

**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 13, 2008**

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) was held on August 13, 2008, at the American Legion Department of Virginia Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

**Members Present**

Robert Gray, *American Ex-POWs*  
Connie O'Neill, *American Legion*  
James Aucoin, *AMVETS*  
Samuel Wilder, *AUSA*  
Daniel Miller, *Disabled American Veterans*  
John Dozier, *Korean War Veterans Association*  
Richard Rinaldo, *Legion of Valor*  
John Bonnell, *Marine Corps League*  
Norman Jasper, *Military Order of the Purple Heart*  
Wes Edwards, *MOAA*  
Bill Townsley, *MOWW*  
David Ellis, *NAUS*  
Frank Sherman, *Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*  
Mike Coleman, *Virginia National Guard Association*  
Daniel Boyer, *Veterans of Foreign Wars*  
Vince Burgess, *Commissioner of Veterans Services*

**Members Absent**

Mason Botts, *Air Force Association*  
Thomas Snee, *Fleet Reserve Association*  
Richard Schneider, *Non-Commissioned Officers Association*  
John Jackson, *Paralyzed Veterans of America*  
Thomas Stephen, *Reserve Officers Association*  
Michala Smith, *WAVES*  
Jenny Holbert, *Women Marines Association*  
Paul Galanti, *Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services*  
Frank Wickersham, *Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation*

**Alternates Present (representing their Veterans Service Organization)**

Jeff Platte, *Air Force Association*  
Russell Fenn, *Marine Corps League (after 2 p.m.)*  
David Coffield, *Paralyzed Veterans of America*

### **Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)**

Phillip Stoneman, *AUSA*  
Russell Fenn, *Marine Corps League* (until 2 p.m.)  
Don Kaiserman, *MOAA*  
John Velleca, *Virginia National Guard Association*

### **Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present**

Delegate Kirk Cox, *Virginia House of Delegates*  
Al Sample, *Board of Veterans Services*  
Martin Kent, *Office of the Attorney General*  
Don Ferguson, *Office of the Attorney General*  
Stephen Parker, *Office of the Secretary of Public Safety*  
Carol Rauschberg, *Department of Human Resource Management*  
Mike Pote, *Department of Human Resource Management*  
Anne Atkins, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Bert Boyd, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Steven Combs, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Jack Hilgers, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Martha Mead, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Judy Reid, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Hazel Sanon, *Department of Veterans Services*  
David Simmons, *Department of Veterans Services*

### **Others Present**

Peter Bryan, *Stratizon*  
Frank Driscoll, *Navy Seabee Veterans of America*  
Henry Goodrich, *Virginia National Guard Association*  
Paul Hinkhouse, *U.S. Department of Labor*  
Ned Hunter, *Stratizon*  
Bill Leighty, *Stratizon*  
Thomas Moran, *NAUS*  
David Sevier, *Commission on the Future of America's Veterans*  
Helen Shepard, *VCU/W&M*  
Doris Thomas, *S2CG*  
Harry Warner, *Virginia War Memorial Education Foundation*  
J.B. Young, *Veterans of Foreign Wars*

### **Agenda Packet**

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes of the March 14, 2008 Meeting
- Wounded Warrior PowerPoint Presentation (3 slides/page)
- Wounded Warrior FAQ sheet

- Board of Veterans Services Chairman's Report
- Veterans Services Foundation Chairman's Report
- Department of Veterans Services Commissioner's Report
- Virginia War Memorial Educational Foundation – update letter
- Joint Leadership Council Guiding Principles for Priority Legislative Objectives
- Background Information for JLC Priority Legislative Objectives
- Sam Wilder: Summary of meeting with Delegate Kirk Cox, 7 July 2008
- Proposed Prioritization Process
- Procedure to Select JLC Priority Objectives
- Summary list of JLC Priority Objectives
- American Legion Proposed 2009 Legislative Objectives
- AUSA Proposed 2009 Legislative Objectives
- DAV Proposed 2009 Legislative Objectives
- JLC Position Paper – Real Estate Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans (DAV)
- JLC Position Paper – Personal Tax Exemption for Virginia Residents on Military Active Duty (LOV)
- Marine Corps League Proposed 2009 Legislative Objective (Position Paper on Missing in America Project)
- MOAA Proposed 2009 Legislative Objectives
- NAUS Proposed 2009 Legislative Objectives
- VFW Proposed 2009 Legislative Objectives
- VNGA Proposed 2009 Legislative Objectives
- DRAFT Veterans Resource List

