

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2008

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) was held on Thursday May 14, 2008, at the American Legion Department of Virginia Headquarters Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

Members Present

Mason Botts, *Air Force Association*
Robert Gray, *American Ex-POWs*
Connie O'Neill, *American Legion*
Sam Wilder, *AUSA*
Daniel Miller, *Disabled American Veterans*
Richard Rinaldo, *Legion of Valor*
John Bonnell, Jr., *Marine Corps League*
Wes Edwards, *MOAA*
David Ellis, *NAUS*
Goodwin Sacra, *Navy Seabee Veterans of America*
Thomas Stephen, *Reserve Officers Association*
Daniel Boyer, *Veterans of Foreign Wars*
Michala Smith, *WAVES*
Jenny Holbert, *Women Marines Association*
Vince Burgess, *Commissioner of Veterans Services*

Members Absent

Jim Aucoin, *AMVETS*
Thomas Snee, *Fleet Reserve Association*
John Dozier, *Korean War Veterans Association*
Norman Jasper, *Military Order of the Purple Heart*
Bill Townsley, *MOWW*
Richard Schneider, *Non-Commissioned Officers Association*
John Jackson, *Paralyzed Veterans of America*
Frank Sherman, *Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*
Paul Galanti, *Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services*

Alternates Present (representing their Veterans Service Organization)

John Cooper, *AMVETS*
James Jones, *Korean War Veterans Association*
Earl Johnson, *MOWW*
David Coffield, *Paralyzed Veterans of America*
John Velleca, *Virginia National Guard Association*

Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)

Phillip Stoneman, *AUSA*

Jack Hilgers, *Legion of Valor*

Don Kaiserman, *MOAA*

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

Erin Bryant, *Office of the Secretary of Public Safety*

Stephen Parker, *Office of the Secretary of Public Safety*

Sara Wilson, *Department of Human Resource Management*

Carol Rauschberg, *Department of Human Resource Management*

Mike Pote, *Department of Human Resource Management*

Tom Nesbitt, *Office of the Attorney General*

Anne Atkins, *Department of Veterans Services*

Tasmyn Childress, *Department of Veterans Services*

Steven Combs, *Department of Veterans Services*

Martha Mead, *Department of Veterans Services*

David Simmons, *Department of Veterans Services*

Others Present

William Tucker, *Disabled American Veterans*

Harry Warner, *Virginia War Memorial Education Foundation*

Agenda Packet

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes of the March 13, 2008 Meeting
- Virginia Wounded Warrior Initiative
- Town Hall Meetings 2008 – Department of Veterans Services
- Veterans Services Foundation Chairman's Report to the JLC
- AUSA Proposed State Legislative Objectives
- Missing in America Project – Fact Sheet
- Homeless Veterans Study – Draft Language
- Possible State Legislative Objectives for 2009
- Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children
- Information Packet – Veterans Remembered Flag

Additional Handouts

- Update on the Wounded Warrior Initiative to the Joint Leadership Council
- Fact Sheet on Veterans Preference in Employment

Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Wilder called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Ms. Holbert led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of VSOs and Quorum Determination

Nineteen of 23 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the JLC were recorded as being represented (fourteen by a primary member; five by an alternate member), the Commissioner of Veterans Services was recorded as present, and a quorum was determined.

Alternate JLC members and other guests were asked to introduce themselves. Mr. Miller introduced Mr. William Tucker, and said that he would probably take over as the representative for the Disabled American Veterans. The Council welcomed the alternates and guests.

Review and Approval of March 13, 2008 meeting minutes

Led by Chairman Wilder

Chairman Wilder asked the Council to review the draft minutes of the March 13, 2008 meeting.

Reference the first sentence on Page 12, the Council voted to keep the sentence as written, as it records what was said at the 3/13/08 meeting. However, the Council voted to record, in a footnote, that the JLC objective simply called for a credit freeze, not for a credit freeze without the \$10 per transaction fee.

A **motion** was made by Mr. Coffield and seconded by Mr. Botts, and passed unanimously, to adopt the amended minutes.

Old Business

Recognition for Delegate Cox

Led by Steven Combs

Chairman Wilder stated that at its previous meeting, the Council had asked Mr. Combs to propose a way of recognizing Delegate Kirk Cox for his outstanding support of veterans issues. Mr. Combs proposed that a JLC plaque be presented to Delegate Cox, and noted that the plaque would be the same as that given to outgoing JLC chairmen. He said that the plaque would have a JLC license plate and a brass plate mounted on the front that would thank Delegate Cox for his outstanding support.

