

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2006

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) was held on Wednesday, October 11, 2006, at the American Legion Department of Virginia Headquarters Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue in Richmond.

Members Present

Jim Aucoin, *AMVETS*; John C. Bonnell, Jr., *Marine Corps League*; Mason Botts, *Air Force Association*; Daniel D. Boyer, *Veterans of Foreign Wars*; Vince Burgess, *Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services (ex-officio/non-voting)*; John T. Edwards, *Korean War Veterans Association*; David Ellis, *NAUS*; Robert O. Gray, *American Ex-Prisoners of War*; Jenny M. Holbert, *Women Marine Association*; John T. Jackson, *Paralyzed Veterans of America*; Norman Jasper, *Military Order of the Purple Heart*; Cornelius T. O'Neill, *American Legion*; Frank Sherman, *Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*; Kenneth Smith, *Virginia National Guard Association*; Tom Stephen, Jr., *Reserve Officers Association*; Frank Wickersham, *MOAA*; and Sam Wilder, *Association of the United States Army*.

Members Absent

Paul Galanti, *BVS Chair (ex-officio)*, Daniel Miller, *Disabled American Veterans*; Richard J. Rinaldo, *Legion of Valor of the U. S., Inc.*; R. Goodwin Sacra, *Navy Seabee Veterans of America*; Thomas Snee, *Fleet Reserve Association*; and Richard Schneider, *Non-Commissioned Officers Association*

Alternates Present

Jack Hilgers, *Legion of Valor of the U. S., Inc.*
David Martinez, *Disabled American Veterans*

Others Present

Russell Fenn, *Marine Corps League*
Paul Hamaker, *NAUS*
Dan Karnes, *Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*
Don Kaiserman, *Association of the U.S. Army*
John Velleca, *Virginia National Guard Association*
Jon Hatfield, Director, Virginia War Memorial
Louis Bromley, VDOT
Roz Trent, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Steven Combs, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Andrew Edwards, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Anne Atkins, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Lew Dea1, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General

Agenda Packet

Meeting Agenda; draft Minutes of the August 9, 2006, meeting; Guide through the Virginia General Assembly Homepage; JLC Membership Listing; Legislative Objectives – 2006-07; JLC 2007 Legislative Agenda; Talking Papers: Military Family Support Programs; DVS Strategic Plan and Budget; In-State Tuition for Service Members; Construct an Education Center at the Virginia War Memorial; Pay Day Lending; October 11, 2006 Memo from JLC Chair re: “Alternate Members” and attached JLC Alternate Designation Form, Point Paper: Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center; Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program Clarification of Commonwealth of Virginia Policy ; Fisher House Update

Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. at the American Legion Department of Virginia Headquarters Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue in Richmond. John Jackson led the Council in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Roll Call of VSOs and Quorum Determination

Roz Trent called the roll. Seventeen of the twenty-one member Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) were recorded as being represented (16 by a primary member, 1 by an alternate member), and a quorum was determined.

Introduction of New VSO Representatives and Guests

The newly elected Chairman, Mason Botts welcomed members and guests to the October meeting of the JLC. He acknowledged the following:

- New VSO representatives to the JLC: John T. Edwards (*Korean War Veterans Association*); Frank Sherman (*Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*); and Daniel Boyer (*Veterans of Foreign Wars*).
- JLC Alternates present: Jack Hilgers, *Legion of Valor of the U. S.*; Don Kaiserman, *AUSA*; Russell Fenn, *Marine Corps League*; John Velleca, *Virginia National Guard Association*; Paul Hamaker, *NAUS*; and Dan Karnes, *Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*.
- New VSO represented on the JLC: Jenny Holbert, *Women Marine Association*
- VSOs no longer represented on the JLC: *Homeless and Disabled Veterans*; *Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge*; and *U. S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association*.
- DVS and OAG staff: Anne Atkins, DVS Director of Communications; Lew Deal, DVS Deputy Director of Communications; and Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General.

Chairman Botts focused attention to the updated JLC Membership Roster, which was included in the agenda packets. He asked each member to review the contact information and submit any changes to Mrs. Trent.

