

**JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

**VIRGINIA VETERANS CARE CENTER, ROANOKE
JUNE 21, 2004, 1:30 PM**

OPENING AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Dan Miller called the meeting to order at 1:32 P.M.

Chairman Miller introduced Ms. Brenda Hamilton, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Roanoke, VA, who swore in newly appointed member Dr. George Dumas (representing the Homeless & Disabled Veterans)

Chairman Miller recognized Mr. Bill Van Thiel, Administrator of Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC), who welcomed the Council members to the facility. Believing that it is important that all JLC members be familiar with the VVCC, Mr. Van Thiel had earlier offered the group a guided tour.

Dr. Dumas commended Ms. Geneva Claybrook, who before the meeting took several members on a tour of the VVCC, adding that he was very impressed by the work being done at VVCC. He also commended Mr. Van Thiel on an outstanding facility.

Chairman Miller led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance, and asked for a few seconds of silence in memory of those who have lost their lives in the defense of our country.

ROLL CALL OF VSOs AND QUORUM DETERMINATION

The roll was called by Chairman Miller:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Miller, Disabled American Veterans, Chairman
Jim Aucoin, AMVETS
George Dumas, Homeless & Disabled Veterans
Michael Hulsey, Reserve Officers Association
Norman Jasper, Jr., Military Order of Purple Heart
James Jones, Jr., Korean War Veterans Association
Cornelius O'Neill, American Legion
Goodwin Sacra, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
Ronald Shamblin, Virginia National Guard Association
Frank Wickersham, III, MOAA

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Bonnell, Jr., Marine Corps League
Mason Botts, Air Force Association
John J. Dunleavy, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge
Paul Richard Fink, US Navy Cruiser Sailors Association

Robert Gray, American Ex-Prisoners of War
John Jackson, Paralyzed Veterans of America
Richard Rinaldo, The Legion of Valor of the US
Richard Schneider, Non Commissioned Officers Association
Thomas Snee, Fleet Reserve Association
Peter Snelling, Veterans of Foreign Wars

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Colbert Boyd, Chief Deputy Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services
Steven Combs, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services
John Anderson, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
Bill Van Thiel, Administrator, Virginia Veterans Care Center
Geneva Claybrook, Executive Services Manager
Paul Willard, representing the Air Force Association

It was determined that because only 10 of the 20 appointed JLC members were present, there was not a quorum. Therefore, official business could not be conducted. Rather, the JLC could only hold a discussion.

INTRODUCTION OF EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Chairman Miller introduced Mr. Bert Boyd, Dr. John Anderson, and Mr. Steven Combs. Also, in attendance (in the audience) was Mr. Jim Walker, Board of Veterans Services; Dr. Dick Luck, Administrator of the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center; Ms. Taylor Lee Wickersham, lobbyist for survivor benefits on the national level and daughter of Mr. Frank Wickersham, III; Mr. Rob Schmidt, from the Salem VA Medical Center; Mr. Perry Johnson, a Vice Commander with the DAV; and Mr. Sloan Hoops, Past Department Commander of the DAV.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 16, 2004 MEETING

One correction was noted on the first page – last sentence – to add the words “it can be filled.” The corrected sentence would read: “John Edgerton moved to exclude DVOP/LVER from a Maximum Employment Level at the Virginia Employment Commission, so whenever there is a vacancy it can be filled.”

The minutes from the March 16, 2004 meeting could not approved due to the lack of a quorum.

Dr. Dumas added that it would be beneficial if acronyms like DVOP and LVER were spelled out in the minutes the first time the acronym was used. Chairman Miller explained that DVOP stood for “Disabled Veterans Outreach Program,” part of the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC). DVOP employees work with veterans under Title 38 of the US Code, while the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program operates under the same legislation.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

Chairman Miller, who will relinquish his title as Chairman at the next meeting (assuming there is a quorum, so that elections can be held), thanked members of the Council, as well as Commissioner Jon Mangis, Chief Deputy Commissioner Bert Boyd, and their staffs for their support and assistance to the veterans of the Commonwealth over the past year. Additionally he

thanked Dr. Anderson, Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services, for being a liaison for the Council and Board. He also thanked Mr. Combs for helping to pull information together for this meeting.

Chairman Miller spoke briefly of the success of the Council, remarking that it had put some pressure on the state to get officials to work on the paperwork for the construction of the Suffolk Cemetery and plans for the second Veterans Care Center in Richmond. He pointed out that it was necessary for the JLC members to remember why the Governor appointed them to the Council – to improve services to the veterans of Virginia, to provide new and better services, and to advocate for more money to support those services. He remarked that the organization can “pick and chose our battles.”

