

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2012

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on March 28, 2012, at the American Legion Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

Members Present

- Jeffrey Platte, Air Force Association
- Brett Reistad, American Legion
- Bruce Brown, AMVETS
- Don Kaiserman, Association of the United States Army
- Abe Zino, Fleet Reserve Association
- James Jones, Korean War Veterans Association
- Bruce Steeley, Marine Corps League
- Raymond Edwards, Military Officers Association of America
- Robert Fairchild, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- William Townsley, Military Order of the World Wars
- Thomas Moran, National Association for Uniformed Services
- Frank Driscoll, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- Matthew Dailey, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Carmen Gentile, Reserve Officers Association
- Nolan Jackson, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Daniel Boyer, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Jenny Holbert, Women Marines Association
- Thad Jones, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
- Paul Galanti, Commissioner of Veterans Services
- Meade Spotts, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation

Members Absent

- George Coker, American Ex-POWs
- David Martinez, Disabled American Veterans
- Roger Dimsdale, Legion of Valor
- David Coffield, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Michael Coleman, Virginia National Guard Association

Alternates Present (representing their VSO)

- Stu Williams, Military Officers Association of America
- Richard Rinaldo, Legion of Valor
- Shawn Otto, Virginia National Guard Association

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Anne Atkins, Department of Veterans Services
- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services
- Jon Hatfield, Virginia War Memorial
- Jack Hilgers, Department of Veterans Services
- Martha Mead, Department of Veterans Services
- Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General
- Judy Reid, Department of Veterans Services
- Danielle Weaver, Department of Veterans Services
- Dan Kemano, Department of Veterans Services
- Bill Janis, Department of Veterans Services
- S. Christopher Woods, Department of Veterans Services
- Al Pianalto, Delegate Cox's Office

Others Present

- Bart Barton, AFA Alternate
- Dan Dennison, NAUS Alternate
- Forest B. Caldwell III, VDVS Volunteer
- Joe Carr, Virginia Veteran Collation
- Zane Clark, Virginia Veterans Collation
- Tom Anderson, Virginia Veterans Collation
- Allen Murray, Virginia Veterans Collation
- Roger Overstreet, Virginia Veterans Collation
- Roger Sullivan, Virginia Veterans Coalition
- Burrell Adams, Virginia Veterans Coalition
- Tom Briggs, Virginia Veterans Coalition

Agenda Packet

Agenda (Agenda Item II)

Presentation (Agenda Item IV)

- USDVA Justice Outreach Program (PowerPoint slides)
- DVS Cemetery Services (PowerPoint slides)

Reports (Agenda Item V)

- Board of Veterans Services Report
 - BVS 2012 Action Plan
 - BVS Committee Assignments
- Veterans Services Foundation Report
 - VSF FY12 Fundraising Results
- Department of Veterans Services Report

New Business (Agenda Item VII)

- Review of JLC 2011-2012 Initiatives and 2012 General Assembly (PowerPoint slides)
- Review of prior-year JLC Initiatives (PowerPoint slides)
- Initial Proposals for 2012-2012 JLC Initiatives (Word/PDF documents)
 - Summary of MOAA proposals
 - MOAA 2013-01: Northern Virginia Veterans Care Center
 - MOAA 2013-02: JROTC to fulfill Physical Education Requirement
 - MOAA 2013-03: Electronic Return of Absentee Ballots
 - MOAA 2013-04: Business Incentives for Hiring Veterans
 - VFW 2013-01: Sales and Use Tax Exemption
 - VFW 2013-02: In-state Tuition Eligibility
- JLC Constitution and Bylaws (Word documents)
- Proposed changes to JLC 2012 Action Plan (Word Document)
- JLC Commanders Roster (Word Document)

Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Jenny Holbert called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and asked Mr. Carmen Gentile to lead the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of VSOs and Quorum Determination

The roll was called, and 20 of the 23 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the JLC were recorded as being represented and a quorum was determined. Thad Jones, the Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services, Mr. Meade Spotts, representing the Veterans Services Foundation, and Paul Galanti, the Commissioner of Veterans Services, were recorded as present. Mr. Raymond Edwards joined the meeting about 10:10 am., bringing the total of VSOs represented to 21.

Approval of the agenda

Chair Holbert asked for a **motion** to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Thomas Moran made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Brett Reistad. The agenda was approved **unanimously**. See *(Attachment 1)*.

Introductions of Guests

Chair Holbert asked that guests and staff introduce themselves. Their names and organizations are recorded above. Chair Holbert welcomed them to the meeting.

Approve December 20, 2011 and January 12, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Chair Holbert stated that the minutes from the December 20, 2011 and January 12, 2012 meetings had been distributed electronically.

Chair Holbert asked for a **motion** to approve the December 20, 2011 and January 12, 2012 minutes. Mr. Reistad made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Gentile. The December 20, 2011 and January 12, 2012 minutes were approved by **unanimous consent**.

Presentations

USDVA Justice Outreach Program

Chair Holbert recognized Mr. Bart Barton the AFA alternate and thanked him for inviting Mr. S. Christopher Woods to give a presentation on USDVA Justice Outreach Program. The presentation was included in the agenda packets.

Mr. Barton stated that the JLC had a successful objective last cycle for the inclusion of statutory language that enable local jurisdiction to find alternatives in the judicial system for veterans in the system. Mr. Barton explained that Mr. Bill Townsley and Mr. Moran worked on this objective for a long time. This objective finally got through the GA. At the same time over the years the USDVA through the VHA veteran's health administration has been doing similar work. There are ties between what the local jurisdictions are doing and what the USDVA does. Mr. Woods is one of three Veterans Justice Outreach specialists in Virginia. There is one in Hampton and in Roanoke. These three jurisdiction have actually gone out and done using legislation and expand opportunity for Veterans in the civil court process to be linked in to what the USDVA is doing. Hopefully this will help defer the veteran from incarceration. Mr. Woods is here to explain what he and his colleagues are doing outside of the civilian role tied to the USDVA. The real key here is money. The local jurisdictions will not be getting any extra money to do this. The localities that are doing this are looking for grant money. The USDVA has money and resources that are readily available. Mr. Barton stated that they are hoping that folks from different parts of the state will look at this program and possible expand this opportunity to the Veteran.

Mr. Woods thanked Mr. Barton for the brief overall on the USDVA Justice Outreach Program. Mr. Woods stated that Mr. Barton asked him to come to the meeting. He explained that he would be doing a presentation on USDVA Justice Outreach Program. This program is fairly new with the USDVA. He is located at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC.

Responding to the Needs of Justice-Involved Veterans

The VA – who are we?

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

- All Health care services
- Medical Centers, Ambulatory Care & Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Veteran Benefits Association (VBA)

- All VA Benefits - VA Regional Offices (Roanoke)
- Compensation & Pension, GI Bill, Home Loans, etc.

National Cemetery Administration (NCA)

- National and State Veterans Cemeteries
- Headstones , Markers & Presidential Memorial Certificates

“Best Medical Care in the U.S.” Business Week (2006)

Nationally – VA has

- 150 Hospitals and Medical Centers with different specializations. Richmond is a Level Three Trauma Center. New Poly-trauma Center is completed

- Over 1,100 Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS)
Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, Emporia
VET Centers---serve Combat Veterans only; drop in services for mental health counseling; records separate from the VAMC

Programs for Justice-Involved Veterans

Jim Temple – Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)

- Begun FY 2007
- 29,000-56,000 estimate number of Veterans released from state/federal prison each year; 80% likely eligible
- 8,000 Reentry Veterans now served annually in 955 of 1,319 US prisons (72%)
- FY 2006/2007 funding: 44 full-time HCRV and 4 hybrid VJO staff

Chris Woods – Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

- Begun Fiscal Year (FY) 2009
- FY 2009 staff appointed at every medical center (.25 FTEE)
- FY 2010 funding: 39 full-time VJO and 4 hybrid HCRV staff

Law Enforcement Education:

- 1,159,500 Veterans’ annual arrests
- VA and community police focus
- Crisis intervention Teams (CIT) added to VA Law Enforcement Training Center
- Veteran piece to community CIT

Jail Outreach:

- 72,600 Veterans in local jail custody (point in time)
- 3,365 local jail facilities

Court Outreach and Liaison:

- Common pleas/criminal courts
 - Treatment Courts:
2,700 Drug & MH
 - Treatment Courts,
31 Veterans Treatment Court

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Initiative

“The purpose of the VJO program is to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans in contact with the criminal justice system have access to: a) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) mental health and substance abuse services when appropriate, and b) Other VA services (e.g., physical, dental healthcare) and benefits (e.g., VBA pension) as appropriate.”

Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, April 30, 2009. Under Secretary for Health’s Information Letter.

DUSHOM Memo (May 2009)

- Designation of a Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialist at every Veterans Affairs Medical Center to:

- Provide outreach to justice-involved Veterans in the communities they serve
- Take initiative in building working relationships with potential justice system partners to see that eligible justice-involved Veterans get needed care
- Partner with law enforcement Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) to train law enforcement personnel on Veteran specific issues

Justice-Involved Veterans

A Justice-Involved Veteran is:

- A Veteran in contact with local law enforcement who can be appropriately diverted from arrest into mental health or substance abuse treatment;
- A Veteran in a local jail, either pre-trial or serving a sentence; or,
- A Veteran involved in adjudication or monitoring by a court (probation)

Veterans Justice Outreach

- While incarcerated, Veterans can:
 - Request his/her DD214
 - Enroll at their local VA Medical Center (10-10EZ)
 - Authorize VJO Specialist to communicate with legal system (ROI)
 - Apply for the VA transitional and/or supportive housing programs
 - Learn about VA and non-VA community resources for post-release needs
 - Attend a “Veterans Resource Group” (if available)

VA Authorization:

Title 38 CFR 17.38

VHA can provide

- Outreach, assessment, and referral to services
- Treatment for justice-involved Veterans who are not incarcerated

Does not allow VHA to provide:

- Hospital or outpatient care for a Veteran who is
 - A patient or an inmate in an institution of another government agency
 - If that agency has a duty to give that care or service

Findings

- Charges vary from DUI, Resisting Arrest, Drunk in Public, Simple Assault (DV), Discharging a Weapon
- *Most* Veterans encountered thus far by the Justice Outreach Program received an honorable discharge/general discharge
- Common underlying issues with justice-involved Veterans have been substance abuse issues and/or possible PTSD: young OEF/OIF male combat Veterans