### **Additional Handouts**

- American Legion Resolution on establishing a Virginia Military Service Medal
- Associated Press article on Special Court for Veterans
- Virginia State Police (VSP) Veterans' Preference and Veterans Hiring
- Virginia Wounded Warrior FAQ Sheet with Pledge Card

### **Opening and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Wilder called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Connie O'Neill led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Roll Call of VSOs and Quorum Determination**

Seventeen of 22 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the JLC were recorded as being represented (fifteen by a primary member; two by an alternate member), and a quorum was determined. The Commissioner of Veterans Services was recorded as present.

Alternate JLC members and other guests were asked to introduce themselves and the Council welcomed the alternates and guests.

## **Review and Approval of May 14, 2008 meeting minutes**

Led by Chairman Wilder

Chairman Wilder asked the Council to review the draft minutes of the May 14, 2008 meeting. A **motion** was made by Commissioner Burgess and **seconded** by Mr. Boyer, and **passed unanimously**, to adopt the minutes.

## **Presentations**

### **VETERANS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE**

Mr. Al Sample, Chairman of the Veterans Workforce Development Taskforce and member of the Board of Veterans Services, gave a presentation on the Veterans Workforce Development Taskforce. He indicated that there will be technological as well as physical solutions, which will provide added leverage to link with current solutions. The program will cost about \$500,000.

Mr. Sample reviewed the Taskforce's Three Major Recommendations:

- Develop collaborative environment of existing programs including TAP, WIA One-Stop, and VCCS for seamless service delivery system
- Develop/Enhance Web-based Job & Training Access Tool for staff , employers, and veterans to use on site or remotely
- Create a follow-on team to develop a Strategic Plan, with specific tasks and timelines to accomplish the recommendations above

Mr. Sample said that the Taskforce requests:

- That the JLC include veteran employment services as a legislative priority or initiative to the upcoming General Assembly.
- That the JLC and its organizations provide publicity and outreach support for Taskforce solutions.

### **VETERANS LEGISLATION**

Chairman Wilder presented Delegate Kirk Cox with a JLC plaque in recognition of his outstanding service to Virginia's veterans.

Delegate Cox then provided an overview of the challenges facing the General Assembly in 2009. He emphasized that the JLC must choose its objectives judiciously in view of the revenue short falls the state is experiencing.

### **TURBOVET**

Mr. Ned Hunter, CEO of Stratizon Corporation, gave a demonstration of the TurboVet system. He stated that the concept is to build something from the veterans' perspective. In other words, tell the enterprise what it needs to do for veterans rather than enterprise telling veterans what they need. This involves a huge shift in perspective on the part of the enterprises involved.

To satisfy veterans' needs for a responsive system, he said that there is a need to build a good process that is speedy, provides good quality, and protects the data. This data forms the critical basis to provide information to feed into forms. There are 150 forms within the system and professional service is needed to capture the knowledge for future generations. TurboVet will ask all the right questions and other questions necessary to accurately determine the benefits each veteran deserves.

He said that the Vision System is a tool used to build TurboVet applications (a simple tool). This system creates forms that are 100% complete. Also this data can meet both the federal and state government requirements. He said that the system will involve:

- **Access** – public library, i-phone, personal computer to log-on
- **Interaction** – want to log-on with respect, not have to repeat filling out forms, a person does not become a number
- **Experience** – don't make it tough, Stratizon is here because DVS and veterans are supposed to be the expert
- **Solution** – who wants their paperwork 98% complete? No one, including veterans and claims agents
- **Service** – nothing beats personal touch, people need to talk to people with a heart for veterans

Extensive discussion followed the presentation. In summary:

TurboVet asks the right questions and provides the tools to get the right answers. The system will inform you if the data is missing in order to complete the information required. Alerts are enacted through data keys mapped in the system.