Review and Approval of August 9, 2006 Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the August 9, 2006 meeting were reviewed. A **motion** was made by Norman Jasper, seconded by Kenneth Smith and passed unanimously, to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2006 meeting, with the following amendment:

P. 4, 1st ¶, line 9 – change “The General Assembly is being requested to fund \$4 million” to “The General Assembly is being requested to fund \$3.5 million in 2007.”

First Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

Update from Chairs

Paul Galanti, Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services, had been called to attend another meeting and could not be present.

Lydia Dudley, Chairperson, Veterans Services Foundation (VSF), gave a brief overview of the role of the VSF. Ms. Dudley has been a member of the VSF since its inception in 2003, but had recently been voted as Chairperson in July 2006. She stated that part of her plan as Chairperson was to establish more collaboration between the VSF, the BVS and the JLC. She stated that the VSF consisted of eight (8) members appointed by the Governor and the Commissioner of Veterans Services and the Chairman of the Board of Veteran Services, who serve as ex-officio members. Ray Smoot of the VSF serves as Vice-Chair.

Ms. Dudley stated that the VSF’s responsibility focused primarily on (1) administering the Veterans Service Fund and make expenditures from the Fund to the Department of Veterans Services to provide supplemental funding for the DVS’s services and programs, and (2) to receive and seek funds as appropriate for veterans’ needs. It is not a competing factor with the BVS or the JLC. She emphasized the importance of focusing more attention on how the VSF might play a role in meeting the unmet needs of veterans in the Commonwealth. She solicited and welcomed any input/suggestions from the JLC to assist in this effort. A formal letter to the Chairs of the BVS and JLC would be forthcoming asking for input regarding VSF future activities and detailing VSF goals, objectives and strategies.

Discussions regarding the VSF mission/purpose followed. Sam Wilder asked if the Fisher House would be a project that the VSF could sponsor. Steven Combs presented and distributed updated information regarding the Fisher House initiative, which was a part of the JLC legislative agenda. Updated information, received from Jim Weiskopf, Vice President of Communications for the Fisher House Foundation, is as follows:

- The USDVA has accepted a proffer from the Fisher House Foundation to build a Fisher House on the grounds of the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond.
- Initial estimates for the McGuire Fisher House
 - 21 rooms
 - 16,000 square feet
 - 12 living suites on the first floor and 9 suites on the second floor
 - Will have a floor plan similar to 21-room houses under construction in Tampa and San Antonio
- Next Steps
 - The Fisher House Foundation will send a team – including an architect – to discuss site selection and other issues with the McGuire VAMC staff. This will probably be scheduled sometime within the next month
 - Sometime after this meeting, a site on the McGuire VAMC campus will be selected
 - The Fisher House Foundation architect(s) will then prepare architectural plans
 - The Fisher House Foundation construction manager will draw up specifications for the project, and will send out construction bids to firms in the Richmond area
- The Fisher House Foundation anticipates beginning construction of the McGuire Fisher House in early/mid 2007, with completion in late 2007

Chairman Botts asked Commissioner Burgess to further clarification regarding the relationship between the BVS, JLC and VSF. Commissioner Burgess stated that the Board of Veteran Services (BVS) is a 19-member policy board, which consists of citizen members and legislators. The DVS advises the Board on operational issues and seeks advice on broad scale issues (i.e. EO 19). The Chairman of the JLC and VSF serve as ex-officio members. He stated that the JLC legislative agenda was reviewed and accepted by the BVS. Legislative members of the Board serve as advocates and/or patrons of legislation. He stated that there is connectivity between the three entities (JLC, BVS and VSF). It is critical that the Chair of the VSF attend JLC meetings to be advised of its operations, as well as to share and gain input as how the VSF can assist in JLC efforts.

Department of Transportation (VDOT), Disabled Veterans Program

Louis Bromley, Coordinator of the Wounded Veterans Program, stated that a presentation had been given at the May 17, 2006 JLC meeting on VDOT's new initiative, "*Transitional Internship for Returning Veterans.*" The purpose of this initiative was to establish a two-year non-traditional transitional internship program for 6-10 returning wounded and disabled veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan who are Virginia residents. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had granted funding in the amount of \$500,000, and VDOT contributed \$100,000 as "in kind" contributions (i.e., VDOT employees donating time, money) to help promote the program.

