

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2015

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on March 18, 2015, at the American Legion Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

Members Present

- Brett Reistad, American Legion
- Richard Mansfield, AMVETS
- Donald Kaiserman, Association of the United States Army
- John Prendergast, Marine Corps League
- Stuart Williams, Military Officers Association of America
- Robert Fairchild, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Thomas Moran, National Association for Uniformed Services
- Matthew Dailey, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Carmen Gentile, Reserve Officers Association
- Thomas Gimble, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Robert Huffman, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
- Marie Juliano, Women Marines Association
- Johnny Johnson, representing the Board of Veterans Services
- Rich Schollmann, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- John L. Newby II, Commissioner of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- Harold Barton, Air Force Association
- Allan McCroskey, Disabled American Veterans
- Abe Zino, Fleet Reserve Association
- John Edwards, Korean War Veterans Association
- Rich Rinaldo, Legion of Valor
- William Barrett, Military Order of the World Wars
- Glenn Rodriguez, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- David Coffield, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- James Clem, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Shawn Otto, Virginia National Guard Association

Alternates Present (representing their VSO)

- Curtis Jennings, Disabled American Veterans
- Bill Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association
- William Townsley, Military Order of the World Wars
- Frank Driscoll, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- John Velleca, Virginia National Guard Association

Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)

- Vic Pena, Military Officers Association of America
- Dan Dennison, National Association for Uniformed Services
- Robert Barnette, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Senator Bryce Reeves
- Jaime Areizaga-Soto, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Leslie Frazier, Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Al Pianalto, Office of Delegate Kirk Cox
- Daniel Davies, Office of Delegate Dave LaRock
- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Jack Hilgers, DVS
- Brandi Jancaitis, DVS
- Judy Reid, DVS
- Danielle Weaver, DVS
- Cathy Wilson, DVS
- Christina Barille, Department of Military Affairs
- Matt Leary, Department of Motor Vehicles
- Sarah Berday-Sacks, Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC)

Others Present

- John R. Clickener, Marine Corps League Department of Virginia
- Rick Oertel, American Legion
- Carl Bess, Air Force Association

Items included in the Agenda Packet

Agenda (Agenda Item II)

Overview of 2015 General Assembly Session (Agenda Item IV)

- Summary of JLC 2015 Initiatives
- Summary of bills/resolutions
- Summary of budget amendments

Reports (Agenda Item VI)

- Board of Veterans Services
- Veterans Services Foundation
- Department of Veterans Services

New Business (Agenda Item VI)

- JLC member 2015-2018 terms: nomination/appointment process
 - Cover memo
 - Term expiration dates
 - Guidance for VSO commanders/presidents
 - Sample nomination letter

Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Thomas “Chip” Moran called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Vice Chairman Brett Reistad led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of VSOs, Quorum Determination, Approval of the Agenda, and Introduction of Guests

The roll was called, and 18 of the 23 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being represented. A quorum was determined. Mr. Johnny Johnson, representing the Board of Veterans Services (BVS); Mr. Rich Schollmann, the Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF); and Commissioner John Newby of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) were recorded as present.

Mr. Tom Gimble made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Bill Townsley, to approve the agenda as presented. The **motion** carried **unanimously** (see *Attachment 1*).

Chairman Moran asked Mr. Steven Combs to introduce the guests. Their names and organizations are recorded above. Chairman Moran welcomed them to the meeting.

Approve December 18, 2014 and January 15, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gimble made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Townsley, to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2014 meeting as drafted. The **motion** carried **unanimously**.

Mr. Gimble made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Townsley, to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2015 JLC conference as drafted. The **motion** carried **unanimously**.

Overview of the 2015 General Assembly session

Mr. Combs gave a presentation on the veteran and military-related budget and legislative items from the 2015 General Assembly session.

Commissioner John Newby thanked the JLC members for all they had done for the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and for their support during the 2015 General Assembly session. He noted that the DVS General Fund budget increased by 27%.

Mr. Don Kaiserman asked Mr. Combs about potential sites for the planned veterans care centers in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia. Mr. Combs replied that potential sites include land owned by the City of Virginia Beach, Prince William County, and George Mason University, but that no decision had yet been made about a site.

At Chairman Moran’s request, Ms. Brandi Jancaitis, Executive Director for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP), gave a brief overview of VWWP services for homeless veterans. Commissioner Newby noted that in a “100 Day Challenge” lasting from November 2014 to February 2015, over 400 homeless veterans had been housed.