Mr. Miller made a **motion** to accept the plaque proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Botts, and was passed unanimously. Mr. Combs suggested that it would be a good idea to invite Delegate Cox to attend the next JLC meeting, where the plaque would be presented. Chairman Wilder asked for suggestions if Delegate Cox could not attend the next JLC meeting. Suggestions included waiting until the October meeting, mailing the plaque to him, delivering it

to him in his office, or asking his legislative aide – Bill Flanagan – to accept the plaque on his behalf. It was agreed that if Delegate Cox could not attend the August meeting, he would be invited to the October meeting, and if he could not attend that meeting, Mr. Flanagan would be invited to accept the plaque on his behalf.

New Business

Presentation: Veterans Preference

Led by Sara Wilson

Chairman Wilder introduced Ms. Sara Wilson, the Director of the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM). Ms. Wilson introduced Ms. Carol Rauschberg and Mr. Mike Pote, also of DHRM.

Ms. Wilson told that Council that Virginia does have a preference for veterans, and that veterans are the only group that receives such a preference. She said that on application tests, veterans have an extra 5% added to their score, while disabled veterans receive an extra 10%. However, she noted that only 3% of state jobs have an application test. She said that for the remaining 97% of state jobs, veterans preference is applied during the hiring process.

Ms. Wilson said that for state jobs, a veteran is defined as someone who received an honorable discharged and served at least 180 days on active duty. She added that this was a broader definition than used by the federal government.

Ms. Wilson said that 9.6% of state workers are veterans – higher than the 7.76% of veterans among Virginia's working age population. She noted that DHRM works actively to recruit veterans to the state workforce. She added a caution that because of the current state budget situation, state hiring is down overall, and that this would impact the hiring of veterans.

Ms. Wilson asked Commissioner Burgess to update the Council on efforts to create a position in state government dedicated to the hiring of veterans. The Commissioner said that DVS will apply to the Governor's Workforce Development Office for grant funding to hire a new DVS staff member to work closely with DHRM on veterans hiring. Commissioner Burgess suggested that the JLC write a letter of support for the grant application.

A **motion** was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Ms. Smith, and passed unanimously for the JLC to write a letter of support for the grant application.

Chairman Wilder noted that DVS would soon begin hiring for the Wounded Warrior program, and asked for additional information on state recruiting practices. He asked if there would be a recruiter at an upcoming job fair in Hampton Roads.

Ms. Wilson replied that while all state jobs were posted on a single state website, state recruiting was decentralized. She said that agencies were responsible for sending recruiters to job fairs. Ms. Mead added that DVS would have a recruiter at the Hampton Roads job fair.

Mr. Cooper asked what the state was doing to encourage veterans to apply for state positions. Ms. Wilson replied that state job advertisements include an broad Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement, and that agencies could include additional information in their job ads.

Mr. Cooper asked Ms. Wilson about a job advertisement for the Virginia State Police. He noted that the ad stated that veteran applicants had to have a home of record east of the Mississippi River. He said that he thought this discriminated against veterans. Ms. Wilson said that she will look into the issue and get back to the Council.

Ms. Cooper asked how the state monitors the application of the veterans hiring preference. Ms. Wilson said DHRM monitors state agency hiring practices and provides this information to agency directors. She said that Commissioner Burgess and his Human Resources Director have ready access to this information.

Mr. Cooper asked if state agencies had a “quota” on the number of veterans to be hired and if state agencies could turn away veterans if the quota had been met. Ms. Wilson replied that state agencies do not have a quota; instead, the state seeks the best qualified applicant, and in many cases, this is a veteran. She added that veterans would never be turned away if they were the best person for the job. She said that the challenge is not in hiring veterans, but in ensuring that they are part of the applicant pool so that they may be considered for state jobs in the first place. She asked the Council to encourage veterans to apply for state jobs.

Chairman Wilder asked if DHRM could issue alerts on state jobs for which veterans may be well qualified. Ms. Wilson replied that this would be an appropriate role for the planned veterans hiring position in DVS.

Mr. Miller stated that veterans are given a 48-hour preference on applying for jobs posted on the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) website. He suggested that this preference be applied to jobs posted on the state website.

Mr. Rinaldo asked how many veterans had received the veterans preference when they were hired for a state job. Ms. Wilson replied that all veterans hired by the state received the veterans preference. She noted that 9.45% of the state workers are veterans and that just among “classified” state employees, over 7,000 are veterans. She reminded the Council that 7.76% of the state’s work-age population is comprised of veterans, but that 9.45% of the state workers are veterans.

Mr. Miller and others discussed the TAP program, and noted that not every service member had the opportunity to attend TAP. Mr. Miller also noted that employers often tell him that they have a hard time understanding what is on a service member’s resume – i.e. that there can be difficulty translating military experience to civilian experience. He noted that VEC and others help service members translate their military experience into language that employers can understand. Ms. Wilson said that DHRM would appreciate knowing where these gaps exist, and that having the “translation” tools would also help DHRM with veterans hiring.

Ms. Holbert asked about veterans hiring in the private sector. Ms. Wilson replied that many corporations do not capture veterans preference data.