Chairman Miller said that the Federal Government, over the past few years, has passed down unfunded mandates to the states, and that he felt that Virginia has been in a financial quandary for the last year. With the budget that was passed this year, he added, it looks as though the state will end in the black. Despite this, he said, additional funds will continue to be hard to come by, so there is a need to look at those things that are administrative changes, changes that cost no money or little money, and keep that as the JLC’s goal. The Council should take advantage of every opportunity there is to do something to provide more and better services to the veterans of the Commonwealth. He thanked everyone for attending meetings and expressed his appreciation for their support.

He addressed future priorities, such as realizing a true hiring preference for veterans in the Commonwealth and staffing issues regarding the DVOP and LVER positions. These positions are subject to VEC’s Maximum Employment Level (MEL) restrictions. Chairman Miller expressed his belief that these positions should be exempt from the MEL, so when DVOP/LVER positions become available they can be listed and filled immediately.

Chairman Miller was applauded by the Council for his leadership as Chairman of the JLC. He will continue working with the DVOP and LVER programs.

COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

On behalf of the Commissioner, Mr. Boyd discussed recent personnel changes in the Department of Veterans Services. He stated that in an effort to provide increased services to veterans, the General Assembly had approved changing four part-time support positions to full-time positions at the benefits offices in Big Stone Gap, Cedar Bluff, Charlottesville and Wytheville. Mr. Boyd, working with Mr. Combs and other members of the department, will be identifying regions of the state that are underserved, and will recommend localities that will require either additional benefit/claims agents and/or new offices.

Mr. Boyd stated that prior to the formation of the JLC, several Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) worked closely with the administration in making this organization and the department come into existence through the General Assembly, efforts that are very much appreciated. The service organizations have stayed together and worked on legislation that was enacted, and the department is looking forward to working with the VSOs to continue to determine the major issues the VSOs want to bring to the General Assembly. Mr. Boyd said that he thought that last

year some issues were recognized to late in the legislative process, and recommended that this year the VSOs begin earlier rather than later. He recommended that all VSOs bring their primary issues to the Joint Leadership Council, so that that group can coordinate on those issues and be prepared to take them to the next General Assembly session.

Mr. Boyd told the JLC that the Veterans Services Foundation had provided the department's benefits section with a grant of \$14,000 for a training conference, held in May in Roanoke. This was the first training conference that the benefits section has held in over four years. He rated the training conference as very successful, as it combined state and federal level training and was completed as under budget.

Mr. Boyd next turned to the department's activities to date this fiscal year, pointing out that in the past eleven months benefit claims activity has contacted over 90,000 veterans and processed some 17,000 claims. At present, 65 to 70% of the department's claims are granted.

Mr. Boyd said that the burial rate at the Amelia Cemetery has not changed a great deal, and it is only up three burials over this time last year. He attributed the low burial rate to two factors: a low level of marketing efforts and less than ideal location. He expects the situation to improve once the new Cemetery Administrator is hired. Approval has been given to hire a Cemetery Administrator to oversee operations in Amelia and Suffolk. One of the key requirements of the applicant for the position will be marketing and as well as operational experience. The application period just ended, with forty to fifty applications having been received. The Suffolk Cemetery is roughly 75% complete with an anticipated completion date of early September.

The Care Center in Roanoke is operating effectively from a care delivery standpoint as well as a cost delivery standpoint. A Federal grant was approved for the renovation of the facility, which opened in 1992. A number of changes to the interior have been approved. In addition, an outside storage building will be constructed. The VA is paying for 65% of the renovation, with the remainder being funded by the Commonwealth.

Mr. Boyd discussed the construction of the new care center in Richmond, saying that he and Mr. Van Thiel, in conjunction with architects and engineers from Clark Nexsen and the Project Manager from the Division of Engineering and Buildings, have been developing a design plan for the appearance of the building, the allocation of space, and all the site work. The process is approximately 80% complete. There will be private rooms housed in a single level building on a roughly 19.5 acres tract of land located on the grounds of the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond. On both the renovation and construction projects, there is a July 15, 2004 deadline to submit 35% of the required architectural plans and drawings, with associated costs, to the VA's State Home Grants office. There are no problems at this time that might delay the department from submitting the required documents on time. There will then be about six months for the team to complete and submit the remainder of the plans and drawings.