Mr. Bromley stated the two-year internship program helps develop job skills and/or improves current job skills. Jobs will not be created, but rather candidates will be placed in open jobs and the environment will be tailored to meet their needs. VDOT is partnering with private enterprise in this effort to help veterans return to the job market.

He stated that the primary focus of the program is on current wounded veterans. However, he stated that the program is also open to any veteran who is identified with a disability or is able to provide documentation of military service. In addition, the program is open to those veterans without disability or wounds, as well.

Mr. Bromley distributed information and asked the JLC for its assistance in referring interested veterans to the program.

Chairman Botts stated that this program might tie-in with the JLC legislative initiative - Veterans Preference.

Commissioner's Update

Commissioner Burgess welcomed the new members to the JLC. He gave a summary of the following national legislation which DVS is tracking:

- *S.2694 - removes certain limitations on attorney representation of claimants for veterans benefits in administrative proceedings before the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make certain improvements in the area of memorial affairs, and for other purposes.*

Commissioner Burgess stated that there is concern regarding this piece of legislation as there are claims officers already providing this service. At a meeting of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, a resolution was passed opposing this legislation. It would open it up for attorneys to take on the representation of veterans in the appeal process and many Veterans Service Organizations feel there is no need for this legislation.

There is strong indication that this bill is on its way to passage.

- *S.2762/H.R. 5671 ensures appropriate payment for cost of long term care payments to state Veterans Care Center as at the same rate as a private nursing home.*

Bill Van Thiel, Virginia Veterans Care Center Administrator, stated that presently, the USDVA can contract with private nursing homes for a veterans care contract at an all-inclusive rate (pays for room, medication, doctor's visits, lab work, etc.) for a certain period of time. The Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC), however, gets a per diem from the USDVA, which pays for about 1/3 of care. The VVCC is ineligible for a contract. These contracts are awarded based on service-connected disability percentage; however, for the VVCC, this does not matter. It will only get the per diem. This

legislation addresses this issue and allows the VVCC and other state care centers to participate in the contractual arrangement.

It is anticipated that the legislation will pass.

Chairman Botts stated that the JLC had previously addressed this issue (about two years ago) in its 2004 legislative agenda. He asked Steven Combs research this issue and provide information to him.

- *S.2766 transfers property at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant from the DoD to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purposes of a state veterans cemetery.*

Commissioner Burgess stated that this legislation is on its way to the President for signature.

Commissioner Burgess stated that DVS will keep the JLC abreast of the status of all national legislation.

House Appropriations Committee Presentation

A copy of the September 18, 2006 presentation given by Commissioner Burgess to the House Appropriations Committee (HAC) was included in the agenda packet. The presentation was given at the suggestion of Delegate Kirk Cox for the purpose of providing the HAC with a status of how the Department was using the funding and positions that had been appropriated. The presentation was very well received by the HAC members and staff.

A Report from the Auditor of Public Accounts was addressed in the presentation. Commissioner Burgess stated that DVS is addressing the specific findings of the APA Report by implementing a new Financial Management System and developing proper procedures/policy and ensuring they are implemented throughout the agency. DVS will be providing the Department of Accounts with a status report every three months. The BVS Budget and Strategic Planning Subcommittee will review the status report and a full report and a full report will be presented to the BVS. The JLC will receive a copy of the status report as well.

The Financial Management System (FMS), an automated financial system, is critical to the Department's success in keeping track of and monitoring expenditures and funds that have been allocated to the agency in an effective manner. The FMS will be finalized by the end of the year and used in presenting the operational budget to the BVS.

Executive Order Nineteen (EO19) Status and Legislative Process for 2007 General Assembly Session

Mr. Combs is developing the interim report, which is due to the Governor in mid-October. (The JLC will receive a copy of this report).

As a result of EO19, a meeting was held on October 5th with the Chair of the BVS (Vice-Chairman, Judson Stanley attended); JLC Chairman and Vice Chairman, Mason Botts and Sam

Wilder; representatives from the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC); and representatives from the Virginia Citizen Solder Support Council (VCSSC). Also present were representatives of the Virginia National Guard, the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety, and the Department of Veterans Services. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a proposed joint list of legislative initiatives, which was embraced by all organizations. A full listing of legislative initiatives will be presented to the Governor and the Governor's Policy Office. It is envisioned that the Governor's Office will support some of these initiatives during the next session of the General Assembly. EO19 provided a mechanism for state agencies to work together on improving services to Virginia's veterans. A result of EO19 will be a roadmap for how Virginia can rank as one of the top five states in the country for providing benefits and services for veterans.