Chairman Wilder asked Ms. Wilson if she needed a JLC representative to sit on the DHRM Veterans Outreach Council. Ms. Wilson replied that DHRM Council is comprised of state employees, but that JLC members who are also state employees would be welcome to participate.

Ms. Wilson was asked for the link to the state employment website. She replied that it was www.dhrm.virginia.gov, and that visitors to the website should click on the “Employment” button.

Presentation: Wounded Warrior Project
Led by Martha Mead

Ms. Mead told the Council that she would be covering three main areas:

- The role of the Virginia is for Heroes Conference in the Wounded Warrior Initiative and Regional Planning Efforts
- The Business Development Plan
- Progress to Date

Ms. Mead discussed the role of the Virginia is for Heroes Conference in the Wounded Warrior Initiative and Regional Planning Efforts. She covered these topics:

- October 2007 – Virginia is for Heroes Conference set statewide goals and objectives. This led to two bills (HB475 and SB297), which the JLC played a major role in helping to get passed by the General Assembly
- March 2008 – Virginia is for Heroes Conference at Fort Monroe initiated regional planning. The conference began to identify how the key strategies identified in the statewide conference will be applied in Hampton Roads
- Virginia is for Heroes Planning Group – developing template for regions to implement regional cooperation, map provider roles and responsibilities, assess gaps in services, determine measures of effectiveness (performance), and plan regional strategies
- Working Groups – are forming in Hampton Roads and in the Richmond Area to continue cooperative efforts and planning
- Next regional conference: planned for Fall 2008 at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center

Ms. Mead next turned to the Business Development Plan, which is a detailed plan with timelines to “stand up” the Wounded Warrior Office, hire the Executive Director and Regional Directors, develop long-term service procurement strategy, and distribute community funding. She covered these components of the plan:

- Internal organization approach, design, and establishment
- Program partner relationships, communication, and coordination
- Legislative reporting requirements and approach

- Community organization relationships, communication, and coordination
- Business development (i.e. non-state funding) approach
- Systems/technology/data requirements, issues, and potential solutions
- Identification of significant project (start-up) risks and risk mitigation strategies
- Service procurement strategy and approach
- Potential internal operational “ripple effects” (i.e. impact on other DVS operations)

Ms. Mead then covered the progress to date, which includes these items:

- Recruitment for the Executive Director is under way
- P-5 (Purpose, Picture, Plan, Participants, and Process) message has been drafted and sent out for review and comment

Chairman Wilder stopped Ms. Mead’s presentation to ask about media coverage. He stated that he thought that it was good in the Hampton Roads area but lacking in the Richmond area. He asked how DVS could publicize Wounded Warrior information in the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Ms. Atkins replied that the communication plan is under development. She said that DVS would prepare news releases, but that the program may not be far enough along for the Times-Dispatch to pick up the story.

Mr. Kaiserman suggested that the JLC appoint a committee to speak with editors of the Times-Dispatch to promote increased coverage of military and veterans issues. Ms. Atkins suggested that the JLC and DVS first meet with Peter Bacque, the Times-Dispatch reporter who covers military and veterans issues.

Ms. Smith suggested that DVS and the JLC contact Admiral Jay Johnson, USN (Ret), a Vice President at Dominion Power, to enlist corporate support for the Wounded Warrior Program. Chairman Wilder informed the Council that Dominion Power has been approached by Mr. Galanti and Ms. Joan Washburn for a donation.

Mr. Rinaldo suggested that Congressman Scott be contacted to enlist his support for articles in the Newport News Daily Press.

Mr. Jones asked why a regional conference hadn’t been held in the Richmond area. Ms. Mead replied that the state wide Virginia is for Heroes Conference was held in Richmond and that a working group had been formed centered on the McGuire VA Medical Center. She added that the regional conferences will continue in other parts of the state.

Ms. Mead continued her discussion of progress to date, which covered these items:

- Meetings have been held with partner agencies, such as Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse (DMHMRSAS), the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), and the Brain Injury Association, to review the purpose of the program, to plan, and to begin a discussion of procurement strategies
- Meetings have been held with the Regional Directors of the DVS Benefit Services section to conduct a review of internal operational ripple effects

- A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Social Services (DSS) for information and referral to the 211-Virginia system, which is a dial-in system for information on and referral to social services such as Medicare, Medicaid, etc.
- Meetings of the Regional Planning Groups have been held in Hampton Roads and the Richmond area. Policy discussions have been held with the Virginia Association of Community Service Boards (VACSB)
- A pilot proposal for Hampton Roads has been submitted to Congressman Scott by the Hampton Roads Community Services Board (CSB). Ms. Mead noted that if federal funding is provided, the Hampton Roads CSB would need less funding from the state
- Chairman Wilder held a meeting with Congressman Cantor to discuss potential federal support

Mr. O'Neill asked if the funding proposed by Congressman Scott would be limited to the Hampton Roads region. Ms. Mead replied that since the funding request was submitted by the Hampton Roads/Newport News CSB, the funding would go to services in the Tidewater area. She added that the proposed funding would also provide services to active duty service members and their families.