Mr. Boyd next discussed the move of the State Approving Agency (SAA) from the Department of Education to the Department of Veterans Services. One of the functions of the SAA is to determine at which institutes of higher education in the Commonwealth veterans may use their federal education benefits. During this past session, the General Assembly approved the

conversion of two part-time positions to full-time positions. This will allow the department to increase the level of outreach to those institutions that provide educational services to veterans. Permission to staff the two new positions has been received from the Secretary of Administration; but the positions have not yet been advertised.

Mr. Boyd then referred to the handout of letters from the Commissioner supporting two National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) resolutions. In letters to the VSO commanders and the JLC members, the Commissioner asked that each VSO submit the resolutions to their national organization, and that each VSO draft VSO-specific resolutions supporting the NASDVA resolutions. The Commissioner is waiting on progress reports from the VSOs regarding the two resolutions.

Mr. Aucoin addressed the need to obtain details and the cost to upgrade the TV system at the VVCC to a digital system. There was a brief discussion regarding the cost of putting of putting the new system in now instead of later.

Mr. Boyd also remarked that new electric beds might also be included in the VA renovation grant. These two issues will be clarified.

Mr. Wickersham reported that MOAA's Virginia Council of Chapters is supporting the two issues and will take them up with MOAA's national office.

Mr. O'Neill asked how many service officers were trained at the training conference. Mr. Boyd replied that approximately twenty-two persons were involved in the training.

Mr. Miller and Mr. O'Neill pointed out that the DAV and American Legion state conventions will held be at the end of June and the first part of July, and that the two resolutions will be presented at these conventions.

Mr. Boyd reported that three laptop computers were donated to the department's benefits section at the VFW's convention in June. Mr. Boyd expressed his appreciation to the VFW and to other service organizations for their support to the department.

Mr. Combs referred the Council to the packet of correspondence; stating that there was a letter from Commissioner Mangis to the JLC regarding the Canteen at the VVCC and a follow up letter to the VSO commanders from Chairman Miller and Chairman Anderson. These letters are for the Council's information. Additionally, there is a letter to Mr. Walker from Commissioner Mangis regarding the Care Center's "ambulance." Additionally, the packet contained a copy of the letter sent by Chairman Anderson, inviting Chairman Miller and Chairman Hanson (of the Veterans Services Foundation) to the Board of Veterans Services meeting in Hampton. Legislation passed during the 2004 General Assembly Session made the Chairmen of the Joint Leadership Council and the Veterans Services Foundation ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board of Veterans Services. Likewise, the Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services was made an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Joint Leadership Council.

There was a brief discussion regarding how the JLC and VSOs could become more effective in dealing with the Commissioner's office and the public. It was suggested that local VSO chapters become more familiar with their local legislators, to let them know that the VSOs are aware of proposed legislation, when it is coming before them, what issues the VSOs think are important in terms of their own organization, as well as promoting issues that the JLC brings to Dr. Anderson's Board of Veterans Service. Mr. Combs pointed out that one of his duties is to provide support to the Council, Board and Foundation.

Dr. Anderson added that it is very important that communication be established and maintained between the three groups that are working for Virginia' veterans. This is the reason each Chairman will be attending the other groups' meetings. He said it is a key factor that there are five legislators on the Board of Veterans Services to help get issues to the General Assembly. Additionally, the question of a calendar of things to come will be addressed later in the meeting.

Mr. Combs mentioned the copy of Senate Bill 412, passed during the 2004 General Assembly session, which outlines recent changes to veterans services in the Commonwealth. He also said that a report was included in the handout that outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Council, Board, and Foundation. Working under the guidance of Mr. Don Ferguson, Assistant Attorney General, Ms. Marie Johnson prepared this report at the request of Dr. Anderson. The report summarizes those sections of the Code of Virginia that deal with veterans.

Mr. Jasper announced that after the meeting he would present a check from the Military Order of Purple Heart Service Foundation, in the amount of \$15,100, to the Care Center. A check for \$943.75 will also be presented to the VA Medical Center in Salem.

LEGISLATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Connie O'Neill, JLC Legislative Officer, stated that part of the problem of finding out where the JLC is in regard to the budget is that the budget took so long to be approved. Mr. O'Neill sent an e-mail to Mr. Combs, requesting that he muddle through all the legislation to find out what had been accomplished, with the idea that if the JLC did not get all that it had asked for in the 2004 session, then the JLC could put it on its agenda for 2005. Mr. Combs produced the requested information, which Mr. O'Neill then outlined. He reported that the issue with the service officers has been rectified, with four new positions being approved (see above). One major problem in this past session was that the Virginia War Memorial's educational program for taping the remembrances of veterans, primarily from WWII, was not funded.