Chairman Moran announced that Old Dominion University is holding its 2nd Annual Virginia

Student Veterans Conference on Friday, March 27 at the Ted Constant Convocation Center in Norfolk. He noted that John Harvey, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, will be a guest speaker.

Reports

Board of Veterans Services

Mr. Johnny Johnson gave the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) report (see *Attachment 2*).

Veterans Services Foundation

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman Rich Schollmann gave the VSF report (see *Attachment 3*).

Virginia Military Advisory Council

Chairman Moran stated that the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC) has not met since the last JLC meeting.

Department of Veterans Services

Commissioner John Newby delivered the report of the Department of Veterans Services (see *Attachment 4*).

Commissioner Newby stated that the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program was being rebranded to better reflect what the program does and who it serves; effective October 1, it will be known as Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS).

New Business

Report of the Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee

Mr. Pete Fairchild delivered the report of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, stating that the Committee did not have any recommended changes to either document at this time. He invited the members to recommend changes to him at any time.

JLC member 2015-2018 terms: nomination/appointment/reappointment process

Mr. Combs reviewed the process that will be followed for veterans service organizations (VSOs) to nominate members for appointment by Governor McAuliffe for the 2015-2018 term. He asked for the members help in the nomination/appointment process for their VSO.

Initial review/discussion of potential 2016 JLC Initiatives

Chairman Moran opened the floor for the members to present potential ideas for initial discussion.

Mr. Brett Reistad said the American Legion would develop a proposal on the need for more veterans service officers at the American Legions and other organizations. He asked the members how many VSOs have a service officer program; five members indicated that their VSO has such a program. Mr. Reistad explained that the American Legion has been working to build a robust service officer program, but that there are only limited funds for service officers.

He said that there are currently have 12 American Legion service officers. He noted that some states provide financial assistance to VSOs to offset the cost of operating service officer programs. The American Legion would like to propose to look at this as an initiative for next year.

Commissioner Newby pointed out that the additional funding appropriated to DVS in Fiscal Year 2016 will enable DVS to increase the number of DVS Veterans Service Representatives from 36 to 59. Commissioner Newby suggested the VSOs explore opportunities for joint training.

Mr. George Corbett presented a proposal for the Vietnam Veterans of America. He explained that the proposal is to name Virginia bridges and roadways after Medal of Honor recipients. He noted that 49 Virginians have received the Medal of Honor.

Mr. Stu Williams distributed a list of potential MOAA recommendations, listing three budget items, two legislative items, and four watch items. Mr. Williams then gave a brief overview of the following:

Budget Items:

- B1. Benefit Services Claims
- B2. Veteran Wounded Warrior Program
- B3. Virginia War Memorial

Legislative Items:

- L1. Court dockets for veterans
- L2. Electronic return of Voted Ballot by overseas military

Watch Items:

- W1. Veterans Care Centers
- W2. DVS Report by JLARC
- W3. Veteran Employment Grant Fund
- W4. Veteran Entrepreneur Grant Fund

Other New Business and open discussion

Mr. Carmen Gentile gave a brief report on the Nominating Committee, noting that the terms of 21 of 23 JLC members will expire on June 30, 2015.

Mr. Stu Williams inquired about reaching out to younger veterans to invite them to the JLC meetings. Chairman Moran explained that with student veterans there is a huge turn over, making it difficult to have the same person at each meeting, but that one solution would be to have the student veterans groups rotate a representative to attend the JLC meeting as a guest.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Moran reminded the members that the next meeting will be held May 20 at the American Legion building.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1
Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
American Legion Building
1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond
March 18, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman* (10:00 – 10:05)
- II. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, approval of agenda and introduction of guests – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman* (10:05 – 10:10)
- III. Approve December 18, 2014 meeting minutes and January 15, 2015 conference minutes – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
- IV. Overview of the 2015 General Assembly session – *Steven Combs, DVS Director of Policy & Planning* (10:15 – 10:45)
- V. Reports (10:45 – 11:05)
 - a. Board of Veterans Services – *Johnny Johnson, BVS Vice Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Rich Schollmann, VSF Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - c. Virginia Military Advisory Council – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - d. Department of Veterans Services – *John Newby, Commissioner* (5 minutes)
- VI. New business (11:05 – 11:50)
 - a. Report of the Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee (annual review) – *Pete Fairchild, Committee Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - b. JLC member 2015-2018 terms: nomination/appointment/reappointment process – *Steven Combs, DVS Director of Policy & Planning* (5 minutes)
 - c. Initial review/discussion of potential 2016 JLC Initiatives – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman* (20 minutes)
 - d. Other New Business and open discussion – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman* (15 minutes)
- VII. Public comment period (11:50 – 11:55)
- VIII. Closing remarks and prepare for next meeting – *Chip Moran, JLC Chairman* (11:55 – 12:00)
- IX. Adjourn (12:00)