Challenges: access and admission, especially from incarceration; limited resources; no VTC in local area

Veterans Treatment Courts A Growing Movement

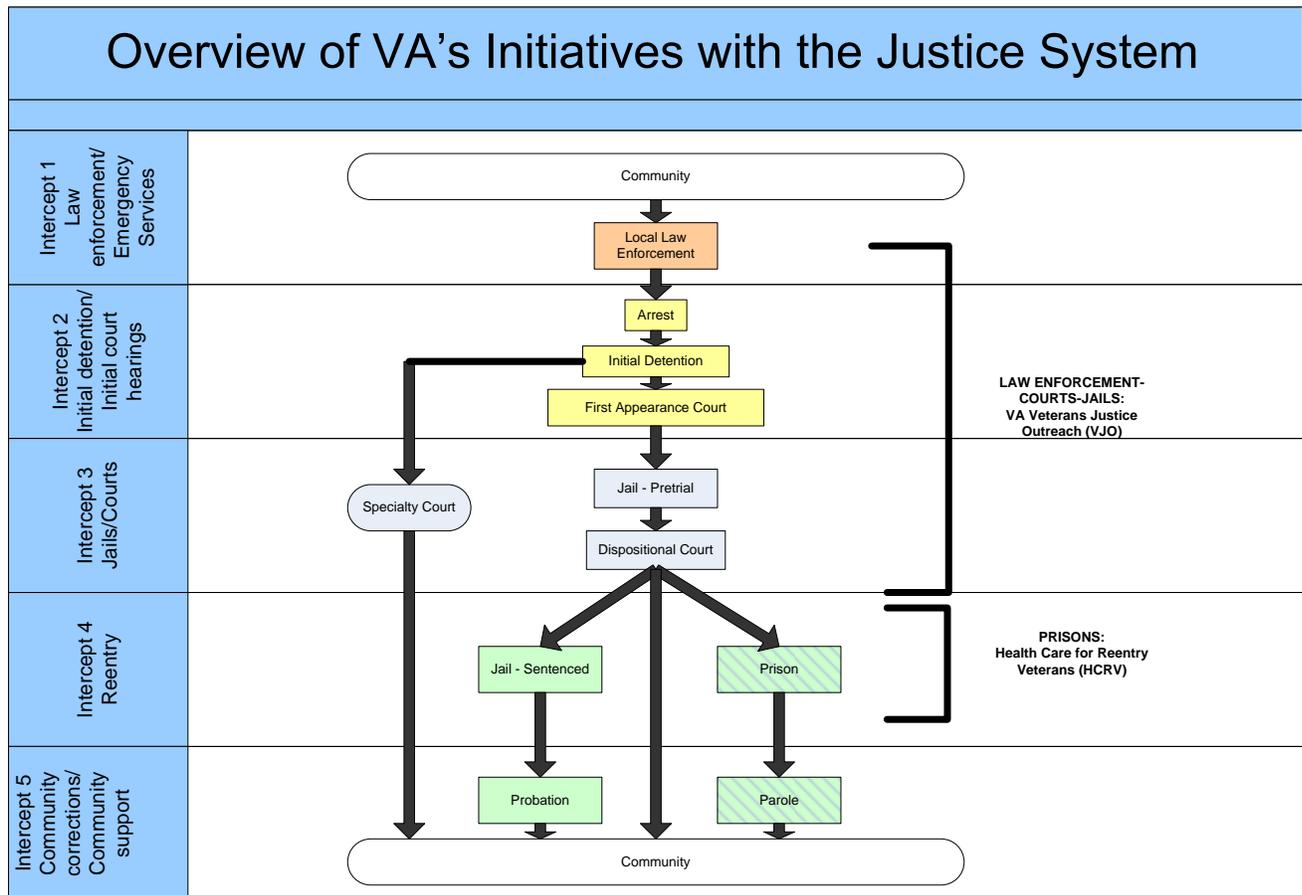
Currently approximately 80 Veterans Treatment Courts in Operation.

Veterans Treatment Courts - hybrid Drug and Mental Health Courts Models to serve veterans struggling with addiction, serious mental illness, PTSD, and/or co-occurring disorders.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/27319834>

Why a Separate Court (or Docket)?

- Provision of Veteran Specific Services – VHA, VBA, Volunteer Veteran Mentors
- Reduce Community Expenses – “Crisis Systems”
- Increase Public Safety



Points of Contact

- Health Care for Reentry Veterans Specialists:
 - <http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/Reentry.asp>
 - State point of contact list
- Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists by medical center:
 - <http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>

Mr. Jeff Platte asked “What can the VSO’s do to help?” Mr. Woods stated that USDVA does not

have enough resources.

Chair Holbert then recognized Ms. Martha Mead of the VWWP for her work with Mr. Woods. Chair Holbert then asked Ms. Mead if she had a few words to share.

Ms. Mead stated that Mr. Woods covered the program very well and that they are working together. She then stated that one thing that VWWP is doing that Mr. Woods didn't mentioned is that in the coming months the VWWP will be going across the Commonwealth with a Criminal Justice Training program. This training is available to all members of the Justice System.

DVS Cemetery Services

Mr. Dan Kemano gave a presentation on the cemeteries. A presentation was included in the agenda packets but Mr. Kemano did not speak to this presentation. Mr. Kemano distributed a handout for everyone to follow along with him. The JLC in 2011 did a tremendous thing for the cemeteries. He then stated that this is the first year he had an excellent operating budget. Funding was authorized for two positions at the Albert G. Horton cemetery and one unfilled position at the Amelia cemetery. Funding is required to make up for short falls in the budget. Funding is required for 12 year old equipment at Amelia cemetery. Funding is required for the road signs for directions to our Southwest Cemetery in Dublin. Funding is required for grass seed and fertilizer. The cemeteries have 26 acres to tend to. Funding is required for overtime for the staff. Included in the handout is an organizational chart for the cemeteries and all positions have been filled. This is the first time in 8 years that cemeteries are fully staffed.

Mr. Kemano continued with the Phase replacement issue to replace worn out equipment. This fiscal year with the funding that the cemeteries were allocated the Dodge dump truck at Amelia was replaced with a brand new F350. He also purchased five new commercial size lawn mowers. In the packet that was handed out is a picture of the F350 and the new lawn mowers.

Mr. Kemano stated that next month that the Virginia Logo has insured him that they will start placing the road signs along the route to the Amelia and Southwest Cemeteries. Mr. Kemano then explained that VDOT does not make the road signs they approve the location for the road sign. Virginia Logo sub-contracts to VDOT to make the signs. The cost for these signs is \$51,225.12. Mr. Kemano is still waiting for the approved contracts from VDOT for placing these signs on the roads.

Mr. Kemano then discussed the grass seed and fertilizer issue. The cemeteries are in the process of purchasing grass seed which is \$88 for a 55 pound bag and then spreading the seed across the cemeteries.

Mr. Kemano explained the employee overtime. He states that there are now three cemeteries to staff. There is staff from 9 am – 3 pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays. On Memorial Day and Veterans Day the entire staff comes in to help.

Mr. Kemano then stated that the cemeteries federal grants have been approved for the Suffolk and Amelia cemeteries burial vaults. The grant for 4.1 million dollars is for Suffolk and 1.6 million for Amelia. The cemetery is going to put in about \$1600 at Amelia and about \$5,000 in

Suffolk. The burial numbers at Amelia is 250 to about 300 burials per year. At Suffolk they have about several hundred per year.

Mr. Don Kaiserman asked Mr. Kemano if he has had any success in asking companies for donations for replacement of equipment, grass seed, fertilizer and/or mulch. Mr. Kemano explained that he has a fund set up for beautification of the cemeteries that anyone can donate to which is used for this expense. Mr. Kemano stated that the companies do not want to donate funds for replacement of equipment they feel that is a state obligation.

Chair Holbert thanked Mr. Kemano for the wonderful presentation.

Chair Holbert called for a break at 10:52 am. Chair Holbert called the meeting back to order at 11:10 am.

Chair Holbert asked if everyone could silence their cell phones.

Chair Holbert then thanked Mr. Thad Jones for the work that he does.

Reports

Board of Veterans Services

Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Chairman Thad Jones delivered the BVS report (*Attachment 2*). The board adopted the BVS Action Plan, meeting schedule, and revised committee assignment. He then commented that the JLC is a very powerful group and thanked them for all of their support. He stated that five of their 6 proposals that were submitted were approved by the Governor. The BVS is very pleased with this accomplishment. The next meeting will be on May 16, 2012. Mr. Jones announced that he does have to leave before the meeting will conclude today.

Chair Holbert thanked Mr. Jones for his report and stated that the JLC is looking forward to any initiatives the BVS may have for legislation at the next JLC meeting.

Veterans Services Foundation

Mr. Meade Spotts delivered the Veterans Services Foundations (VSF) Board of Trustees report (*Attachment 3*). The FY12 contributions are up 25% from last year there is about \$167,463.60. He then stated that \$158,342.90 of this money is dedicated to the VWWP. Mr Spotts also stated that the events are growing each year. VSF next meeting is May 2, 2012.

Department of Veterans Services

Commissioner Paul Galanti delivered the DVS report (*Attachment 4*). Benefit Services have all 32 authorized positions filled. There is a training office in place to train the new employees. The State Approving Agency now has over 51,000 veterans using the GI Bill. The Commissioner stated that DVS now has a brand new Deputy Commissioner who is working with student veterans. The Care Centers employs most of the DVS employees. The commissioner invited everyone to please visit the two Care Centers and three Cemeteries at their leisure. The GA is funding a study for the new Hampton Roads Care Center that may be located near Fort Monroe. Mr. Kemano just gave an impressed briefing on the cemeteries. Virginia Wounded Warrior

Program Executive Director Cathy Wilson has been working with the program for a little over three years and has been able to do a lot with very little.

Commissioner Galanti then announced that DVS is pleased to welcome the new Deputy Commissioner Bill Janis.

Commissioner Galanti also stated that they have issued an RFP for the Automated Claims Processing on March 15, 2012. The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) has developed a group to work with the USDVA to make the automated systems to interface with each other. Commissioner Galanti has been selected as the Chair for this group. The group will be meeting this Friday.

Commissioner Galanti then asked Deputy Commissioner Janis to give the JLC a brief bio. Deputy Commissioner Janis introduced himself and stated that he is a recovering member of the GA and spent 10 years in the House of Delegates. Deputy Commissioner Janis stated that he was appointed by the Governor to be the Deputy Commissioner for VDVS and was tasked with three initiatives.