Mr. O'Neill requested that all the VSOs bring in their legislative agenda, passed by the various conventions/conferences, to the September JLC meeting. Mr. O'Neill said that he already has the American Legion's agenda and will bring it at the September meeting. The combined agenda will be passed on to the Board of Veterans Services.

There was discussion regarding the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' benefits package, which Chairman Miller passed out at the last meeting. There is a vast difference between what some states do and what the Commonwealth of Virginia has done for its veterans. Mr. O'Neill reported he was going to suggest that a formal study group be established to look into the status of benefits for Virginia's veterans.

OVERVIEW OF SERVICES OFFERED AT WOODROW WILSON REHABILITATION CENTER

Dr. Richard Luck, Administrator of the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) in Fishersville, presented information on the center's activities, which are funded with federal and state dollars (\$14.6 million dollars from Federal government). WWRC was constructed as the Woodrow Wilson General Army Hospital in 1942 and was subsequently converted into a rehabilitative center for the citizens of Virginia. There is approximately 600,000 square feet of usable space at the facility. He asked the JLC members to visit the center's website at www.wwrc.net.

Dr. Luck told the JLC that there is greater capacity to provide services, in terms of the number of patients that can be treated at the residential facility at any one time, than there is budget to provide the services. The average number of patients at any one time is approximately 250, but almost 500 could be treated if all space was used. Dr. Luck is attempting to connect with veterans organizations to explain the situation. The center has a \$14.6 million block grant, which comes from the Commonwealth's Department of Rehabilitative Services. The rest of the budget is made up with revenues by third party filing of Medicare and Medicaid. One idea is to set up an arrangement with the VA, where individuals could be sent directly from VA medical facilities to Woodrow Wilson. While Virginia veterans have access to WWRC like any other citizen of the Commonwealth, they have wait in line like everyone else. Dr. Luck is interested in expediting a program that would admit disabled veterans directly into the facility, with a separate source of funding.

Dr. Luck mentioned that brain injuries are increasing due to the increased use of body armor – the headgear is not as good as the body armor. He reported seeing amputations and head injuries increase as well as spinal injuries. Woodrow Wilson is designed to service these injuries. The center has the most comprehensive wheel chair evaluation operation on the east coast. There are approximately 50 – 75 wheelchairs, all shapes and models, electric powered as well as man powered, and the staff is schooled to be experts on the chairs.

As the Administrator of the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, Dr. Luck serves on the Board of Virginia's Assisted Technology Loan Fund, which is an organization with about \$9 million to make low interest loans to persons with disabilities for any type of assistance in technology. It is run through the Sun Trust Bank, which buys down the interest on loans, i.e., anything from a headset for a person who might need to operate a computer to a van conversion, or to purchase vehicles to be used. Home accommodations, such as construction work to accommodate someone who has become disabled to a ramp or elevators are considered by the Board. It is a very valuable resource for anyone with a disability. So many times there are people with disabilities and they are not eligible for certain services, such as vocational rehabilitation. It might be a family of a young child with a mental disability and this organization makes it possible for them to get low interest loans to provide these services. At Woodrow Wilson there is professional staff that can work with an individual for accommodations and through assisted technology to loan money to those individuals and come to the Center. He encouraged the Council to look at this valuable resource and take advantage of it.

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Dr. Anderson related he was very pleased to be at the meeting, and noted that the theme of his address to the Council is collaboration as an effective means at getting things done. The Council, Board and Foundation have an extraordinary opportunity in getting things done, he said.

Dr. Anderson reported that he and Chairman Miller sent a letter to the commanders of the VSO's asking for their help in getting the VVCC Canteen reopened. The Canteen is highly valued by VVCC residents, but unfortunately was closed because of financial irregularities. Dr. Anderson stated that he thought that the important thing was to get a mechanism in place whereby a VSO or group of VSOs would sponsor the Canteen.

He next commended Mr. O'Neill's efforts to bring everyone together and encouraged each JLC representative to bring new ideas to the JLC, which will in turn be shared with the Board of Veterans Services. He said he believes the JLC should develop an operating relationship with the Board and Foundation, and said that he is working on Board-Foundation relations. Because the enabling legislation does not specify how the three organizations should work towards a common purpose, it is up to the Council, Board, and Foundation to establish these relationships.