The final report of EO19 is due April 2007.

Request for Proposals (RFPs) – DVS will put out an RFP for a statewide study for care centers in Virginia, to include the northern Virginia area. Goal: (1) have a vision of where the needs are and (2) how to approach and address the need. The RFP should be out by the end of the month.

In addition, as required by the budget, DVS will put out a RFP to assist the department in understanding the need and location for additional veterans cemetery. There will be a cemetery in southwest Virginia, but requests have been received to study the need for veterans cemeteries in other parts of the state.

Marketing and Outreach – Anne Atkins and Lew Deal have been very aggressive in spreading the word out about the services of DVS. A Veterans Expo was held in Wytheville, Virginia, with 250 veterans in attendance.

John Bonnell commended Lew Deal on his presentation to the Marine Corps League staff meeting.

Commissioner Burgess requested that Anne Atkins, DVS Director of Communications, give a presentation on the DVS Communication Plan at the next meeting of the JLC.

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) – (formerly the Virginia War Orphans Education Program). This program has gotten additional interest and involvement of family members, spouses and children who qualify. The eligibility for this program has been expanded to include spouses, and the upper age of qualifying children was raised from 25 to 29.

Issue: The Code of Virginia requires colleges and universities to waive tuition and required fees. In addition, the law provides for the waiver of room, board, books and supplies, but makes these waivers contingent on funds being appropriated or donated funds being received. There are issues with how the language is written (*i.e. ...from such funds as may be appropriated...*) Because no funds have been specifically appropriated to support VMSDEP, the colleges and universities do not waive room, board, books, and supplies. DVS is working with Delegate

Janis, sponsor of HB1272 during the 2006 General Assembly, and the Governor's Office on this issue.

The JLC recessed for 5 minutes.

Old Business

JLC Legislative Agenda Updates

Chairman Botts reiterated Commissioner Burgess' comments regarding the meeting held on October 5, 2006. He stated that the JLC legislative agenda was well represented. He commended Vice-Chairman Sam Wilder in his effort in taking the lead on JLC legislative issues. A JLC Legislative Sub-Committee was formed to include the following:

Sam Wilder, Chair
Connie O'Neill, Vice-Chair
Jack Hilgers
Ken Smith
John Jackson

Chairman Botts revisited the issue of the JLC focusing on active duty military. Per legislative code, the JLC's primary charter is on **veterans** services, not active military. In discussions at the October 5th meeting, it was decided as a group, that focus would be placed on active duty military as well as veterans issues, as long as the veterans' issues was the primary focus.

Chairman Botts focused attention to the 2007 Legislative Agenda, which was included in the agenda packets. Vice Chairman Wilder stated that based on information submitted, the JLC collectively represented over 250,000 veterans, and urged members to communicate this with legislators when speaking on JLC legislative issues. Copies of the JLC representation in Virginia was distributed.

JLC 2007 Legislative Objectives

Vice Chairman Wilder distributed **amended** copies of the JLC 2007 Legislative Objectives. He explained that the package included a one-page statement of the seven legislative objectives voted on and approved at the June 14th JLC meeting:

- Priority #1** - Support for the Virginia National Guard and Reserves (Broken into 2 categories: (a) Preparedness and (b) Family Support Programs)
- Priority #2** – Fully fund the Department of Veterans Services Budget and Strategic Plan
- Priority #3** – In-State Tuition for Service Members
- Priority #4** – Funding for the Virginia War Memorial Foundation Wing
- Priority #5** – Clarify Veterans “Preference” in Hiring Practices
- Priority #6** – Pay Day Lending
- Priority #7** – State Tax Exemption for Virginia Residents of the Armed Forces while deployed overseas

Vice Chairman Wilder elaborated on each issue. Fact Sheets/Position Papers were attached for Priority #1, #2, #3, #4, and #6.