Mr. O'Neill asked what message the JLC members should convey to their VSOs. Ms. Mead replied that the JLC members should communicate the P-5 message, but not until it is in final form. She said that it should be in final form by early June.

Ms. Mead continued her discussion of progress to date, which covered these items:

- Ms. Mead, Ms. Atkins, and Commissioner Burgess met with Brigadier General Loree Sutton of the new Department of Defense Center for Excellence in Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. Topics covered include:
 - Activities of the Federal Partners Work Group on reintegration needs of returning veterans and their families
 - Organizations represented on the workgroup
 - Plans for the workgroup to work nationally with 211 systems. Virginia is a pilot state in this effort
 - Virginia is the only state represented on the workgroup

Mr. Miller asked Ms. Mead to include a timeline in future updates provided to the JLC. Chairman Wilder added that he would like DVS to provide an update on the Wounded Warrior Program at all future JLC meetings.

Mr. Miller stated that he would post the Executive Director job announcement on the VEC system.

Chairman Wilder suggested that the name of the program be the "Virginia Wounded Warrior Mental Health Program" to avoid confusion with other programs using the name "Wounded Warrior Program." Ms. Mead replied that this program encompasses more than just mental health, to include other support services. She said that it is her preference to leave the name as the "Virginia Wounded Warrior Program."

Chairman Wilder expressed his belief that the Executive Director should be a veteran. Commissioner Burgess stated that DVS would hire the best person for the job, even if that person wasn't a veteran.

Mr. Stephen commented that there were no employers represented on the DoD Center for Excellence workgroup. He stressed the importance of having employer representation to help them better understand the issues faced by returning veterans. Ms. Mead noted that she provided only a partial list of workgroup members and that she would provide a more detailed list at the next meeting. She said she would suggest to DoD that employers be included if they are not already.

Fundraising for the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center at the Virginia War Memorial
Chairman Wilder stated that Mr. Warner had to leave, but that he would give his presentation later in the meeting.

Summary of Town Hall Meetings

Led by Anne Atkins

Chairman Wilder thanked Ms. Atkins for her excellent summary, and, in the interest of time, asked her to cover only the highlights of her presentation. He added that it was his understanding that no legislative issues that required JLC attention had come out of the Town Hall Meetings. Ms. Atkins confirmed this.

Ms. Atkins stated that the overarching theme to come out of the Town Hall Meetings was the need for better communication.

The Council took a break for lunch between 12:15pm and 12:30pm.

Reports

Board of Veteran Services

Led by Chairman Wilder

Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Chairman Paul Galanti was not present.

Chairman Wilder stated that he had attended the April BVS meeting, and noted that three of the four legislative members of the BVS were present at the meeting: Delegates Mark Cole, Kirk Cox, and Vivian Watts. Chairman Wilder said that Senator John Edwards is a member of the BVS but was not present at the meeting.

Chairman Wilder summed up the comments made by the legislators present at the April BVS meeting in this way:

- Delegate Cox reported that the 2008 General Assembly was a great session for veterans issues, and thanked the everyone who worked so hard to get veterans issues passed
- Delegate Watts emphasized the key role the JLC played in getting veterans legislation passed, and noted the assistance that the JLC gave to legislators like herself. Delegate Watts thanked the JLC for its work in helping Virginia veterans speak with one voice with lawmakers. Delegate Watts reported that one of her bills that would have given tax relief to National Guard and Reserve members deployed outside the United States for 90 days or more was carried over to the 2009 General Assembly Session. She asked the JLC to make that bill one of its priorities for the 2009 session
- Delegate Cole emphasized the importance of veterans and their families to the Commonwealth and the need to adequately address veterans and family issues. Delegate Cole asked the JLC to support his bills relating to the interstate compact on educational opportunities for military children, and tax credits for physicians who accept TRICARE

Chairman Wilder remarked that in the past, the JLC had to approach legislators for support, but now legislators were approaching the JLC for support.

Veteran Service Foundation

Led by Chairman Wilder

Veteran Service Foundation (VSF) Chairman Frank Wickersham was not present, but provided a written report to the JLC.

Chairman Wilder stated that there are fundraising efforts underway in support of the Wounded Warrior Program, adding that there have already been two fundraising events and more are planned.

Chairman Wilder said that the 2008 General Assembly expanded the VSF from eight citizen members to 16 citizen members. He said that the new VSF members will improve the capacity of the VSF to raise funds, that the new members are to have fundraising experience, and that they are to be geographically balanced to facilitate fundraising statewide.