Dr. Anderson stated that he has a passion about getting ready to serve those who have come back from Iraq and Afghanistan. There are problems that have not been in large numbers for quite some time. Body armor has saved lives, but there are many trauma areas in the limbs and head. We need to concern ourselves with how the Commonwealth will help injured veterans when they come back home. There may be a lot of cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He suggested that sometime in the next year there be a joint meeting of the Board, Foundation and Council so that ideas can be exchanged.

Dr. Anderson said he looked forward to working closely with the JLC and continuing to work for the veterans of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Jasper commented that Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) Post 353 (Washington D.C. area) meets planes returning from Afghanistan and Iraq three times a week and provides returning military personnel with personal comfort items. He reviewed a list of what is provided. He will provide a copy of this to Ms. Claybrook, who will send a copy to members of the JLC.

UPDATE ON DVOP & LVER POSITIONS

Chairman Miller led a discussion on the DVOP and LVER positions at VEC, saying that this was one of the first issues Commissioner Mangis dealt with through the JLC, as well the . A Virginia Employment Commission and the Disabled Outreach Employment Commission. DVOP and LVER positions are, under Title 38 of the U.S. Code, required by law to work strictly with veterans in employment-related situations. The VEC has a maximum employment level (MEL), and the DVOP and LVER positions count towards the VEC MEL, even though the federal government funds the positions. If these positions are not filled at the end of the federal fiscal year, the federal government will recapture some of the grant money that comes to the VEC to support those positions. Chairman Miller stated that this problem formed the basis of his letter to Commissioner Mangis, recommending to (or requesting from) the Secretary of Commerce that these positions be exempt from the MEL. Either as a result of this letter or other actions,

approximately twelve open DVOP/LVER positions, at offices across the state, were advertised on the Commonwealth's job recruitment website. The positions were not exempted from the MEL, but VEC has opened up these positions and is recruiting, interviewing and filling the positions as they become available.

Mr. Miller indicated that he would ask the new chairman he would like Mr. Miller to continue to follow up on the DVOP/LVER situation. Mr. Miller said that he would like to do this because he has had a conversation with the Chairman of the Commerce Committee to explain the situation. The Chairman said that Mr. Miller should keep in touch with him on this issue, that Mr. Miller should write a letter describing the situation and how the Commerce Committee can affect a change. Mr. Miller has also had conversations with the VEC's regional directors, who have indicated to him that they would like these positions to be exempt from the MEL, which in turn would free up over 100 positions in other parts of the VEC. Therefore, the regional directors are in favor of it, and when Mr. Miller talked to Chairman Harvey Morgan of the Commerce Committee, he was in favor of it, based on what Mr. Miller had told him. Chairman Miller said he would like, when there is a new chairperson, to be able to follow up on that with the Council's permission. While the positions are being filled, they are still not exempt from the MEL. This could be an issue for the JLC to address.

Dr. Dumas asked if there was legislation already written that speaks to the veterans' preference issue in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He also asked if there was legislation already written that exempts these DVOP/LVER positions. Mr. Miller responded that in terms of veterans' preference in the employment aspect, the way the law reads is that basically the hiring authority *may* take a veteran's background into consideration, which does not say that there is a preference there at all. It was suggested that the JLC, along with the Board of Veterans Services, draft legislation for a veterans' preference and put it before the General Assembly for its action.

Mr. Miller stated that he was not certain that the veterans' preference issue requires a legislative action. It is his opinion that it may require nothing more than an administrative change coming from the Secretary of Commerce. That would be something he would want the Board to review. The Federal government pays the salaries, benefits, travel, and training for the DVOP/LVER positions. Mr. Boyd mentioned the part-time employees at the Department of Education and noted they are also funded the Federal government.

Mr. Miller mentioned the men and women returning from the Middle East, noting that they would need case managers at the VA to refer them to the DVOP/LVER program as being "job ready." DVOP works in conjunction with the VSOs to find men and women suffering from PTSD, who are not receiving the care or service to which they are entitled. DVOP can bring these veterans into the system and giving them direction. Additionally, there is the Transition Assistance Program, which works with those men and women preparing to leave the military within the next year. These men and women bring a breadth and depth of services that are valuable to employers.

DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. Boyd introduced Mr. Combs and described his background and work with the Commissioner. Mr. Combs related that Chairman Miller had asked him to look at some future meeting dates and locations, pointing out that the JLC members expressed the desire to hold the meetings in different parts of the Commonwealth. These are public meetings, and the JLC has stated that its goal is to serve Virginia's veterans; therefore, the public should be encouraged to participate in the JLC meetings, especially during the public comment period. It is very important to advertise these meeting, and it was suggested that perhaps the Board, Council and Foundation partner with the VSOs to host a meeting. There may be a regular membership meeting held for that particular VSO Chapter or Post, in order to get the public there to see that the various boards are there to serve them.