Discussion ensued on Priority #1 – Support for Virginia National Guard and Reserves – Family Support Programs. Frank Wickersham questioned the \$1.2 million provided to the Virginia Citizen Soldier Support Council (VCSSC) rather than the Adjutant General (TAG) in overseeing a combined approach to support families of the Guard and Reserve. Cindy Norwood stated that Guard is much better at family support than reserve; the TAG is over the Guard and someone needed to look out for the Reserve. Dan Boyer advised the JLC that the VFW operates a military assistance program that supports the family of reservists, guardsmen and active duty military in Virginia and every other state. Chairman Botts stated that in discussions at the October 5th Legislative Priorities meeting, it was noted that there are other organizations other than the Guard and Reserve that attention should be focused on. Vice-Chairman Wilder added that it was discussed that the various entities that provide family support fall under the umbrella of the VCSSC. He suggested that the VFW be represented under the VCSSC.

Chairman Botts requested an e-mail be sent to Mr. Combs that discusses the kinds of programs for families that each organization is involved in. This information will be given to the VCSSC.

Further discussion ensued.

Chairman Botts emphasized that the discussion centered around the JLC legislative agenda **only**; If VSOs have specific agendas, they should lobby for such.

Dave Ellis stated that the VMSDEP had not been funded. He asked if this item fell under “support for family support programs.” Chairman Botts stated that this was a different item and does not fall under “support for family programs.” Commissioner Burgess and Sam Wilder stated that the VMSDEP became an issue at the October 5th Legislative Priorities meeting and became a priority for the Governor.

Sam Wilder asked members to attend the House Commerce and Labor Committee meeting on Pay Day Lending on December 5th. Commissioner Burgess stated that this is carry-over bill. The Point of Contact will send reminder notices regarding this meeting.

JLC Points of Contact

Chairman Botts selected the following persons to serve as JLC Points of Contact for questions on legislative priorities listed below:

- Priority # 1 – Sam Wilder (primary)
- Priority # 2 – Frank Sherman (primary), Dan Karnes, Steven Combs (subject matter expert)
- Priority # 3 – Jack Hilgers (primary), Don Kaiserman
- Priority # 4 - Dave Ellis (primary), Connie O’Neill, Jon Hatfield (subject matter expert)

Priority # 5 – Dan Boyer (primary to develop a point paper)

Priority # 6 - Frank Wickersham (primary), Jack Hilgers, John Cooper, Richard Rinaldo

Priority # 7 - Frank Wickersham (primary), Jenny Holbert

Commissioner Burgess stated that DVS will develop a consistent format for the point papers with assigned bill numbers to be used during the General Assembly session.

The JLC unanimously accepted the 2007 Legislative Objectives distributed by Mr. Wilder.

The JLC recessed for 10 minutes.

Old Business (continued)

Sam Wilder made a motion that JLC accept the amended 2007 Legislative Objectives distributed at the October 11th meeting. Dan Boyer seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Chairman focused the members' attention to the "Guide to Walking Through the Virginia General Assembly Homepage" which was included in the agenda packets for members' use in tracking legislation.

JLC Alternates

Chairman Botts stated that the Code of Virginia states that the JLC member would be responsible for determining his/her alternate. Alternates may be temporary or permanent. He stated that there should be no organization that is not represented at JLC meetings. Included in the agenda packet was a memorandum from the Chair explaining the guidelines to ensure that all matters related to alternate JLC members are conducted in an effective, open, and timely manner. Also attached was an "Alternate Designation Form." If JLC members had already selected an alternate, members were requested to fill out the form and return it to Roz Trent. If not, members were requested to send the form to Mrs. Trent by mail. Faxes would also be accepted.

Chairman Botts reminded members that if he/she could not attend a meeting, members should contact the alternate so designated with the Alternate Designation Form. This can be done on a short term basis (if alternate is temporary) or have a form on file (if alternate is permanent).

Chairman Botts also emphasized that alternates were welcome to attend meetings and participate with JLC members; however, there would be only one reimbursement made for mileage per organization.