Chairman Wilder said that the eight additional members will be appointed by the General Assembly – five by the House and three by the Senate. He said that he had spoken to Delegate Cox regarding the identification of candidates, and that Delegate Cox had told him that he would welcome suggestions from the veterans community. Chairman Wilder charged the JLC members to identify the kind of person that would be a good fit for the VSF.

Mr. Miller asked how the JLC members should put forward the names of potential candidates. Commissioner Burgess responded that it was a political process and that it wasn't appropriate for the names to be sent to the Department. Mr. Hilgers added that the Speaker of the House and Chairman of the Senate Rule Committee ask for nominations from legislators. Mr. Hilgers said that if a JLC member wished to put his or her name forward, or if they wished to nominate someone, they should contact their Delegate or Senator.

Department of Veterans Services

Led by Commissioner Burgess. The Commissioner covered the following topics:

- Sitter and Barfoot Veteran Care Center (SBVCC): The SBVCC now has 54 residents. The Alzheimer's/Dementia Wing opened last week, with three of the 54 residents being in the new wing.
- Fundraising for the Wounded Warrior Program: The next fundraiser will be at Nauticas, in Norfolk, on June 17. On the June 18 a fundraising dinner is scheduled in Washington D.C.
- State Budget Reductions: The state is in a negative budget situation for this fiscal year. DVS has already had to cut \$288,000 from the General Fund. This will carry over to FY09, and DVS is being asked to cut an additional \$90,000 from the FY09 budget. DVS has a \$34 million budget, of which \$5.7 million is from the General Fund. DVS is trying to avoid making cuts to direct service, but has not filled a number of administrative positions.
- Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin: The land for the cemetery will be transferred from DoD to DVS in September or October 2008, and construction will begin shortly thereafter. The target to begin operations is late summer or early fall 2010.
- TurboVet: The General Assembly appropriated \$100,000 in FY09 to continue development of the TurboVet system. DVS is waiting for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) to award a development contract to Stratizon Corporation, which will then select four pilot states to test the program. Virginia is in the running to be one of the four pilot states. The development will be monitored by the National Defense University (NDU). The \$100,000 appropriated by the General Assembly will be used to support these development efforts.
- Virginia War Memorial: On July 1, DVS will begin providing administrative support to the Virginia War Memorial.
- Veterans Workforce Development Taskforce: Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall has convened a Veterans Workforce Development Taskforce. The next taskforce meeting will be held on July 15, 2008. The taskforce report is due at the beginning of September.
- USDVA Forecast of Veterans Population: The USDVA recently released a revised forecast of the number of veterans in the U.S., and Virginia has gone from #11 to #8 in total veterans population. The revised forecast places the number of veterans in Virginia at over 807,000, up from 728,000 in the old forecast.

Mr. Miller asked if the increased number of veterans in Virginia would improve the state's chances of receiving funding for the construction of veterans care centers. Commissioner

Burgess replied that the USDVA has placed a ceiling on the number of beds for which states may apply for federal grant funds. The ceiling for Virginia is 1,312 beds. Commissioner Burgess said that believes that the USDVA may redo the funding formula to reflect the new population forecast.

Fundraising for the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center at the Virginia War Memorial Led by Harry Warner

Mr. Warner thanked the JLC for the support that was given to the War Memorial during the 2008 General Assembly Session, and for making the construction of the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center a top priority. He said that JLC support was critical in helping to get the funding through the General Assembly, and praised the efforts of Delegate Cox and Senator Stosch to secure the additional \$2 million.

Mr. Warner said that the construction budget for the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center is \$8.1 million, and that with the \$2 million in additional funding, the state commitment is now \$6.1 million. He added that the Virginia War Memorial Education Foundation is working to raise the remaining \$2 million, and noted that the state funding was contingent on the Education Foundation raising the \$2 million in private funds.

Mr. Warner said that he is optimistic that the Education Foundation will be able to raise the full \$2 million, due to the fact that \$1.25 million has already been raised. He stated that contributions have been received from veterans service organizations, from corporations, and from private donors.

Mr. Warner said that he expects to raise the \$2 million by August, after which the funds would be presented to the state, along with architectural plans for approval. He noted that the approval process would take approximately three weeks, after which the plans would be sent out for bid. He concluded by saying that a contractor would be selected in October and that ground would be broken in November.

JLC 2009 Legislatives Objectives

Led by Chairman Wilder

Chairman Wilder called the Council's attention to the handout titled "Possible State Legislative Objectives for 2009." He said that he would like to review each issue one by one, eliminate those don't appear to be priorities, and line up a sponsor for each remaining item.

