Governor on 20 June. One is John Lesinski who is Senior Vice President at Colliers International and is a retired Marine Colonel. The other is Matice Wright who is an independent Consultant and Entrepreneur and is a retired Naval Flight Officer. They are replacing Peter Trainer and Juanita Farrow who will remain on the Board as advisors to the Development Committee.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for August 6, 2014 at the Virginia War Memorial. There will be Development and Finance Committee meetings prior to the Board meeting. Items for the next meeting may include: (1) approval of the Final Quarter FY14 Financial Statement; (2) approval of the review and updates of VSF-DVS Joint Policies #1, 2, 3 and 4; (3) refine a new policy on charitable bequests/planned giving; (4) review VSF FY14 fundraising program and projections for FY15; and (5) appointment of committee chairs for FY15.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Schollmann
VSF Chairman

ATTACHMENT 7



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

Paul E. Galanti
Commissioner

Telephone: (804) 786-0286
Fax: (804) 786-0302

Memorandum for: Chairman Thad Jones
Members, Board of Veterans Services

From: Paul Galanti, Commissioner

Date: July 22, 2014

Subject: Department of Veterans Services report

Some of the recent items of note for the Department of Veterans Services (DVS):

- Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP):
 - The June 9, 2014 state-wide Homeless Veteran Summit convened high-level decision makers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), state agencies, Continuums of Care (CoCs), veteran service organizations, and non-profit and private groups to develop a coordinated plan to end veteran homelessness in Virginia.
 - Over 170 people attended the summit, which was hosted in collaboration with the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness and VA VISN 6.
 - The summit provided best practices in housing first, rapid re-housing, targeting of resources, data sharing, access to behavioral and mental health, and employment services.
 - VWWP received a Highly Rural Transportation Grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the amount of \$8,825 to implement the Highland County Veterans Transportation Program (grant period June 30, 2014 – June 29, 2015).
- Veterans care centers:
 - Construction continues on the 40-bed addition to the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC). Completion is expected in late 2014 with the first new residents expected to be admitted in early 2015;
 - SBVCC was awarded a 2014 Bronze National Quality Award by the American Healthcare Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) for

- SBVCC's dedication to improving the lives of residents through commitment to quality care.
- Work began June 2 on the new patient elopement system at the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC). The new system is funded in part through a federal grant.
- Veterans cemeteries:
 - 1,465 veterans and eligible dependents were interred at state veterans cemeteries in Fiscal Year 2014:
 - Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk): 1,018 interments;
 - Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Amelia): 307 interments;
 - Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin): 140 interments.
 - As of June 30, 2014, a total of 10,674 veterans and spouses have been interred.
 - All work is now finished on the *Avenue of Flags* project at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin). Equipment is in place for an *Avenue of Flags* at all three state veterans cemeteries. American Flags are flown on Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, and on special occasions
 - Virginia War Memorial
 - Over 2,000 people attended the Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony on May 26. The inspirational tribute, held in the Heilman Amphitheater, was dedicated to the proposition that Freedom is Never Free.
 - An estimated 3,000 people viewed the *RVA Fireworks on the James* from the Virginia War Memorial on July 5. The Memorial was open extended hours.
 - Design work continues on the 19,500 square foot addition to the Virginia War Memorial. Construction is tentatively scheduled to be complete in Fall 2016.
 - Veterans Education, Training and Employment (VETE):
 - VETE is collaborating with the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU-RRTC) to conduct a study, funded by the National Science Foundation, on the perceptions of GI Bill participants of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields as a viable career option.
 - Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program: the second annual V3 summit is scheduled for August 28. Invitations will be sent to all Board members.

Thank you for your stellar support of the Department of Veterans Services and our programs and services. We look forward to our continued partnership.

ATTACHMENT 8

Board of Veterans Services Position Paper 2015-01 Benefit Services Section Adopted July 22, 2014

1. **Objective:** To ensure that the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has the financial resources necessary to effectively recruit, hire, train, and retain staff members in the Benefit Services Section.

2. **Background:**
 - Veterans with injuries or illnesses resulting from military service may file a claim for compensation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
 - DVS assists Virginia veterans with the VA claims development and submission process. Services are provided free of charge at 23 Field Offices.
 - Virginia receives a considerable return on investment for helping veterans, estimated at \$122 million in new disability compensation payments to Virginia veterans in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, \$154 million in FY 2011, and \$154 million in FY 2012.
 - DVS Benefit Field Offices are staffed by trained claims agents who provide direct, one-on-one assistance to veterans in developing and filing VA claims.
 - DVS has had a 70 percent claims agent turnover during the past five years, with many leaving for higher paying jobs.
 - DVS lacks the financial resources to recruit and retain trained and experienced claims agents by being able to offer them competitive salaries.