Deputy Commissioner Janis is tasked with working with student veterans utilizing the GI Bill and how to make them successful. He will be working with the Student Veteran Group of America that is a National Veteran Service Organization. These students are under the age of 30. There are several chapters in Virginia and he will be meeting with them in Richmond. Their goal is to propose four or five names to the Governor then the Governor will appoint one of these students to join the JLC.

Deputy Commissioner Janis is also tasked with working with the Unemployment issue that veterans face. The state average of unemployment under the age of 24 is 37%. This percentage is double the national percentage. He explained that he is working with several groups on this initiative. On the Federal and State levels a lot of resources are being dedicated to train service members and veterans on how to become effective job seekers. He is working with a group that works with employers on how to look for veterans to hire and retain.

Deputy Commissioner Janis then stated that this year the GA passed legislation that clarifies the VDVS is the ultimate authority from denials on the part of local treasurers or revenues of the Real Estate Property Tax exemption. After this law was passed last year the law was not carried out uniformly throughout the Commonwealth. Now with the new law Commissioner Galanti will have the final say for any denials under this program. DVS will develop guidelines for the localities to follow in awarding the Real Estate Tax exemption.

Deputy Commissioner Janis stated that he is looking forward to working with everyone and thanked the JLC for their services and support.

Mr. Barton asked the new Real Estate Property Tax legislation and when would it go into effect. Deputy Commissioner Janis stated that the legislation has a July 1st implementation date however, the legislation also has an emergency clause in it that makes it effective now.

Mr. Richard Rinaldo stated that the Military Times newsletter puts out each year a report on the Best for Vet Colleges. Deputy Commissioner Janis stated that he is aware of the report and that we do not get very good grades according to this report for our colleges in Virginia. Deputy Commissioner Janis has met with the council for the state Higher Education and they contacted Military Times. They asked the Military Times to send them the actually test that they are using to grade the schools in Virginia. Military Times has distributed that test back to our schools for their review. However, the schools are filling out the test and returning them to the appropriate person. The test are never reviewed or processed. Deputy Commissioner Janis stated that he plans to remedy this.

Chair Holbert Welcomed Deputy Commissioner Janis to the council. She then stated that some of the council members already met Deputy Commissioner Janis in January during the GA session. Chair Holbert then stated that the JLC is grateful that the Governor has appointed Mr. Janis to Deputy Commissioner for VDVS.

Virginia Military Advisory Council

Mr. Jeff Platte, JLC Representative to the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC) stated that there has been no meeting therefore he had no report. The next meeting will be April 24, 2012. He will have a report to present to the JLC after this meeting.

Interstate Compact

Mr. Moran stated that due to the GA session no meeting was scheduled during this quarter and he has no report. The next meeting should be in May.

Virginia War Memorial

Mr. Jon Hatfield, Virginia War Memorial (VWM) Executive Director, thanked the JLC members for their support. The memorial is doing well. He does have one change to report. In the past the Governor has held a Wall of Honor ceremony adding new names to the wall at the Pocahontas Building. This year on May 28, Memorial Day, the wall will be located at the VWM and both ceremonies will become one. He invited the council to attend the combined ceremony at 10:00 a.m on Monday, May 28 to help honor all of our Virginia Heroes at one time and at one location.

Mr. Jones asked if all of the pictures would be removed from the Pocahontas Building. Mr. Hatfield explained that all of the pictures would be removed from the Pocahontas Building and delivered to the VWM mounted on moveable panels for several weeks before Memorial Day and several weeks after. The pictures will then be moved to the Patrick Henry building in the old state library temporarily until the construction at the VWM is completed to give them a permanent home.

Chair Holbert called for a lunch break at 11:26 pm. Chair Holbert called the meeting back to order at 12:06 pm.

New Business

Review of JLC 2011-2012 Initiatives and 2012 General Assembly session

Mr. Brett Reistad stated that the JLC had another successful year with our initiatives. Mr. Reistad announced that Mr. Al Pianalto would do a presentation to the JLC reviewing the JLC initiatives and GA session. Mr. Pianalto is with Delegate Kirk Cox's office.

Mr. Pianalto addressed the council and stated that it is a pleasure to address the council. He explained that he has served with Delegate Cox for two sessions with the GA. Mr. Pianalto put together this presentation to bring the council up to date. The presentation is included in your packets. Mr. Pianalto explained that each year the JLC puts together a group of legislative issues to forward to the Commissioner and then forward to the Governor.

LEGISLATION and BUDGET SUMMARY

BILLS	<u>Introduced</u>	<u>Passed</u>
House	47	27
Senate	23 (70)	13 (40)
RESOLUTIONS		
House	07	04
Senate	02 (09)	01 (5)
BUDGET AMENDMENTS		
Governor's Budget	03	03
House	09	03
Senate	03 (15)	00 (6)
TOTAL	94**	51

**** 20 were duplicates or similar bills**

Legislation and Budget Analysis - JLC

JLC Recommendation 1 - Veterans Identification on Drivers License

- Legislation is not required - DMV will implement without legislation

JLC Recommendation 2 - Unclaimed Cremains

- HB439 and SB433 passed General Assembly unanimously and were signed by the Governor

JLC Recommendation 3 - Sales Tax Exemption for 501(c) (19) VSOs

- SB114 (McDougle) passed Senate
- House continued until 2013

JLC Recommendation 4 - Homeless Veterans

- Governor proposed \$197,000 and two positions. House and Senate have approved in their respective versions of HB1301

Legislation and Budget Analysis - BVS

BVS Recommendation 1 - Delivery of Benefit Services – 4 more claims agents

- Governor McDonnell proposed \$255,000 and two new positions
- Included in House and Senate versions HB 1301
- HB1121 and SB254 change the ratio of claims agents to veterans to 1 to 23,000.
Passed General Assembly unanimously and signed by Governor.

BVS Recommendation 2 - Education Section Staffing

- Included in House and Senate versions of HB 1301

BVS Recommendation 3 - Care Center Staffing

- Included in House and Senate versions of HB 1301

BVS Recommendation 4 - Hampton Care Center Study

- \$250,000 for site study included in House version of HB 1301

BVS Recommendation 5 - Voting Status of *ex officio* BVS members

- HB730 and SB297 passed General Assembly unanimously and signed by Governor.
- BVS Recommendation 6 - Additional Citizen Board Members
- Not supported by Governor. No action taken by General Assembly.

BVS Recommendation 6 - Additional Citizen Board Members

- Not supported by Governor. No action taken by General Assembly.

Legislation and Budget Analysis

- ❖ 14 of 94 Bills, Resolutions and Budget Amendments introduced supported JLC and BVS Legislative Objectives (13%)
- ❖ Strong support from Governor and his Administration
- ❖ Strong Bipartisan support in both Houses
 - Every Bill that made it to the floor of the respective house passed
 - Often by wide margins

Legislation and Budget Analysis

- ❖ New Process worked extremely well
 - Achieved Governor's support early on
 - Achieve one initiative through administrative procedures
 - Two initiatives included in Governor's budget
- ❖ Sub-Committees are the key
 - Identify early and work on getting their support
 - Impact statement critical
 - Able to identify all legislation the first day of the session
 - Focus on sub-committee
- ❖ Time to start now to identify next year's objectives

Mr. Jones asked the how important is the face time during the GA with the members during session. Mr. Pianto stated that at this time it is too late to go out and meet with the co-patrons. These meetings need to be held before the start of the GA.

Mr. Pianalto explained that Delegate Cox had around 100 people coming to his office everyday during the GA session.

Mr. Don Kaiserman stated that you have to meet with the co-patron before the GA sessions starts. He also commented on the spreadsheet that Mr. Pianalto created and that he covered the objectives from 2005 – 2012.

Review of prior-year JLC Initiatives and Current Status

Mr. Combs reviewed the JLC Initiatives 2005 – 2012 which is included in your packet. This presentation was created from a request from Mr. Jeffrey Platte at our last meeting. Mr. Platte asked VDVS if they could put together a summary looking back on all of the legislative objective initiatives that the JLC has recommended since 2005 and where are we now with these initiatives. Mr. Combs grouped the initiatives by the most recommended to the least recommended. He then reviewed each initiative.

State Veterans Cemeteries

- 2005 JLC Initiative – Purchase land for cemetery in SW Virginia and appropriate operating funds
Action Taken – DVS to work with veterans to identify land for donation
Current Status – Dublin cemetery opened May 2011. Staff and funding levels sufficient for current operations.

- 2006 JLC Initiative – Purchase of land for cemetery in SW Virginia and appropriate operating funds
Action Taken – DVS to work with veterans to identify land for donation
Current Status – Dublin cemetery opened May 2011. Staff and funding levels sufficient for current operations

- 2007 JLC Initiative – Purchase land for cemetery in SW Virginia and appropriate operating funds
Action Taken – Land donated. \$583,000 (GF) appropriated for site development
Current Status – Dublin cemetery opened May 2011. Staff and funding levels sufficient for current operations

- 2009 JLC Initiative – Appropriate funds for purchase of burial vaults. Provide to veterans at no cost.
Action Taken – One bill (did not pass)
Current Status – DVS sells vaults at cost (\$400) at Amelia and Suffolk cemeteries. Vaults provided free at Dublin. VA grant pending to install at Amelia and Suffolk

- 2010 JLC Initiative – Allow DVS to sell burial vaults at cost. Appropriate \$36,000 (GF) (one-time) to purchase necessary equipment.
Action Taken – Bill passed. Budget amendment for \$36,000 (GF) (one time)

Current Status – DVS sells vaults at cost (\$400) at Amelia and Suffolk cemeteries. Vaults provided free at Dublin. VA grants pending to install at Amelia and Suffolk.

2011 JLC Initiative – Funding to fill vacant positions, replace worn out equipment, install road signs, and purchase supplies
Action Taken - \$387,100 (GF) appropriated
Current Status – 22 of 23 positions now filled. Staffing and funding levels now sufficient for current ops. Replacement equipment and supplies purchased.
Contract signed to install road signs.