Chairman Wilder first reviewed the issues left over from 2008. As identified in the handout, those issues are:

1. TurboVet funding
2. Additional funding for Wounded Warrior
3. Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans (2008 Objective #5)
4. Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen-Soldiers (2008 Objective #6)

5. Credit Freeze – allow service members to do it for free (instead of \$10 each time, 2008 Objective #7)

Discussion followed on each of the issues left over from 2008:

- *TurboVet* – Chairman Wilder said he is not sure yet if additional funding will be needed for TurboVet. Commissioner Burgess informed the Council that the key to knowing whether additional state funds will be needed hinges on the USDVA. He said that if the USDVA awards the funding to develop the pilot, state funds may not be needed. He added that if Virginia has to “go it alone,” then \$300,000 will be required. Chairman Wilder asked about the \$900,000 that DVS had said was needed to develop Phase 3, to which Commissioner Burgess replied that only the \$300,000 was needed right now. Chairman Wilder said that this item will be discussed further at the August meeting
- *Additional funding for Wounded Warrior* – Chairman Wilder said that he had added this item to the list several months ago. He said that if the \$4.5 million in funding proposed by the General Assembly is passed, he doesn’t think any additional funding or legislative action should be requested from the 2009 General Assembly
- *Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans* – Chairman Wilder stated that because this issue required a change to the Virginia Constitution, it was automatically carried over to the 2009 Session. He said he thought that this was still a “viable objective”
- *Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen Soldiers* – Chairman Wilder said that bills had been submitted by Delegates Watts and Cline and by Senators Puller and Northam during the 2008 Session. He noted that Delegate Watts estimated that her bill would impact 100 people at a cost of \$150,000, while the Virginia Department of Taxation estimated that 488 people would be eligible at a cost of \$444,000
- *Credit Freeze* – Chairman Wilder said that Senator Saslaw’s bill has brought the credit transaction fee down to \$10 a transaction. He said that John Clickener of MOAA believes that it would be a hard fight to get the per transaction fee changed to \$0. Chairman Wilder expressed his opinion that the JLC should declare victory on the issue and drop it as an issue for 2009

Chairman Wilder next reviewed the State Legislation Urged by DoD. As identified in the handout, those issues are:

1. Unemployment compensation for spouses when military sponsor is transferred.
2. Ease licensing restrictions for military spouses when transferred.
3. Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children

Discussion followed on each of the state legislative issues urged by the DoD:

- *Unemployment compensation for spouses when military sponsor is transferred* – Chairman Wilder reminded the members that this issue had been discussed at the last JLC meeting, when Tom Hinton of the DoD spoke to the Council. Chairman Wilder said that at that time, some JLC members had some objections to the issue, because employers would be penalized if the departing spouse was paid unemployment. He said that some

states, such as Georgia, have gotten around the issue. He noted that the Virginia National Guard Association and the AUSA national office are in support of this issue.

Mr. Kaiserman said that he believes that though some small businesses may be negatively impacted, this issue stands a good chance of being passed if the proper caps are placed on the program.

- *Ease licensing restrictions for military spouses when transferred* – Chairman Wilder said that when military spouses move, they must be licensed to perform their profession in the new state. He said that some states, such as South Carolina, recognize a national certification rather than relying on a state certification, meaning that a teacher who moves to a state that recognizes the national certification would not have to be recertified in the new state. Chairman Wilder said that the JLC would have to do additional research to determine what changes may be required.

Mr. Kaiserman noted that there may be opposition from some professional groups about accepting what they may consider to be “inferior” credentialing from an outside group.

- *Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children* – Chairman Wilder stated that Delegate Mark Cole submitted a bill during the 2008 General Assembly for Virginia to participate in the Interstate Compact. He said that the bill passed the House of Delegates but was left in the Senate Finance Committee. He said that the DoD estimates that it would cost approximately \$80,000 to implement in Virginia. Chairman Wilder noted that the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC) will recommend this issue to the Governor as a legislative priority for 2009

Mr. Kaiserman reported that he met with Senator Stosch and was told that the bill was left in the Senate Finance Committee because the Committee was not presented with enough information on which to base a decision. Mr. Kaiserman said he believed that the limited funding available during the 2008 Session played a part in the decision to leave the bill in committee. Mr. Kaiserman said that he was told by Senator Stosch that the bill was likely to pass in 2009, and that he was willing to sponsor a bill if needed. Mr. Kaiserman said that he believes that with Delegate Cole’s bill and Senator Stosch’s support, the issue is covered. He noted, however, that the JLC should stay on top of the issue with Senator Stosch.

Finally, Chairman Wilder discussed the “Other” issues. As identified in the handout, those issues are:

1. Assistance/incentives for doctors to accept TRICARE (Delegate Mark Cole, HB213)
2. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) issues
3. “Military Personnel Bill of Rights” (Delegate Brian Moran, HB1193)
4. Resolution to adopt a national flag for veterans (an initiative by veterans in California)
5. Input from DVS “Town Hall” meetings
6. BVS Workforce Taskforce – possible legislative initiatives
7. Missing in America Project
8. Homeless Veterans Study project by DVS.