Lunch to follow the meeting

ATTACHMENT 2

REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (JLC) OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS March 18, 2015

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) met on January 12, 2015. At the meeting, the Board:

- Reviewed and discussed the 2015 General Assembly session, to include:
 - Overview (dates, meetings, etc.);
 - BVS and JLC 2015 initiatives;
 - Governor's introduced budget and legislative package;
 - Other veterans legislation;
 - General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus.
- Reviewed and endorsed the Compact with Virginia's Veterans.

The BVS Benefits Committee met on December 22, 2014. The meeting featured an in-depth briefing and review of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Benefit Services section.

The BVS will hold its next meeting on May 12. Additional meetings are scheduled for July 21 and October 26.

Meetings of the BVS Benefits and Cemeteries Committees will be held before the May meeting, likely in early to mid April. The BVS will alert the JLC Chairman when these meetings are scheduled so that the JLC may continue to send a representative. The JLC members bring valuable input to the BVS committees and play an integral role in committee operations.

The top priority for both the BVS and the JLC for the 2015 General Assembly was funding for the DVS Benefits Services section. Our combined advocacy resulted in an additional \$1,750,201 being proposed by the Governor and approved by the General Assembly. Together we achieved great results, and we look forward to our continued partnership with the JLC in 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Johnny G. Johnson
Vice Chairman

ATTACHMENT 3

VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION REPORT TO Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations March 18, 2015

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees has not held any meetings since last JLC meeting. The VSF Report to the JLC on 18 December 2014 remains valid.

As of 1 March, the Foundation has received donations during FY15 of about \$480,000, of which about \$285,000 is for VWWP. This includes significant funds for V3 of \$100,000 from Altria, included in the last Foundation report, and \$21,600 from Virginia Housing Authority for a homeless Boot Camp. It also includes a grant for VWWP of \$22,800. As always, the Foundation extends its sincere congratulations to the outstanding outreach of all DVS activities to realize this significant fundraising level. It could not have been accomplished without the dedication of all DVS personnel.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2015 at the Virginia War Memorial. Items for the next meeting may include: (1) approval of the Second Quarter FY15 Financial Statement and budget adjustments, if any; (2) approval of the review and update of VSF-DVS Joint Policy #9; (3) refine a new draft policy on charitable bequests/planned giving; (4) review and update of the VSF Bylaws and Joint DVS-VSF Memorandum of Understanding; (5) review VSF FY15 goals and objectives; (6) elect a nomination committee for FY16 officers; and (7) confirm meeting dates and locations of 2015 Board meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Schollmann
VSF Chairman

ATTACHMENT 4

Memorandum for: Chairman Chip Moran
Members, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations

From: John L. Newby II, Commissioner

Date: March 18, 2015

Subject: Department of Veterans Services report

By any measure, the 2015 General Assembly session was a huge success for Virginia's veterans, Guardsmen and Reservists, active duty service members, and their families – due, in no small measure, to the outstanding work of the JLC in identifying and advocating for high-priority budget and legislative initiatives. Thank you!

Even as we celebrate the success of the 2015 session, we must start now to identify critical issues for the 2016 General Assembly. Secretary Harvey and I have already identified three focus areas for the next session:

1. Veterans Dockets
2. On-campus support for military and veteran students
3. Spouse employment

We will be briefing you at future JLC meetings to get your input and your buy-in; more information to follow. We will need your support in the Executive and Legislative branches to effect positive change in these areas. We are also counting on the JLC to give us other great ideas to improve services for our veterans, military, and families. I know that not all of your initiatives will align under the three focus areas outlined above, but, to the extent that they can be aligned, our odds of success will only improve.

The JLC has a well-established process, and a well-earned reputation, for identifying and advocating for issues that support the entire veterans and military community. Please push those ideas forward!