The last item in the folder was a list of possible future meeting places. This is in keeping with a quarterly meeting schedule, with the exception being that when the General Assembly is in session two meetings will be held during one quarter, per the JLC constitution. In trying to move the meetings around the Commonwealth, one must keep in mind that people are coming from all over the Commonwealth; therefore driving times will not be perfect for anyone. The next meeting will be somewhere in Northern Virginia, with meetings to follow in Hampton Roads, two in Richmond and looking at possibly Charlottesville or Lexington, which are more centrally located. Dr. Luck volunteered to host a meeting at the Woodrow Wilson Rehab Center.

Without a quorum, there could be no vote on the time and place for future meetings; therefore, Mr. Combs suggested that he poll the Council members by telephone to set a date for the next meeting; Chairman Miller approved this action. Per the JLC constitution, meeting dates and locations are set one meeting in advance. However, a tentative meeting schedule for the next year can be prepared, with the understanding that it is for planning purposes only, and that meeting dates can only be approved one meeting in advance. Accordingly, Mr. Combs asked that each member send a schedule of their meetings for the next year, so that JLC meetings can be scheduled such that they do not conflict with VSO meetings and conventions.

The idea of sponsoring co-organizational meetings was considered. The discussion centered on following through with the various VSOs with regard to support of the VVCC and the Canteen issues. Communication needs to be a priority with more points of contact.

JLC MEMBER COMMENT PERIOD

Dr. Dumas, JLC representative of the Homeless & Disabled Veterans made another appeal for the JLC, the VSOs, the Governor, and Commissioner's office to get involved in helping homeless and disabled veterans. He asked that the VSO representatives get involved and get to know something about the organization that he represents. The Homeless & Disabled Veterans organization is trying to do something to improve the lives of homeless veterans. One thing that is a priority is to provide employment and to help these veterans get jobs. He asked about the number of veterans serving in Congress and in the General Assembly. He asked Veterans are supported in Congress and the General Assembly, and are Veterans elected and do d that the Council look at whether Virginia V we ask the veterans to be the ones to take the lead in all these areas. He welcomed questions regarding his organization.

Mr. Aucoin, AMVETS noted that the AMVETS State Convention was held two weeks ago and the organization did add a Homeless Veterans Representative at the state level.

Mr. Jasper discussed some upcoming meetings dates for the MOPH, saying he would forward these dates to Ms. Claybrook.

Mr. Miller pointed out that there has been a problem with having a quorum at some of the JLC meetings. Members have been appointed and will spend another three years on the Council. Mr. O'Neill suggested a letter be sent to all members making this clear. The American Legion has extended an invitation to meet at their Richmond headquarters at any time.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Perry Johnson, Vice Commander, DAV, stated he appreciated the opportunity to be at the meeting. He commented that the Supermarket of Veterans Benefits in Abingdon was not advertised well. He is a member and Adjutant of the Abingdon Chapter of the DAV and he knew nothing of the event. He asked that he be advised of anything being held in the southwestern part of the state. Mr. Boyd did respond that the event had been advertised in the local media.

Mr. Jim Walker, member of the Board of Veterans Services, noted that several good points had been brought out in the meeting, especially stressing good communication between the Boards and the VSOs and following through with them.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jackson, Mr. Jones and Mr. Wickersham made up the Nominating Committee. This committee was tasked to identify and nominate a Chairman and Vice Chairman to replace the outgoing Chairman and Vice Chairman. Since there was no quorum, the new officers could not be elected at this meeting. Elections will take place at the September meeting, with current officers serving until then.

Mr. Wickersham reported the Committee's proposed slate, with other nominees being welcome from the floor. The committee nominated Mr. O'Neill to be the next Chairman and Mr. Wickersham the next Vice Chairman. There were no other nominations from the floor.

Mr. O'Neill expressed a desire to remain in the position of Legislative Officer. He asked if he could hold the posts of both the Chairman and the Legislative Officer at the same time. He stated that if he could not serve as both Chairman and Legislative Officer, then he would prefer to remain Legislative Officer. Mr. Combs indicated that he would consult with the Assistant Attorney General as to whether one member can hold these posts concurrently.

The nominations will be held until the September meeting in Northern Virginia. There is no specific location.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.