Discussion followed on each of the “Other” issues:

- *Assistance/incentives for doctors to accept TRICARE* – Chairman Wilder noted that Delegate Mark Cole submitted a bill on this issue during the 2008 Session, but the bill was left the House Finance Committee. He said that Delegate Cole has asked the JLC to make it one of its objectives in 2009.

Chairman Wilder read from an AUSA newsletter, which said that it is difficult for some military members to find doctors that accept TRICARE; this is especially true for guardsmen, reservists, family members, and retirees who live in areas with a small military population. Chairman Wilder then stated that the fiscal impact of Delegate Cole’s bill is estimated to be \$2 million.

Chairman Wilder said that he had attended a recent meeting of the Virginia Citizen-Soldier Support Council, at which LTC Thom Morgan, the J-1 of the Virginia National Guard, stated that the Virginia National Guard has no problem with TRICARE. Chairman Wilder reported that LTC Morgan had surveyed the family assistance groups and found no problems. Chairman Wilder noted that the Virginia National Guard Association’s resolutions do not address this issue. He said that this issue could be a hard sell due the fiscal impact and the lack of Guard support. He said that he will meet soon with the Major General Newman to discuss this and other issues.

Mr. Boyer said that he lived in a rural area, and had no access issues. Mr. Stephen said that those with TRICARE Standard have fewer access issues than those with TRICARE Prime. Ms. Smith added that access with TRICARE Prime is a problem in the Tidewater area.

Discussion followed on the nature of TRICARE Prime vs. TRICARE Standard, and it was generally agreed that those with TRICARE Prime have much more difficulty in securing access to care.

Chairman Wilder asked if any VSOs felt there was a need to take this on as a priority issue, and, if they felt it was a priority, to do further research on the issue. He didn’t want to dismiss the issue until more information was available and until the National Guard could be consulted. Mr. Velleca said he would address this with Major General Newman and LTC Morgan.

- *Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) issues* – Chairman Wilder said he does not know of any issues at the present time.
- *Military Personnel Bill of Rights* – Chairman Wilder noted that there were four issues in this bill, which was sponsored by Delegate Brian Moran. He said in that two issues have already been taken care of, including the supplemental pay for state workers called to active duty, if their military pay and allowances are less than their state pay

- *Resolution to adopt a national flag for veterans* – Chairman Wilder noted that this was a proposal advanced by a group of veterans in California. Discussion followed on the merits of the Veterans Remembered flag vs. the U.S. Flag. It was the consensus that those present had served under the U.S. Flag, and that no special veterans flag was required.
- *Input for the DVS “Town Hall” meetings* – Chairman Wilder noted that Ms. Atkins had told the JLC earlier that no legislative objectives had come out of the Town Hall meetings. He noted that there were no additional meetings scheduled at this time.
- *BVS Workforce Taskforce* – Chairman Wilder said that Delegate Watts was leading the Taskforce’s “Legislative Tiger Team.” Ms. Mead noted that Delegate Watts’ team has not met yet, because the other Tiger Teams have yet to make their recommendations. Chairman Wilder said that Delegate Watts had asked the JLC to “leave room” on its 2009 legislative agenda for any legislative recommendations that may come out of the taskforce.

Mr. Miller asked for additional information on the taskforce. Commissioner Burgess replied that the taskforce has been charged by the Secretary of Public Safety to examine workforce opportunities for veterans, with a focus on disabled veterans and members of the Guard and Reserve.

- *Missing in America Project* – Chairman Wilder stated that he is not sure yet if legislative action will be required on this issue. Mr. Bonnell said that he asked Mr. Ferguson to research the issue but has not yet heard back from him. Mr. Bonnell said he has also contacted the Director of the Funeral Home Association of Virginia for additional information.

Chairman Wilder noted that a change to state regulations may not be required. Mr. Bonnell agreed with this, and added that implementing the program will not cost the state anything.

Mr. Boyer asked if this was a liability issue. Mr. Bonnell said that some funeral homes may be concerned about liability, but that others are not concerned. He stated that the goal of the program was to identify veterans and to give them a proper burial in a veterans cemetery.

Mr. Combs said that Pat Green, the Chairman of the BVS Cemeteries Sub-committee, will hold a Committee meeting prior to the next BVS meeting and will address this issue at that time.

- *Homeless Veterans Study project by DVS* – Chairman Wilder asked if the study on homeless veterans could be done for less than \$100,000. He said he did not want to degrade the quality of the study, but rather was trying to determine a realistic price so that the study would have a better chance of being funded.

Commissioner Burgess said that the care center study commissioned by DVS cost over \$100,000 and that the cemetery study was approximately \$35,000. Commissioner Burgess suggested that the JLC ask for \$100,000 and then take a fall back position later.