3. **Discussion:**
 - The state Human Resources (HR) system provides state agencies with the tools necessary to recruit, hire, train, and retain employees. However, agencies must have the funding necessary to effectively use existing state HR tools.
 - DVS lacks the funding to make effective use of all state HR tools.
 - Frequent turnover among Benefits Section employees directly impacts services to Virginia's veterans. Because it takes a considerable amount of time to train new employees and for them to become fully certified, the effect of turnover is substantial and is detrimental to good customer service.
 - DVS has created a staff development plan to compensate Benefit Section employees based on their knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and level of responsibility. The plan incorporates "sub pay-bands" that provide pay increases based on documented achievement of training milestones, certifications, increased responsibility, etc.
 - Implementing the DVS staff development plan will require significant additional funding.

4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly support the recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of Benefits Section staff by increasing the DVS Benefits Services section budget in FY16.

**Board of Veterans Services
Position Paper 2015-02
Centenarian Veterans
Adopted July 22, 2014**

1. **Objective:** Identify and recognize Virginia's Centenarian Veterans and the centenarian spouses of such veterans.
2. **Background:**
 - a. A Centenarian is a person who is 100 years old or older.
 - b. It is likely that there are Centenarian Veterans in Virginia.
 - c. While there is no exact number of Centenarians Veterans in Virginia, a Census Bureau report put the number of centenarians living in Virginia in 2010 at 1,190 (53,364 centenarians in the United States).
3. **Discussion:**
 - a. A centenarian is rare and distinct from the rest of the older population and is deserving of special recognition from the Commonwealth.
 - b. If Virginia's Centenarian Veterans could be identified, they could be appropriately recognized for achieving this distinction and for their service to the Nation and the Commonwealth.
 - c. A mechanism could be established for Centenarian Veterans to self-identify themselves to state government, or for family members or friends to identify them, in order that they may be recognized.
 - d. A state workgroup could also assist in identifying Centenarian Veterans in our state veterans care centers, at federal medical care facilities for veterans, in partnership with our cities and towns, and through information from the National Centenarian Awareness Project.
4. **Recommendations:**
 - a. That the Governor create a working group, led by Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, to facilitate the identification and recognition of Virginia's Centenarian Veterans and the centenarian spouses of such veterans.
 - b. That special certificates of recognition be created to recognize Centenarian Veterans and their centenarian spouses.
 - c. That certificates be presented to the veterans and spouses upon the request of the veteran or spouse, or of a family member or friend.
 - d. That a Virginia State Flag that has flown over the State Capitol also be presented.
 - e. That the Governor present the first certificate and flag at a special ceremony, and that a press release and photos of the ceremony be released in order to promote the new program.

ATTACHMENT 9

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS Summary of 2015 Initiatives Adopted July 16, 2014

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
JLC 2015-01	That the Governor and General Assembly support the hiring, training, and retention of Department of Veterans Services (DVS) claims agents by approving additional funding in FY16.
JLC 2015-02	That the Governor and General Assembly support the delivery of mental health and rehabilitative services for Virginia veterans, Guardsmen, Reservists, and family members through continued and increased funding for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) in the FY16 budget
JLC 2015-03	That the Governor and General Assembly authorize five additional positions for the Virginia War Memorial in FY16 and appropriate the necessary funding for these positions.
JLC 2015-04	That the Governor and the General Assembly support the further reduction of veteran homelessness by approving additional funding in FY16 for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to support increases in general statewide homeless prevention, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing funding to help veterans living in rural areas and/or ineligible for VA services.b. DHCD for development of a statewide homeless data warehouse system to permit a better understanding of the needs of veterans accessing mainstream homeless services.c. DVS/VWWP to add three new Housing Resource Specialist (HRS) positions in order to expand coverage to Roanoke and Northern Virginia, and to add a second HRS position in Hampton Roads.d. DVS/VWWP to add one position to work with the criminal justice system to facilitate statewide coordination of federal, state, and community resources.
JLC 2015-05	That the General Assembly and the Governor approve the establishment of a veterans' lottery as part of the Compact with Virginia's Veterans to supplement the General Fund's support of approved veteran's requirements, with any residual lottery funding reverting back to Education.
JLC 2015-06	That the Governor and General Assembly continue state support for the Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia veterans care center construction projects and continue certification of the availability of 35% state funding to match the federal grant funds, thereby maintaining both projects on the VA Priority List Group 1.