2012 JLC Initiative – Facilitate the honorable burial of unclaimed cremains of veterans.
Action Taken – Two bills approved by General Assembly and Governor.
Current Status – New law goes into effect July 1, 2012

Virginia War Memorial

2005 JLC Initiative – Appropriate \$4.3 million (GF) to construct new education wing. Provide 24/7 on-site security
Action Taken - \$50,000 matching funds (GF) included to begin design
Current Status – Paul & Phyllis Galanti Education Center opened July 2010

2006 JLC Initiative – Appropriate 4.3 million (GF) to construct new wing for education programs and \$250,000 per FY for five years for education programs. Provide 24/7 on-site security.
Action Taken - \$245,000 (GF) (one time) and \$38,000 (GF) (ongoing) for education programs. \$500,000 (GF) and \$2.5 million (NGF) for building
Current Status – Paul & Phyllis Galanti Education Center opened July 2010.
Current funding/staffing levels support many education programs. On-site security now provided 8 hours per day, 5 days per week

2007 JLC Initiative – Appropriate an additional \$3.5 million for education wing
Action Taken - \$3.5 million Treasury Loan authorized
Current Status – Paul & Phyllis Galanti Education Center opened July 2010

2008 JLC Initiative – Release \$500,000 in state funds after \$1 million (of the \$2 million goal) in private funds have been raised, in order to keep project on track.
Action Taken – State loan increased to \$5.97 million. Authorization for \$500,000 (GF) to be released after \$1 million in private funds were raised
Current Status – Paul & Phyllis Galanti Education Center opened July 2010

2010 JLC Initiative – Appropriate \$913,000 (GF) (one time) in FY11 to purchase FF&E.
Action Taken - \$913,000 (GF) included in FY10 budget.
Current Status – Paul & Phyllis Galanti Education Center opened in July 2010.

JLC Initiative – Increase ongoing operating funds by \$632,100 per FY
Action Taken – \$150,000 (GF) in FY11 and \$400,000 (GF) in FY 12 for operations
Current Status – Current funding/staffing levels support many education programs.

DVS Benefits Services Program

- 2005 JLC Initiative – Increase DVS funding by \$1 million (GF) per FY, including funds to fill positions in Benefit Services section
Action Taken - \$1 million (GF) in new funding to fill vacant admin and benefit positions, and hire six new claims agents
Current Status – 65 of 68 positions in the Benefit Services section are funded and filled, including 32 of 32 claims agents
- 2007 JLC Initiative – Support DVS budget request for benefit services
Action Taken – No specific budget amendments for benefit services
Current Status – 65 of 68 positions in the Benefit Services section are funded and filled, including 32 of 32 claims agents
- 2008 JLC Initiative - \$300,000 (GF) in FY09 for TurboVet Phase II and \$900,000 (GF) in FY10 for TurboVet Phase III
Action Taken - \$100,000 (GF) in FY09 appropriated. Proof of concept completed.
Current Status – DVS partnered with AMVETS/Stratizon on development, but project fell through. RFP issued on Mar. 16. \$150,000 in House and Senate budgets for FY13/FY14
- 2009 JLC Initiative – Subject to the availability of sufficient funds, DVS to develop and deploy an automated system for the electronic preparation of veterans’ disability claims.
Action Taken – One bill passed. \$100,000 (GF) appropriated for FY10 but not spend. \$\$ returned to Treasury.
Current Status – DVS partnered with AMVETS/Stratizon on development, but project fell through. RFP issued on Mar 16. \$150,000 in House and Senate budgets for FY13/FY14
- 2010 JLC Initiative – Appropriate \$100,000 (GF) in FY11 for continued development of the automated claims processing system
Action Taken – No funding provided. Bill submitted but not passed. Estimated fiscal impact of \$30,000 per year.
Current Status – DVS partnered with AMVETS/Stratizon on development, but project fell through. RFP issued on Mar 16. \$150,000 in House and Senate budgets for FY13/FY14
- 2011 JLC Initiative – Appropriate \$402,400 (GF) in FY12 to restore staffing in Benefit Services section
Action Taken - \$402,400 (GF) appropriated

Current Status – 65 of 68 positions in the Benefit Services section are funded and filled, including 32 of 32 claims agents

Guard and Reserve Program

- 2005 JLC Initiative – Create state medal for Virginia service members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.
Action Taken – Governor’s National Service Medal created for VA Guardsmen called to active federal service since 9/11
Current Status – Governor’s National Service Medal is still being awarded
- JLC Initiative – Create state medal for Virginia service member cited for heroism.
- 2007 JLC Initiative – Appropriate funding to enhance recruiting and retention, support family programs, provide tuition assistance, etc.
Action Taken – Over \$1.6 million additional funding for a variety of programs
- 2008 JLC Initiative – Enact legislation to protect the custodial rights of mobilized service members
Action Taken – Bill passed to allow a court to enter a temporary order modifying custody of visitation based on a parent’s deployment.
- 2009 JLC Initiative – Enact legislation to make benefits paid by the Military Family Relief Fund tax exempt.
Action Taken – Two bills left in House Finance
Current Status – Bills passed in 2010 sessions allows subtraction from adjusted gross income
- 2010 JLC Initiative – Enact legislation or identify administrative solutions such that benefits paid by the Military Family Relief Fund tax exempt.
Action Taken – Two bills passed allowing subtraction from federal adjusted gross income for tax year beginning January 1, 2010
Current Status – Policy still in effect. MFRF identified as a “check off” on Virginia state income tax. Funds being donated to the MFRF exceeds that being granted to reserve-component families

Veteran Care Center

- 2005 JLC Initiative – Construct veterans care center in Hampton Roads
Action Taken – \$50,000 (GF) in planning funds appropriated
Current Status – DVS is #53 on FFY12 federal priority list for grant funding. FY13 House budget includes \$250,000 (GF) for site evaluation.
- 2006 JLC Initiative – Construct veterans care center in Hampton Roads
Action Taken – Governor authorized to request federal grant funds
Current Status – DVS is #53 on FFY12 federal priority list for grant funding. FY13 House budget includes \$250,000 (GF) for site evaluation.

- 2007 JLC Initiative – Construct veterans care center in Hampton Roads
Action Taken – DVS submitted request for federal funds in FY07. State funds committed to project.
Current Status – DVS is #53 on FFY12 federal priority list for grant funding. FY13 House budget includes \$250,000 (GF) for site evaluation.

Veterans Preference in State Government

- 2005 JLC Initiative – Establish a hiring preference for veterans, especially disabled veterans
Action Taken – One bill passed, requiring status as a veteran or disabled veteran to be considered
Current Status – Definition of “preference” clarified in 2007. DHRM has developed and issued hiring policies/guides for all stated agencies.
- 2007 JLC Initiative – Clarify the definition of “preference” so that real preference is given.
Action Taken – Two bills passed. DHRM directed to issue policies to state agencies
Current Status – Definition of “preference” clarified in 2007. DHRM has developed and issued hiring policies/guides for all state agencies.

DMV Issues

- 2005 JLC Initiative – Establish a thirty-day grace period for driver’s license renewal for service members returning from overseas assignments.
Action Taken – Discovered that DMV was already doing this. Also for vehicle registration.
Current Status – Drivers license grace period extended from 90 to 180 days by 2012 General Assembly. 90 days for vehicle registration.
- 2007 JLC Initiative – No-cost vehicle registration for veterans
Action Taken – DVS worked with DVS
Current Status – Registration fee waived for certain disabled veterans. Fee also waived for certain license plates.

Education Programs

- 2006 JLC Initiative – In-state tuition for active duty and family members stationed in Virginia: achieve 2 of 3 “desired states” identified by U.S. Army (eligibility in state of residence, eligibility in state of assignment, continuity in state of assignment)
Action Taken – Bills passed granting eligibility for dependents and continuity of eligibility for dependents. Active duty not included.
Current Status – Laws in still in effect
- 2007 JLC Initiative – In-state tuition eligibility for active duty
Action Taken – Bill passed granting eligibility
Current Status – Law still in effect

- 2009 JLC Initiative – Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children
 Action Taken – Bill passed requiring Virginia to join the Compact Funding provide to DOE for costs
 Current Status – Law still in effect. Chip Moran is JLC representative to Virginia Council.
- 2011 JLC Initiative – In-state tuition eligibility for veterans
 Action Taken – Bill passed granting eligibility
 Current Status – Law still in effect. Possible issues with implementation (see 2012 SB605)

Alternate Revenue Sources

- 2006 JLC Initiative – Income tax check off for DVS
 Action Taken – None
 Current Status – DVS not listed. Virginia War Memorial and Military Family Relief Fund are listed.
- 2011 JLC Initiative - Alternate dedicated revenue source for veterans programs
 Action Taken – None

Fisher House at McGuire VAMC

- 2006 JLC Initiative – Commonwealth of Virginia to contribute \$1 million to construct Fisher House at McGuire VAMC
 Action Taken - \$750,000 (GF)
 Current Status – Fisher House at McGuire VAMC opened in 2008

Sales Tax Exemption for Overseas Military

- 2007 JLC Initiative – Provide a state tax exemption for Virginia residents (Active Duty, Guard, Reserve) serving outside the U.S.
 Action Taken – None
- 2008 JLC Initiative – Provide a state tax exemption for Guardsmen and Reservists serving outside the U.S. for more than 90 days
 Action Taken – Three House bills left in House Finance. Two Senate bills left in Senate Finance
- 2007 JLC Initiative – Enact legislation to curb the practice of pay day lending to service members
 Action Taken – 12 bills (9 House, 3 Senate) submitted to modify the Payday Loan Act. None passed.
 Current Status – Legislation passed in 2008 allowing Virginians to place a freeze on their credit files

- 2008 JLC Initiative – Allow Virginia – domiciled service members to place a freeze on their credit file
Action Taken – 4 bills submitted. Incorporated into approved legislation applicable to all Virginians
Current Status – Law still in effect

Virginia Wounded Warrior Program

- 2008 JLC Initiative – Create Virginia Wounded Warrior Program
Action Taken – Bills passed creating VWWP. \$2.4 million (GF) in FY09 and \$2.0 million (GF) in FY10.
Current Status – VWWP now funded at \$2 million (GF) and \$550,000 (NGF) per FY. 7 of 7 positions filled, including five regional directors
- 2010 JLC Initiative – Continue level funding of VWWP at \$2 million (GF) per FY
Action Taken – Level funding continued. \$2 million (GF) per FY appropriated per FY
Current Status – VWWP now funded at \$2 million (GF) and \$550,000 (NGF) per FY. 7 of 7 positions filled, including five regional directors

Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans

- 2008 JLC Initiative – Pass a resolution to allow a vote to amend the Virginia Constitution to grant a real estate tax exemption for 100% service-connected disabled veterans
Action Taken – 4 resolutions submitted. All continued to 2009
Current Status – Virginia voters approved the Constitutional Amendment in 2010. Went into effect January 1, 2011.
- 2009 JLC Initiative – Pass a resolution to allow a vote to amend the Virginia Constitution to grant a real estate tax exemption for 100% service-connected disabled veterans
Action Taken – 4 resolutions submitted, 2 passed (2 were incorporated). First reference
Current Status – Virginia voters approved the Constitutional Amendment in 2010. Went into effect January 1, 2011.
- 2010 JLC Initiative – Pass a resolution (second reference) to allow a vote to amend the Virginia Constitution to grant a real estate tax exemption for 100% service-connected disabled veterans
Action Taken – 2 resolutions submitted – both passed (second reference)
Current Status – Virginia voters approved the Constitutional Amendment in 2010. Went into effect January 1, 2011. Attorney General opinion clarified several issues. Legislation passed by 2012 General Assembly addressed most issues in AG's opinion

Homeless Veterans

- 2009 JLC Initiative – Fund a study to examine the current level of services provided to homeless veterans in Virginia and the need for and cost of additional services
Action Taken – 1 resolution (left in House Rules). Delegate Kirk Cox requested that JLCARC complete the study
Current Status – JLCARC study completed June 2010. Governor McDonnell’s FY13/14 budget proposal includes \$197,000 (GF) and two homeless veteran coordinator positions
- 2012 JLC Initiative – Reduce and prevent veteran homelessness in Virginia by implementing as many strategies identified in the JLARC report as resources permit
Action Taken – Governor’s FY13/14 budget proposal includes \$197,000 (GF) and two positions
Current Status – House and Senate budgets did not modify the Governor’s proposal

Special Judicial Procedures

- 2010 JLC Initiative – Authorize creation of veterans courts; establish an education program for legal/law enforcement; and study further ways to help veterans
Action Taken – Two bills submitted. One left in committee, one incorporated (then failed)
Current Status – Legislation passed in 2011 allowing localities to enact special judicial procedures for veterans and service members. VWWP rcvd grant to train legal/law enforcement. USDVA launched new initiatives
- 2011 JLC Initiative - Allow localities to establish special judicial procedures
Action Taken – Two bills passed
Current Status – VWWP rcvd grant to train legal/law enforcement. USDVA launched new initiatives.

Veterans Identification

- 2012 JLC Initiative – Provide a simple, ready means of identification of veterans’ status for Virginia’s veterans by creating a Virginia Veterans ID Card
Action Taken – DVS and DMV working to create Virginia Veterans ID Card
Current Status – Rollout of new ID card on/around Memorial Day 2012

Sales & Use Tax Exemption

- 2012 JLC Initiative – Establish a Sales & Use Tax Exemption for 501(c)(19)VSOs
Action Taken – Not included in Governor’s legislative package. One bill submitted.
Current Status – SB114 carried over to 2013 in House Finance

Mr. Combs stated that this concludes his summary of the JLC initiatives over the last eight years subject to any questions.

Chair Holbert thanked Mr. Combs for his presentation and asked the Council if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Kaiserman stated that everyone here and our predecessor should take great pride in what the JLC has accomplished. He also stated that in the last two years the JLC received a standing ovation at the GA.

Mr. James Jones thanked Mr. Combs for all he does and his support to the JLC.

Mr. Bart Barton asked if veterans ID cards would be available for all uniformed service members. Ms. Atkins said that they will be for all service personnel in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Their eligibility would be verified through presentation of a DD-214 and another government issued picture ID. Mr. Barton said that uniformed members of the U.S. Public Health Service and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration should be eligible because they are considered veterans. Ms. Atkins said that she would check into that and let everyone know if they are eligible.

Chair Holbert stated that this presentation shows what was accomplished but does not show all of the people and organizations that were involved. There has been tremendous change due to what the JLC has accomplished along with BVS, VSF, Governor and many others.

Initial Review of JLC 2012-2013 Initiatives

Chair Holbert discussed the JLC 2012 – 2013 initiatives. These proposed initiatives are included in your packets. No action will be taken at this time. She reminded the council to share the proposals with others from your own VSO. Several VSO have some proposals to present. See (*Attachment 5*).

Mr. Raymond Edwards, VSO for MOAA, presented four proposals for MOAA.

1. Northern Virginia Veterans Care Center –
2. JROTC to receive credit in lieu of otherwise required physical training
3. Electronic return of absentee ballot voted by Overseas voters
4. Individual and corporate income tax credit for taxpayers hiring returning or disabled military veterans

Items of MOAA Interest as “Watch Items”

1. Compact with Virginia’s veterans
2. Role of the JLC under EO 29
3. Homeless Veteran Programs
4. Veteran’s health care

Mr. Dan Boyer, VSO for VFW, presented proposals for the VFW.

1. Sales and Used Tax Exemption for Veterans Service Organizations
2. In-State Tuition Eligibility for Veterans

Mr. Boyer recommended that the JLC support the In-State Tuition Eligibility for Veterans.

Chair Holbert encouraged the council to please read these initiatives and be ready for further discussion at the next JLC meeting in May.

Chair Holbert asked if there are any other initiatives.

Mr. Abe Zino, VSO for FRA, presented an initiative for FRA. He distributed the Position Paper at the beginning of the meeting.

1. Military Retirement Pay

Mr. Brett Reistad, VSO for AL, stated that the AL is looking at one that has to do with funding for MSDEP to ensure that there is sufficient continued funding in place for those who are utilizing this program.

Mr. Townsley, VSO for MOWW, and Mr. Platte, VSO for AFA, both have ideas that they are looking into.

Mr. Combs asked that everyone please to forward your proposals to him electronically by May 1st and he will then forward on to the other council members.

Report of the Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee

Mr. Robert Fairchild gave the report on the Constitution and By-Laws. Mr. Fairchild stated that about eight days ago prior to this meeting Mr. Combs forward to all council members as an attachment full copies of the latest Constitution and By-Laws. Mr. Fairchild has not received any further updates.

Mr. William Townsley read the Operating Principles in the Constitution out loud to everyone to make sure everyone understood.

Other new business/open discussion

Chair Holbert explained that there are changes to the JLC 2012 Action Plan. The updated Action Plan is included in your packet. The changes start with July 11. Appoint Legislative Officer, form Legislative Operations Committee has been deleted. She stated that the JLC just elected the Chair and Vice Chair and is too early for a newly appointed Chair and Vice Chair to appoint the Legislative Officer. On August 15 the Chair will appoint the other legislative officers. The legislative officer will then form the Legislative Operations Committee.

Chair Holbert stated that under September/October the Chair appoints JLC Appointed Officers has been deleted.

Mr. Combs explained that the items that have lines through them have been deleted and the items with lines underneath are additions.

Chair Holbert asked for a **motion** to approve the changes to the Action Plan as presented. Mr. Frank Driscoll made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Carmen Gentile. The Action Plan with changes was approved **unanimously**.

Chair Holbert then asked the council to review the enclosed JLC State Commanders Roster and please let Mr. Combs or Ms. Danielle Weaver know of any changes by Wednesday, April 4. This roster will then be forward to the Secretary of Commonwealth for new appointments and re-appointments. Mr. Combs explained that there is about 7 – 8 members that are reaching the end of their second term with the JLC. The rest of the members are reaching the end of their first term and are eligible to be re-appointed. The Secretary's office will in turn send a letter to your state commander in reference to the appointments.

Mr. Kaiserman addressed the council to discuss to items. The first was in reference to General Bob Newman the former TAG got in touch with Mr. Kaiserman and arraigned a meeting. They want to put out a brocheau that covers the member of the GA that are veterans. Mr. Kaiserman was surprised by the number of veterans in the GA. There is actually 39 members of the GA that are veterans. This brocheau will be given out to VSO and others to distribute to whomever may be interested in them. Mr. Kaiserman things this is a good idea and suggested that this not a JLC initiative but the JLC might want to consider placing an insert on one of the pages of expression of the JLC's appreciation to the GA and Veterans Services.

The second item that Mr. Kaiserman discussed is the plan for a Welcome Home parade. The parade will be on Armed Forces day on May 19. There has been some issues in contributions for the parade. The estimate for the parade is around \$30,000. Mr. Kaiserman stated that the Mayor approves of this event but Mr. Kaiserman wants to know exactly what did he approve. Did the Mayor say he was supporting it or did he say he was going to fund it. It's about \$50,000 for just the police to be available for the parade. Mr. Kaiserman said that whomever wants to participate as a VSO in the parade or in the Veteran Resource Village go to www.AmericafourVeterans.com website. You can go in there and pull up the applications and submit to the person listed on the website. The focus is on veterans only.

Public Comment

Chair Holbert asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. Pionalto stated that he worked with a disable veteran who lost his job because he did not have transportation. The veteran has been on a downward spiral every since. Mr. Pionalto finally went to the Richmond Automotive Association to find out if they knew of a dealership that would donate a car. The Richmond Automotive Association told Mr. Pionalto to check with Connor Brothers Recycle Ride which is a national group. The veteran was able to get a car from them. Mr. Pionalto stated that there is a need for veterans with transportation issues.

Mr. Roger Sullivan addressed the Council about the quality of the VDVS claims agents. He gave an example of an issue he had with a veteran who filled a claim. Chair Holbert recommended that Mr. Sullivan contact the VDVS to address this issue with them.

Closing remarks

Chair Holbert reminded everyone to please submit no later than May 1st all of your 2012/2013 initiatives. They must be in paper format and will be distributed to all council members. On May 23rd the JLC will do a review of these initiatives.