Jack Hilgers gave further clarification on S.2694. He stated that S.2694 is a bill designed to put money in trial lawyers' pockets and will not help veterans or speed the process. He stated that even though the bill is moving swiftly through the process, VSOs should contact senators and representatives and let them know of their opposition to the bill. **Mr. Hilgers made a motion**

that each JLC representative take this issue to his/her individual organization to support opposing this legislation. Dave Martinez seconded.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Burgess stated that he would send a copy of S.2694 and provide background information.

Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Hilgers amended the motion to read that JLC members take the issue back to member organizations and propose that if desired, organizations take an active role in fighting S. 2694 through contacting Senators and Congressmen, in addition to providing educational training on the services DVS.

No further discussion. Motion unanimously carried.

New Business:

October 5th Legislative Priorities Meeting Update

Chairman Botts stated that this issue had already been discussed. Actual documentation had not been received. Steven Combs had developed a listing of the different items that were pulled together to discuss prioritizing. Sam Wilder drafted the document that put things into groups that provided 4-5 items to propose to the Governor. He stated that because this is being handled by multiple groups, the papers are marked "*Governor's Confidential Working Papers*" and at this time, cannot be shared. As soon as he receives this information and is privileged to release the information, he will forward information to the JLC.

Sitter Barfoot Veterans Care Center Project Update

Chairman Botts focused attention to the handout included in the agenda packets entitled "Point Paper on the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center." Commissioner Burgess gave background information on the construction of the Care Center and informed the JLC of concerns expressed by some organizations of changes in the reduction of the number of beds (not rooms) for the domiciliary care addition planned at the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC). Currently there is a 160-bed, single-occupancy room facility under construction. A 40-bed/40-room domiciliary care wing will be added. This is a change from the 80-bed/40-room facility originally planned. Bill Van Thiel, VVCC Administrator, gave an overview of the current status:

- 160-bed facility currently under construction
 - 120 skilled care (nursing) beds
 - 40 Alzheimer's beds
 - Projected completion – Spring 2007
 - Projected opening – July 2007

- Total project costs: \$26.3 million
 - \$14.7 million – federal grant
 - \$11.6 million – Commonwealth of Virginia
- 40-bed addition
 - Domiciliary (assisted living) care
 - Construction expected to begin in 2009 or later
 - Project is ranked #88 of 160 on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs “Priority List of Pending State Home Construction Grant Applications for FY 2007”
 - Total project costs: up to \$8 million
 - \$5.2 million – federal grant
 - \$2.8 million – Commonwealth of Virginia

Mr. Van Thiel stated that early in the planning stages, double-occupancy rooms for the skilled care and domiciliary care wings was originally discussed. However, due to recent health studies, infectious diseases and privacy issues, the health care industry has moved more toward private rooms. In addition, females presently comprise up to 15% of the military. The use of double occupancy rooms with one bathroom would not be feasible. A decision was made that the best and safest environment that can be provided for veterans is private rooms and private bathrooms.

Mr. Van Thiel further stated that construction of the facility will be as “home-like” as possible -- not like an “institutionalized” setting. He stated that many soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are younger. They, too, may need the use of the facility, but do not want to be in a “nursing home” setting. The building is built long and wide. It is a one-floor facility and provides many entrances to the courtyard for security and safety purposes.

Additionally, Mr. Van Thiel stated that of the 160-bed facility, 40 beds will be for the Alzheimer’s unit. He explained that the additional wing was cut from 60 beds to 40 beds. He explained that the Alzheimer’s Unit needs to be smaller, as patients do not need excessive external stimulation. There are two (2) twenty-bed wings, each having a twenty-seat dining area and a day-room that connects to the dining area.

Mr. Van Thiel stated that DVS moved toward quality rather than quantity for veterans, and reduction of the beds provided a safer and more feasible environment.

Mr. Van Thiel stated that the DVS will submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Long Term Care Center Feasibility Study to assist the department in understanding the market potential for long term care facilities for Virginia’s Veteran population. The RFP will be submitted next week.

Discussion ensued.