Chairman Wilder called the members' attention to the handout labeled "AUSA Proposed State Legislative Objectives 2009" and explained that the AUSA supports the following issues:

- Fully fund the TurboVet System
- Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans
- Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen-Soldiers called to Active Duty
- Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children

Mr. Rinaldo proposed an additional legislative proposal for consideration: a Virginia supplemental G.I. Bill for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Chairman Wilder asked Mr. Rinaldo to write a draft position paper and to e-mail it to the JLC members.

Chairman Wilder noted that the JLC might receive additional input from two sources, which could be considered at the August meeting:

- The Virginia Citizen-Soldier Support
- The BVS Workforce Development Taskforce

Mr. Ellis stressed the need for the JLC objectives bulleted and not numbered, because he believes that legislators would address only the #1 issue and ignore the rest.

Chairman Wilder proposed that the following items identified on the "Possible State Legislative Objectives for 2009" be eliminated from consideration:

- Under "Issues left over from 2008," Chairman Wilder proposed eliminating:
 - #2 – Additional funding for Wounded Warrior
 - #5 – Credit Freeze

No one objected to eliminating these items

- Under "State Legislation urged by DoD" Chairman Wilder proposed eliminating:
 - #2 – Ease licensing restrictions for military spouses when transferred

Mr. Rinaldo objected to eliminating this item, and so it will remain on the list for possible consideration. Mr. Rinaldo agreed to research and sponsor this item

- Under "Other" Chairman Wilder proposed eliminating
 - #2 – BRAC Issues
 - #4 – Resolution to adopt a national flag for veterans
 - #5 – Input from DVS "Town Hall" meetings

No one objected to eliminating these items

Chairman Wilder then called for sponsors for the remaining issues. He explained that the sponsor is the VSO which will 1) write the JLC position paper on the issue, and 2) attend committee and sub-committee hearings to testify on behalf of the JLC in support of the issue (he noted that in some cases the sponsor won't have to testify, but rather be present at the sub-committee hearing)

Sponsors were identified as follows:

- “Issues left over from 2008”
 - #1 – TurboVet funding – *AUSA*
 - #3 – Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans – *DAV*
 - #4 – Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen-Soldiers – *MOAA*

Mr. Rinaldo proposed expanding #4 (Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen Soldiers. Chairman Wilder stated that if Mr. Rinaldo wished to expand this issue, he would need to research it and provide the JLC with a new position paper and a fiscal impact for consideration. After some back and forth, Mr. Rinaldo agreed to do so.

- “State Legislation urged by DoD”
 - #1 – Unemployment compensation for spouses – *no volunteer*
 - #2 – Ease licensing restrictions – *Legion of Valor*
 - #3 – Interstate Compact – *MOAA*
- “Other”
 - #1 – TRICARE – *no volunteer*
 - #3 – Military Personnel Bill of Rights – *no volunteer*
 - #6 – Workforce Taskforce – *no volunteer*
 - #7 – Missing in America Project – *Marine Corps League*
 - #8 – Homeless Veterans Study – *American Legion*
 - #9 – Virginia Supplemental G.I. Bill – *Legion of Valor*

Public Comment Period

There were no members of the public that wanted to speak

Election of new officers

Led by Mason Botts

On behalf of the Nominating Committee (comprised of Mr. Botts, Mr. Miller, and Mr. O’Neill), Mr. Botts proposed that the election of new officers be postponed to the August meeting.

Mr. Botts stated that the JLC Constitution specifies that elections be held at the second quarter meeting. He made a **motion** that the JLC deviate from the Constitution and hold the election at the third quarter meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. O’Neill. There was no discussion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Botts suggested that a committee be formed to review the JLC Constitution and to recommend possible changes, including moving the election of new officers to the third quarter meeting. He volunteered to serve on the committee. Mr. Ellis suggested that committee be comprised of current and past JLC chairmen. Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Miller volunteered to serve on the committee, with Mr. O'Neill as Chairman.

Mr. Combs reminded the JLC that any proposed changes to the JLC Constitution would need to be sent to the members 30 days in advance of the meeting at which they are to be voted on.

Preparation for next meeting

Led by Chairman Wilder

Chairman Wilder reported that the next JLC meeting will be held on August 13, and that he would like the legislative position papers to be finalized by the end of August. He noted that the JLC will also meet on October 15 and December 18. He asked that a member of the Governor's Policy Office attend the December 18 meeting to explain the Governor's position on the JLC's legislative agenda.

Chairman Wilder said that he would like to hold another "JLC Day at the General Assembly" and asked Mr. Hilgers to identify a possible day. Mr. Hilgers replied that the event would be held on January 19 – the first Monday of the 2009 Session.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Wilder called for a motion to adjourn. A **motion** was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Boyer, and a unanimous decision was made to close the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.