Adjournment

Chair Holbert adjourned the meeting at 1:52 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations

American Legion Building

1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond

March 28, 2012

10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Jenny Holbert, JLC Chair* (10:00 – 10:05)
- II. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, approval of agenda and introduction of guests – *Jenny Holbert, JLC Chair* (10:05 – 10:10)
- III. Approve December 20, 2011 and January 12, 2012 meeting minutes – *Jenny Holbert, JLC Chair* (10:10 – 10:15)
- IV. Presentations (10:15 – 10:50)
 - a. USDVA Justice Outreach Program – *S. Christopher Woods, Criminal Justice Outreach Specialist, McGuire VA Medical Center* (15 minutes)
 - b. DVS Cemetery Services – *Dan Kemano, Cemeteries Director* (20 minutes)

Break (10:50 – 11:00)

- V. Reports (11:00 – 11:30)
 - a. Board of Veterans Services – *Thad Jones, BVS Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *David Holt, VSF Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - c. Department of Veterans Services – *Paul Galanti, Commissioner* (10 minutes)
 - d. Virginia Military Advisory Council – *Jeff Platte, JLC Representative* (5 minutes)
 - e. Interstate Compact – *Chip Moran, JLC Representative* (5 minutes)

Lunch (11:30 – 12:00)

- VI. New business (12:00 – 1:20)
 - a. Review of JLC 2011-2012 Initiatives and 2012 General Assembly session – *Brett Reistad, Legislative Committee Chairman* (20 minutes)
 - b. Review of prior-year JLC Initiatives and current status – *Steven Combs, Director of Policy & Planning* (20 minutes)
 - c. Initial review of JLC 2012-2013 Initiatives – *Jenny Holbert, JLC Chair* (30 minutes)
 - d. Report of the Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee – *Pete Fairchild, Committee Chairman* (5 minutes)
 - e. Other new business/open discussion – *Jenny Holbert, JLC Chair* (5 minutes)

VII. Public comment period (1:20 – 1:25)

VIII. Closing remarks – *Jenny Holbert, JLC Chair* (1:25 – 1:30)

IX. Adjourn (1:30)

ATTACHMENT 2

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES
REPORT TO THE
JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
March 28, 2012**

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) met on November 16 and January 9. At the meetings, the Board:

1. Adopted the 2012 Action Plan (attached)
2. Adopted the 2012 meeting schedule:
 - a. Monday, January 9, 2012
 - b. Wednesday, May 16, 2012
 - c. Wednesday, July 18, 2012
 - d. Wednesday, November 14, 2012
3. Adopted revised committee assignments (attached)

In response to Executive Order 29 (EO29), the BVS submitted six recommendations for consideration by Governor McDonnell. Below is a summary of those recommendations and the current status:

Recommendation 1 – Delivery of Benefit Services: Improve the delivery of benefit services to Virginia veterans.

Status: Governor McDonnell's introduced budget includes \$255,136 per FY, which will fund two new positions and fill two vacant/unfunded positions. HB1121 (Kirk Cox) and SB254 (Reeves) passed both houses unanimously. The bills change the ratio of claims agents to veterans from the current 1:26,212 to 1:23,000. The law takes effect July 1.

Recommendation 2 – Education Services Staffing: Ensure that the Education Services Section of the Department of Veterans Services has the necessary resources to meet its new mission under the Post 9/11 GI Bill Improvement Act.

Status: Governor McDonnell's introduced budget transfers two unfunded positions between DVS service areas

Recommendation 3 – Care Center Staffing: Ensure that state veterans care centers have the resources to deliver quality care to residents.

Status: Governor McDonnell's introduced budget includes 51 additional positions, \$2.7 million NGF in FY13, and \$3.6 million NGF in FY14 for the opening of the 40-bed addition to the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center.

Recommendation 4 – Hampton Veterans Care Center Pre-Planning Study: Ensure that a viable and appropriate site is selected for the construction of the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center.

Status: Governor McDonnell proposed that \$250,000 GF be appropriated in FY13 for the study.

Recommendation 5 – Voting Status of Ex Officio Members of the Board of Veterans Services: Strengthen the capacity of the Board of Veterans Services to fulfill the Powers and Duties set forth in the Code of Virginia by granting voting privileges to all *ex officio* members.

Status: HB730 (Dudenhefer) and SB297 (Puller) passed both houses unanimously and have been signed by the Governor. The law takes effect July 1.

Recommendation 6 – Additional Citizen Board Members: Strengthen the capacity of the Board of Veterans Services to fulfill the Powers and Duties set forth in the Code of Virginia by increasing the number of citizen board members from 11 to 15.

Status: Governor McDonnell did not support this recommendation. No action taken by the General Assembly.

Thanks to the outstanding support of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, the Governor adopted five of the six recommendations submitted by the BVS in 2011.

Our next meeting is May 16. As is noted on the Board's 2012 Action Plan, we'll be hard at work on our EO29 recommendations for the 2013 General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Thad A. Jones
Chairman

Board of Veterans Services
2012 Action Plan – “Building Upon Our Success”

January 9 meeting

- DVS Operations Briefings: Cemeteries and Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.
- Discuss 2012 General Assembly session, including Governor McDonnell’s proposed budget, DVS Agency Legislation, and other veterans legislation.
- Review Executive Order 29 (EO29) *Serving Virginia’s Veterans* and the role of the BVS
- Administrative matters, as required.

January – May: “Research and development”

- Committees hold meetings to review/discuss potential EO29 proposals.
- BVS members research initial EO29 proposals and prepare background papers for presentation at May 9 meeting.

May 16 meeting

- Review 2012 General Assembly Session: budget and legislation.
- Review and discuss initial EO29 proposals.
- Select a nominating committee for July 2012 election of officers.

May – July: “Putting Meat on the Bones”

- BVS members continue research on EO29 proposals and prepare background papers for presentation at July 18 meeting.
- Candidates for BVS Chairman or Vice-Chairman submit resumes to nominating committee.

July 18 meeting

- Review, discuss, and approve BVS 2012 EO29 recommendations.
- Review, discuss, and adopt JLC 2012 EO29 recommendations.
- Elect BVS Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

NLT August 15

- Submit BVS 2012 EO29 recommendations to DVS.

November 16 meeting

- Adopt 2013 Meeting Schedule.
- Adopt 2013 Action Plan.
- DVS Operations Briefings: Benefits, Care Centers, and Education.
- Review DVS Strategic Plan.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Board of Veterans Services
Office of the Chairman

Thad A. Jones
Chairman

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E-mail: thad.a.jones@comcast.net

Looking & Moving Forward Committees Assignments

Benefits Committee

- Bill Haneke, Chairman
- Kate Kohler
- Sandra Love
- William Nicholas

Care Centers Committee

- John Anderson, Chairman
- Don Lecky

Cemeteries Committee

- George Melnyk, Chairman
- Don Kaiserman
- Al Sample

Board Members at Large

- Thad Jones, BVS Chairman
- Jenny Holbert, JLC Chair
- Dave Holt, VSF Chair
- Paul Galanti, DVS Commissioner
- Rich Anderson, House of Delegates
- Mamy BaCote, House of Delegates
- Chris Stolle, House of Delegates
- John Edwards, Senate of Virginia
- Toddy Puller, Senate of Virginia

Adopted November 16, 2011, revised January 2012

ATTACHMENT 3
VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION
REPORT TO
Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
March 28, 2012

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees met on March 21, 2012. The following actions were taken:

- (1) Received Board of Veterans Services Chairman's, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Chairman's, Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Commissioner's, Foundation Executive Director's, and VSF Committee Reports;
- (2) Reviewed Foundation fundraising and fundraising events conducted to date during FY12;
- (3) Approved VSF FY12 Second Quarter Financial Report;
- (4) Approved one budget adjustment for VWWP and one to support the 32nd Veterans Wheelchair Games in Richmond;
- (5) Elected a Nominating Committee for FY13 Board officers; and
- (6) Confirmed that the next Board meeting will be held on May 2, 2012 at the Virginia War Memorial.

The Finance Committee met on March 14 and again on March 21. The Development Committee and its Branding and Logo Subcommittee met before the full Board meeting on March 21, 2012. Each Committee had a quorum. The minutes of the Development and Finance Committee meetings will be posted on the Commonwealth Calendar as will the abbreviated minutes of the Branding and Logo Subcommittee.

As of 21 March, the Foundation raised about \$167,500, of which over \$158,000 is for VWWP, during FY12. Total fundraising and VWWP fundraising is up by 125% over last year with several significant fundraising events yet to occur this spring. See the next page of a break-down of contributions received.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2012, as mentioned above. Items for the next meeting may include: (1) approval of the 3rd Quarter FY12 Fund Statement; (3) review VSF FY12 fundraising program; (4) possibly consider additional budget adjustments; and (5) elect Foundation Board officers for FY13. There will be Finance and Development Committee meetings before the next Board meeting.

Dates and locations for future meetings are:

August 1 – Virginia War Memorial

November 7 – Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center

Respectfully submitted,

David Holt
VSF Chairman

VSF FUNDRAISING RESULTS FOR FY12*

Unaudited
March 21, 2012

Income

VWWP

Dominion Resources	25,000.00
Anonymous Foundation	18,000.00
Soc Gov Mtng Prof	12,982.00
Marshall Ch. MOAA	12,500.00
Ladies Auxiliary Va VFW	10,253.83
Lakeview Golf Club	10,221.08
Southwestern Youth Assn	8,386.00
Bosh Global Services	7,400.00
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American Legion Post 146	6,132.00
Achievable Dream	5,000.00
Mar Corps League Ch.	4,197.65
Cavalier Golf & Yacht Cl.	3,322.31
Marriott (SGMP)	3,000.00
Richmond Ch. MOAA	2,000.00
Premium Distributors of Va	2,000.00
WSIG Radio	1,901.00
Texas Roadhouse	1,600.00
American Legion Post 89	1,500.00
Other VSO's**	2,235.00
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Sgt Petty Poker Run	1,189.50
Mead West Vaco	1,163.95
Langley Yacht Club	1,000.00
Individual Donors	<u>17,358.58</u>

VWWP Revenue Balance 158,342.90

Amelia Cemetery	1,715.00
Horton Cemetery	4,480.00
Dublin Cemetery	1,076.00
Homeless Veterans Fund	500.00
Foundation Endowment	1,349.70

Non-VWWP Total 9,120.70

Total FY12 Income to Date 167,463.60

*Does not include Care Centers, Grants, or Interest

**American Legion Posts, MOAA Chapters, DAV Aux Unit, VFW Post Aux

ATTACHMENT 4

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES
REPORT TO
JOINC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
March 28, 2012**

Summary of DVS operations: December 2011 – March 2012

- ***Benefit Services: assists Virginia's veterans and their dependents in obtaining benefits to which they are entitled under federal, state, and local laws***
 - All 32 currently authorized and funded claims agents positions are filled
 - Legislation passed by the General Assembly will reduce the ratio of claims agents to veterans from 1:26,212 to 1:23,000. This will necessitate hiring four additional claims agents. Governor McDonnell's budget includes funds to fill these positions

- ***State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training: approves educational programs so veterans and their dependents may receive their educational benefits***
 - Over 51,000 GI Bill students in 2011
 - New compliance oversight mission – greatly increased workload for staff
 - Governor McDonnell has proposed shifting two positions to SAA to help meet the increased workload

- ***Virginia Veterans Care Centers: provide long-term care and short-term rehabilitation to Virginia's veterans***
 - Design work proceeding on the 40-bed addition to the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center
 - Governor McDonnell has proposed additional positions and appropriation for operating the new wing
 - DVS hopes to complete design work by July and begin construction in early fall
 - Several renovation projects ongoing at Virginia Veterans Care Center, including parking lot expansion and road work

- ***Virginia Veterans Cemeteries: Virginia's veterans cemeteries are shrines commemorating the personal sacrifice of those who served and those who stand ready to defend our freedom***
 - All cemetery positions now filled
 - Equipment replacement and installation/replacement of road signs underway.