Members were directed to the point sheet included in the agenda packets. John Bonnell gave a brief background presentation regarding an issue encountered by Mr. Todd Golding of Winchester, a disabled veteran and his wife, an eligible student applicant, encountered at Lord Fairfax Community College. Mr. Golding takes issue with the interpretation of the Code of Virginia, Article 13-7.4:1.A.(v), which allows for the waiver of books and supplies. Mr. Golding believes that this section is not properly interpreted to allow for the reimbursement of software required for courses at Lord Fairfax CC.. Mr. Golding has asked that the JLC intercede to gain allowance for software to be reimbursable.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Burgess suggested that since no funds are currently available in college/university budgets to cover required supplies, the JLC will need to wait to see what occurs in the legislative process and the Governor's Office. Steven Combs suggested that a more immediate interpretation regarding software could be requested from the Office of the Attorney General and report at the next JLC meeting.

Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General, stated that it may depend on what the software is used for. If required by professor of the course, she is unaware why "software" would not be considered supplies. She will do additional research.

Mr. Bonnell made a motion that the JLC recommends that, within the funds available, the Commonwealth of Virginia interpret that "supplies" includes required computer software as a waived expense under the Code. Dave Ellis seconded. The motion carried with one opposition (David Martinez).

Mr. Bonnell stated that Mr. Golding has expressed his appreciation to the staff at DVS for their helpfulness with this issue and his pleasure with the direction of proceeding that the DVS has taken in this issue.

JLC Legislative Campaign Plan

Sam Wilder distributed a "draft" JLC Legislative Campaign Plan. He explained that in addition to contacting individual delegates/senators, the draft "Campaign Plan" lists state delegates/senators who should be contacted on key issues/sponsors.

Key members of the JLC Legislative Sub-Committee are: Sam Wilder (Chair), Connie O'Neill, (Vice-Chair), Jack Hilgers, Ken Smith, and John Jackson.

Don Kaiserman informed the JLC that the MOAA Richmond Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America kicked off a program to welcome home the 80th Division, headquartered in Richmond at the Defense Supply Center. The objective of this event is three-fold:

- To show respect and appreciate to troops and families
- Recognize an opportunity for recruiting

- Retention

Mr. Kaiserman met with 80th Division and asked that the event in Richmond be held at the Virginia War Memorial on October 22, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. He thanked Anne Atkins for providing communication on this event. Delegate Kirk Cox will present resolutions to the 80th Division. Senator Ed Houck and Delegate Robert Orrock will also attend. Mr. Kaiserman encouraged JLC members to attend.

Mr. Kaiserman stated that Senator Allen commented on the national issues that MOAA is addressing.

JLC Legislative Breakfast

Chairman Botts discussed the feasibility of having a JLC legislative breakfast. It was suggested that this can be done in conjunction with the JLC January 17th meeting. Plans are to have the breakfast from 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. The JLC meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. Jack Hilgers has offered his assistance in speaking with Delegate Wardrup to sponsor a room at the General Assembly Building for this event. Dave Ellis suggested that state chairs of organizations be invited.

Commissioner Burgess suggested the following options for parking:

- Park at the American Legion Building and car pool/shuttle van members to the General Assembly Building
- Park at the Virginia War Memorial and car pool/shuttle van members to the General Assembly Building

DVS is seeking financial donations from VSOs to support this event. It was decided that DVS staff will explore parking options and advise JLC members prior to the January 17th breakfast.

Schedule Next Meeting (date/location)

The next meeting of the JLC will be on Thursday, December 21, 2006, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the American Legion Department of Virginia Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue in Richmond.

Chairman Botts stated that although it is not required, it has been suggested that meetings be held across the state. After discussion, it was decided that meeting in Richmond was the consensus of the group. Commissioner Burgess suggested that the JLC tour the new Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center in the spring of the year.

Norman Jasper stated that the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Virginia will sponsor a program in Arlington on November 11, 2006 at 10:00 am. Mr. Jasper's daughter will sing the National Anthem at this ceremony. Also, at 3:00 p.m., the Military of World Wars will have its ceremony at General Pershing's grave, Section 34.

Commissioner Burgess stated that the JLC had been recognized by Senate Joint Resolution 53 and House Joint Resolution 171 for its contributions to supporting the National Guard and Reserve during the two previous sessions of the General Assembly. The Resolutions will be mounted and framed by the next JLC meeting.

John Bonnell suggested that the JLC recognize the American Legion with a certificate or plaque for allowing the use of their facility for JLC meetings.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.