- ***Virginia Wounded Warrior Program: provides behavioral health, rehabilitation services, and support to veterans, National Guard members, reservists, and their family members***

- Governor McDonnell has proposed transferring one position to VWWP, which will allow VWWP to hire a full-time director for the Virginia Veterans Corps
- **Miscellaneous**
 - We are pleased to welcome former delegate Bill Janis onboard as Deputy Commissioner! Governor McDonnell appointed Bill in January to spearhead new initiatives in such areas as employment, education, and homeless veterans.
 - A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued on March 15 to solicit proposals from suppliers to provide a claims processing and forms creation system with a web-portal interface for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. The goal of the RFP is to obtain a full working product that will replace an existing internal business application; that will apply TurboTax®-like technology to the veterans claims process by using available technology system(s) with modifications, if necessary; and that will best meet or exceed the performance standards set forth in the RFP.

I cannot thank the Joint Leadership Council members enough for their continued support of Virginia veterans and the Department of Veterans Services.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul E. Galanti
Commissioner

ATTACHMENT 5

Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) of the Military Officers Association (MOAA) proposals for JLC at March 28, 2012 meeting

As of March 22, 2012

* For reference only – does not indicate priority

Section I – Items with specific MOAA EO29 Recommendations

#*	Issue	EO 29 Recommendation	Background
1.	Northern Virginia Veterans Care Center	Have a portion of the state owned property at the site of the Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC) in Fairfax County set aside for future construction of a Virginia Veterans Care Center. NVTC is planned to close by June 30, 2015.	<i>The Long-Term Care Feasibility Study: Quality Care They Earned</i> was prepared for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in 2007 had as one its recommendations to provide a new Virginia Veterans Care Centers (VCC) in the Northern Virginia Planning District (Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Alexandria City, Fairfax City, Falls Church City, Manassas City, and Manassas Park City) to accommodate 41,654 veterans (2000 census) over 65 in the Area. Land set aside would be used to construct the new VCC with up to 240 beds. Actual construction would occur after the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that federal funds will be allocated, and Virginia approves and allocates the state share of the construction costs.
2.	JROTC to receive credit in lieu of otherwise required physical training	Require local school boards to accept participation in the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) as fulfillment of any high school physical education requirement.	SB 269 covering this issue was introduced in 2012 and continued to 2013. Currently granting physical training credit to individuals participating in JROTC is a local school board option which is not specifically required.
3.	Electronic return of absentee ballot voted by Overseas voters.	Allow electronic return of absentee ballot voted by Overseas voters.	Currently an overseas voter can electronically register and receive an absentee ballot which then must be returned via "snail" mail. Legislation is required to permit electronic return of the voted ballot. HB 1057 and SB 82 as introduced in 2012 on this issue were continued to 2013.
4.	Individual and corporate income tax credit for taxpayers hiring returning or disabled military veterans.	Permit an individual and corporate income tax credit for taxpayers hiring returning or disabled military veterans into new jobs paying an annual salary of at least \$50,000.	The Federal American Jobs Act that was enacted November 21, 2011, included tax credits for helping veterans and wounded veterans find employment. Four other states and the District of Columbia have similar tax credits targeted to employers who hire veterans. HB 1041 as introduced in 2012 and continued to

			2013 would allow an individual and corporate income tax credit for each new full-time job created and filled by a veteran with an annual salary of at least \$50,000
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Section II – Items of MOAA Interest as “Watch Items”

#*	Issue	Concern	Background
5.	Compact with Virginia's veterans.	<p>Has a compact with Virginia’s veterans been fully defined and implemented?</p> <p>Requires review and understanding of the DVS 2011 Annual Report which was released on 12 March. Review may result in specific EO 29 recommendation(s) prior to the 11 July JLC meeting.</p>	<p>Compact is addressed but not fully defined in § 2.2-2004. Additional powers and duties of Commissioner. 17. Establish and implement a compact with Virginia’s veterans, which shall have a goal of making Virginia America’s most veteran-friendly state. The compact shall be established in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services----</p> <p>§ 2.2-2454. Powers and duties of Board [of Veterans Services] 2. Investigate issues related to the provision of care and services to veterans, upon request of the Commissioner of Veterans Services or the Governor;</p> <p>3. Study all matters affecting the welfare of Virginia citizens who are veterans or dependents or survivors of such veterans, and make recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services;</p>
6.	Role of the JLC under EO 29	<p>Should Virginia Code 2.2-2681 covering the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC); be amended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish the JLC as an independent advisory body to the executive and legislative branches, and • give it authority to address military related issues involving things the state can do to better accommodate military members and their families residing in Virginia? <p>Requires review and consideration by the full JLC membership. Actual adoption of resulting recommendation, if any, would occur at JLC meeting on 11 July.</p>	<p>Virginia Code § 2.2-2681 addresses the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC); membership; terms; chairman; quorum; compensation. It further stipulates that The JLC is established as an advisory council, within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government.</p> <p>Executive Order 29 (EO29) dated December 23, 2010 established guidance on the development and processing issues related to veterans. Prior to EO29 the JLC typically adopted legislative objectives (LO’s) and informed the administration of these LO’s are were not restrained from carrying them directly to the General Assembly (GA). EO 29 has altered the process in that the administration now has control of issues presented to the GA and issues</p>

			that the JLC may advocate. Additionally "veteran" as defined in Virginia Code does not include active duty military.
7.	Homeless Veteran Programs	<p>Is dedicated funding for Homeless Veteran Programs required? Funds could address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Regional stand-downs, B. Emergency housing, C. Transition housing, and D. Permanent housing solutions <p>May be a specific EO29 recommendation to be presented in CY 2013.</p>	<p>The biennium budget for 2013-2014 is expected to provide positions and funding in DVS to focus on development of an action plan addressing mitigation of homelessness among veterans per the 2010 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee study.</p> <p>Need to develop a cost estimate.</p>

Section II – Items of MOAA Interest as “Watch Items”- continued

#*	Issue	Concern	Background
8.	Veteran's health care	<p>Should appropriate agencies be required to perform outreach activities to ensure veteran's health care receives top attention?</p> <p>Suggest that JLC go on record with DVS that this is an area of concern for the JLC and that the JLC be advised of any assistance that the JLC could provide.</p>	<p>63,659 Virginians have been deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq between September 2001 and November 2011; many of these men and women are returning with injuries and need assistance with filing claims for benefits. Concurrently, as Vietnam veterans age, they too have an increased need for claims assistance. Testimony to the U.S. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee in February indicated included "A 2011 RAND survey of veterans in New York State revealed that many veterans face difficulty navigating the complex systems of benefits and services available to them. While this survey was specific to New York veterans, the results are indicative of veterans' experiences nationwide. Veterans reported that they do not know how to find the services they need or apply for the benefits they have earned. Even when they are able to find services appropriate for their needs, many veterans report frustration in accessing these services. Some veterans report long waiting periods to get an appointment at the VA, while others report having to repeat their stories and experiences to a number of different providers."</p>

* For reference only – does not indicate priority



VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS
Military Officers Association of America
2013 Position Paper
MOAA 2013-01

Northern Virginia Veteran Care Center

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To set aside land currently owned by the State of Virginia at the Northern Virginia Training Center in Fairfax County for the future construction of a Northern Virginia Veterans Care Center.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

The *Long-Term Care Feasibility Study: Quality Care They Earned* was prepared for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in 2007 by the Schroeder Center for Healthcare Policy located in the College of William and Mary's Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy.

Among the six primary recommendations made in the report included the need for new Virginia Veterans Care Center in the Northern Virginia Planning District (Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Alexandria City, Fairfax City, Falls Church City, Manassas City, and Manassas Park City). The report suggested that the VCC "be located near veteran population centers without a Veterans Care Center and with high proportion of Medicaid and low income residents." A specific location for this VCC has not yet been designated.

As of the 2000 census there were nearly 42,000 veterans over 65 in the Northern Virginia Planning District, second only to Hampton Roads with nearly 48,000.

The Northern Virginia Training Center located in Fairfax County near the George Mason University Campus first opened its doors in April, 1973 as one of five residential training centers in the Commonwealth to serve people with intellectual and related disabilities. The Commonwealth of Virginia and the U.S. Department of Justice in January 2012 reached a settlement agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, Virginia will close the Northern Virginia Training Center in Fairfax by 2015. About 200 residents live at NVTC.

3. **DISCUSSION:**

- This property is already owned by the State of Virginia.
- Land set aside would be used to construct the new VCC with up to 240 beds. Actual construction would occur after the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that federal funds will be allocated, and Virginia approves and allocates the state share of the construction costs.
- The cost of property in the Northern Virginia area is very high. By utilizing property already owned by State of Virginia the cost of the project should be significantly reduced.

4. **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the JLC recommend that the Governor direct the necessary administrative or legislative actions to formally set aside land currently owned by the State of Virginia at the Northern Virginia Training Center in Fairfax County for the future construction of a Northern Virginia Veterans Care Center.



VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS
Military Officers Association of America
2013 Position Paper
MOAA 2013-02

JROTC to Fulfill Physical Education Requirement

1. **Objective:** To allow participants in high school Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs to fulfill any high school health/physical education (HPE) requirement.

2. **Background:**

Prior to school year 2007-2008, students were allowed to meet HPE graduation requirements through JROTC participation because the JROTC programs fully integrated the standards of learning (SOL) standards for health/physical education. In 2007-2008 the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) discontinued the practice.

Currently, through provisions in the Standards of Accreditation (8 VAC 20-131-110) local school boards are permitted to develop policies to approve courses that could be substituted for regular courses. In part, 8 VAC 20-131-110 states, "if a school division elects to award credit on a basis other than that 140 clock hours of instruction required for standard unit of credit defined in this subsection, the local school division shall develop a written policy approved by the superintendent and school board which insures: (1) that the content of the course for which credit is awarded is comparable to 140 hours of instruction; and (2) that upon completion, the student will have met the aims and objectives of the course."

Senate Bill 269 (Norment) attempted to amend Code of Virginia section 22.1-253.13:1.D.14 regarding programs of physical fitness which "include any combination of (i) physical education classes, (ii) extracurricular athletics, or (iii) other programs and physical activities deemed appropriate by the local school board." Senator Norment's amendment would have added a sentence, "Such program shall accept participation in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps as fulfillment of any high school physical education requirement." The Bill had no fiscal impact statement and was continued to 2013.

The Heart Association maintains the high school HPE goes beyond physical activity and encompasses the promotion of a healthy diet and lifestyle. Further, that if physical exercise is the only activity, then student athletes would be eligible of credit for participation in sports. Physical education instructors are opposed to JROTC fulfilling the HPE requirement.

3. **Discussion:**

High school JROTC programs include physical exercise and wellness/lifestyle education to varying degrees, but uniformity and quality and course content is not assured across local school divisions.

While local school boards are the best judges of the requirements for physical education and healthy lifestyles, they also are heavily influenced by their communities and education associations making uniform requirements problematic.

4. **Recommendation:** That the JLC urge through appropriate channels that JROTC curriculum contain "promotion of a healthy diet and lifestyle" and propose legislation which allows JROTC programs to fulfill the high school HPE requirement provided the goal of promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle have been verified.



VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS
Military Officers Association of America
2013 Position Paper
MOAA 2013-03

Electronic Return of Absentee Ballot Voted by Overseas Voters

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To allow electronic return of absentee ballot voted by Overseas voters

2. **BACKGROUND:** Uniformed service personnel, their dependents, and overseas civilian voters have traditionally experienced difficulties in casting absentee ballots due to a number of factors, including the timely return of a voted ballot.

Currently an overseas voter can electronically register and receive an absentee ballot which then must be returned via “snail” mail. Legislation is required to permit electronic return of the voted ballot.

HB 1057 and SB 82 as introduced in 2012 intended to improve registration and absentee voting procedures for military and overseas voters to include authorization for pilot programs *to vote by secure electronic means*. Both were continued to 2013.

HB1057 as an example authorizes the Secretary of the State Board of Elections(SBE) in added section § 24.2-713 B to authorize and supervise a pilot program or demonstration project in partnership with the Department of Defense Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) or other state agency for the purpose of allowing voters specified in subdivision 2 of § 24.2-700 and military voters with disabilities or injuries to vote by secure electronic means or new technologies for such voters.

The Impact Statement for HB 1057 states that the “SBE indicates that a \$1.81 million dollar federal grant from the Department of Defense’s Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is funding the development and immediate ongoing costs associated with this legislation. This technology is already in development for improvement in processes that are allowed under existing law.”

Further, SBE states that the cost estimates of \$337,270 in FY 2012 and approximately \$90,000 in FY’s 2013 through 2016 were put together based on estimates and MOU’s with the various vendors associated with developing these projects as part of its FVAP grant application.

3. **DISCUSSION:** The State Board of Elections in their biennium 2010-2012 Strategic Plan states:

“SBE continues its efforts to expand access to the electoral process for military and overseas citizens. SBE implemented a program which makes absentee voting more convenient by offering military and overseas citizens the option to receive their absentee ballot by electronically by email. Counties and cities which have established central absentee precincts (caps) have the option to offer this service to military personnel serving on active duty overseas, as well as, to overseas citizens. Now, 86 out of 134 (64%) counties and cities in Virginia provide absentee ballots to military and overseas citizens electronically by email. Military and overseas citizens who qualify under this program may take advantage of special procedures that allow them to apply for an absentee ballot by e-mail; receive their ballot by e-mail, and in some cases, return their voted ballot by either mail.

4. **RECOMMENDATION:**

That JLC recommend legislation to further enhance absentee voting by military and overseas citizens as which would complete the voting cycle by returning a voted ballot via the internet.



VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS
Military Officers Association of America
2013 Position Paper
MOAA 2013-04

Business Incentives for Hiring Veterans

1. Objective: To encourage businesses to hire veterans and both take them off of unemployment and have jobs ready for veterans when they leave the military service.

2. Background:

The jobless rate for veterans who were in the service following September 11, 2001 was 12.1 percent last year, up from 11.5 percent in 2010 according to the Department of Defense. This far exceeds the employment rate for nonveterans for the same periods.

Virginia is home to approximately 823,000 veterans, of whom about 301,600 are from the period following September 11, 2001. Of these, approximately 36,500 are unemployed.

The focus of efforts to get veterans employed has been educating them regarding their qualifications, and how to find jobs. Veterans have been assisted in this by the Virginia Employment Commission's Virginia Workforce Connection website that assists veterans in stating their qualifications, which in most cases are significant.

The Virginia Workforce Connection also is designed to assist employers find the type of veteran they are seeking to employ. However, in reality most employers and their human relations personnel do not understand the qualities veterans possess and may be put off by anecdotal media pursuit of veterans with problems. Therefore, they do not understand that hiring veterans can lead to stronger businesses.

One approach to correcting this anomaly has been to offer tax incentives or credits for businesses to hire veterans. In the past, tax credits have provided incentive to hire certain types of employees. However, recently in Virginia this has come under criticism because the state has no handle on the tax incentives it has provided in the past that have reduced revenues into the general fund and thereby, in part, contributed to budget constraints. Over a dozen bills offering tax incentives, including two for hiring veterans (HB 1041 and 1050), were continued to 2013 pending the results of a comprehensive review of current tax credits and their productivity.

Another evolving approach is to educate employers and their human relations staff regarding the benefits veterans possess. In that way, employers would be seeking veterans rather than lumping them into the general category of potential employees.

3. Discussion: Virginia should do everything in its power to transform those who have been defending our liberties into productive veterans that can strengthen its economy. Employment incentives through education and tax credits should be pursued to this end.

4. Recommendation: That the JLC propose legislation that will support hiring veterans, particularly those who have served during the past decade.

VFW POSITION PAPER
VFW 2013-01
Sales and Use Tax Exemption for Veterans Service Organizations

1. **Objective:** To establish an exemption from the state and local Sales or Use Taxes for non-resale items in the Code of Virginia for nationally organized and recognized Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs).
2. **Background:**
 - The IRS has recognized nationally organized and recognized VSOs as exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code.
 - §58.1-609.11 of the Code of Virginia provides an exemption for sales or use taxes for entities exempt from federal income taxation under 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.
 - VSOs classified as 501(c)(19) perform essentially the same functions as those classified as 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4).
 - For example, the VFW Congressional Charter establishes “charitable” as one of the purposes of the organization.
 - In 2010, the VFW Department of Virginia and Auxiliaries reported the expenditure of \$1,852,292 and a donation of 339,052 volunteer hours in support of numerous community and youth activities for the citizens of the Commonwealth.
 - Similarly, in 2010, the American Legion reported the expenditure of \$2,561,917 and a donation of 526,338 volunteer hours in support of community and youth service.
 - In the 2010-2011 year, the Paralyzed Veterans of America donated 13,637 hours in support of community service.
 - Other smaller VSOs also contribute some dollars and hours in support of community and youth service.
3. **Discussion:**
 - Given the level of community and youth service performed by VSOs as expressed in dollars and hours, VSOs should be accorded the same sales and use tax exemption as other 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations.
 - An exemption would apply to all VSOs, but would primarily benefit VSO Posts/Chapters, etc. that own/operate a permanent facility.
 - An exemption would free sales and use tax dollars spent on fuel, maintenance, cleaning, office supplies, and other items not for resale for additional community and youth service expenditures.
 - The estimate exemptions would total approximately \$100,000 for all VSOs in Virginia.
 - The neighboring states of Maryland, West Virginia, and Tennessee provide sales and use tax exemption for nationally organized and recognized VSOs.
 - Providing sales and use tax exemption for non-resale items to VSOs will continue Virginia’s move toward becoming “the most veteran-friendly state in the nation” and put all VSOs on an equal basis with other 501(C)(3) and 501 (C)(4) groups.
4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly establish a Sales and Use Tax Exemption for non-resale items in the Code of Virginia for nationally organized and recognized VSOs.

VFW POSITION PAPER
VFW 2013-02
In-State Tuition Eligibility for Veterans

1. **Objective:** To ensure that, for current and former military personnel and their dependents, the intent to attend a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth is sufficient for the purpose of establishing domiciliary intent and determining eligibility for in-state tuition rates.
2. **Background:**
 - A top priority of the JLC in 2010-2011 was waiving of the one-year residency requirement for veterans to qualify in-state tuition rates, provided other steps were taken to establish residency.
 - The initiative had the support of Governor McDonnell and two bills – HB1861 (Anderson/Stolle) and SB824 (Edwards/Barker/McWaters) – passed the 2011 General Assembly unanimously.
3. **Discussion:**
 - In making its proposal to the Governor and General Assembly, it was the intent of the JLC that veterans would be granted in-state tuition eligibility regardless of any other intent on the part of the veterans, such as to remain in the Commonwealth after completing his/her degree.
 - In making its recommendation, the JLC realized that some veterans will find work outside the Commonwealth after graduation from a Virginia college or university, just as do many non-veteran graduates. But the JLC believes that many veterans, if welcomed to the Commonwealth, will choose to stay in Virginia and seek employment here after graduation.
 - The JLC believes that most veterans, because of their service in the military, attend college as “independent students.” Even if they are pursuing an undergraduate degree, they are more closely aligned with graduate students in age and financial situation. Unlike a typical undergraduate student, veterans students do not rely on their parents for financial support. As such, they do not come to Virginia just to attend college. They come to Virginia to get an education. And for the entire time they are in school in Virginia, the Commonwealth is their home.
 - With the advent of Iraq/Afghanistan student veteran organizations on Virginia campuses, the bonds created among student veterans will encourage them to remain in the Commonwealth after graduation, enhancing the Virginia workforce and Virginia communities.
 - Senator McWaters submitted a bill, SB605, in the 2012 General Assembly session. This bill seems to indicate that the 2011 legislation is not being fully implemented as proposed by the JLC.
4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly enact the measures contained in SB605 in the 2013 General Assembly session.