The system is web based. Internet access is needed. The results can be printed locally, but the data is located where it is safe and secure. The data does not belong to the management system. Data is provided to the system, it is used then returned to the providing agency. Agencies don't want data downloaded because it can get lost. Passcode accessibility is possible. All of this is available now; that is, the tool is built and validated. The technology is there and just waiting to be utilized.

Mr. Hunter introduced Mr. David Sevier, Executive Director of the Commission on the Future of America's Veterans. This group consists of ten commissioners looking into how to move things forward for veterans in the future. The Commission is very concerned about how the veterans get their benefits. They envisioned a Turbo Tax kind of an application process. Mr. Hunter testified before the commission in Washington, DC subsequently the concept was taken to the House Committee. VA Secretary Peake will include in their report a recommendation to develop this on a state level as well as on a national level. The VA report is due to be ready in the fall of 2008.

Commissioner Burgess discussed whether Turbo Vet will be successful or unsuccessful and said that the National Defense University and a member of the Governor's office are working on the IT side. The specific business needs of the agency are being defined so we have everything we

need in order to make this work; that is, have all the information embedded in the intelligence. This will be the driver. Does it match up to the million or the \$900,000? It should. We are currently, within three or four weeks of having that answered.

Delegate Cox mentioned that the reality of things is that the state is facing a billion dollar short fall. The JLC may get one budget item and one only so it must be realistic about its initiative.

Discussion then involved the number of veterans in Virginia that would benefit. There were about 780,000 veterans in Virginia through last year. Of these 780,000 veterans, 106,000 were receiving disability benefits. In addition, DVS filed 20,427 claims on behalf of Virginia veterans in FY06. However, it is unknown how many of the 780,000 could have been eligible. The average claim is between \$8,000 and \$12,000 annually and this is on the low end in Virginia. Texas or Utah gets about \$12,000 per veteran. Virginia could be doing a lot better. If an additional 20,000 claims were processed, that would bring in an average of \$10,000 to each veteran, and another \$200 million will be injected into the Commonwealth's economy. Therefore, it does provide good a return on investment.

Commissioner Burgess asked Mr. Hunter to share what is taking place with the VA regarding Stratizon's proposal. Mr. Hunter responded that in mid June, VA "released a request for quote" or RFQ to which Stratizon is responding. Mr. Hunter believes that they have some chance despite the bureaucracy involved because VA wants to get this out. Commissioner Burgess stated that he brought the issue up because there is potential for funding from the VA and then Virginia could possibly be a pilot, to which Mr. Hunter agreed.

The discussion turned to costs and Mr. Coleman said that \$1 million for 2010 is what is being requested, but he wanted to know what is the minimum that is going allow for TurboVet to sustain so that it does completely and totally die. The Commissioner responded that according to Mr. Hunter's figures it is about \$240,000 per year. The question followed, what would be the absolute minimum in the year 2010 to keep the ball rolling.

Mr. Hunter responded by asking how robust do you want to make this solution? Do you want to say we have 50 forms and let's cut it into 10 forms. The money is spent not in license or technology, it's in maintaining intelligence. It's about tapping and maintaining intelligence, because intelligence changes.

According to Mr. Hunter, if no federal funds materialize and the General Assembly provides absolutely no funding, Stratizon goes away. However, the number of additional applications and the amount of money that will be brought into the State is a valid point to be put into the JLC legislative proposal in terms of financial benefits that will get a favorable reaction from legislators.

#### VIRGINIA WOUNDED WARRIOR PROGRAM

Martha Mead, DVS EO19 Implementation Director, said that her handouts were included in the agenda packets and that they had been updated. The *Code of Virginia* states that the program is designed to insure timely access to treatment and support for veterans and their family members who are dealing with the effects of post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries as a

result of their service in combat areas. DVS has partnered with the Department of Mental Health, Department of Rehab Services, Brain Injury Association of Virginia, Department of Social Services, National Guard, Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The DVS plan is to use the existing network of community service board providers and local mental health, substance abuse providers, and the traumatic brain injury providers and their services to expand their services to veterans and their families.

Accomplishments to date include, two conferences. The first was the “Virginia is for Heroes” conference in October, 2007 that set the broad goals for the program. The second was a regional conference in Hampton in March 2008 that began networking in the Hampton area. An information sheet that is called the “P5” message sets out the purpose, plans, the processes, the participants, and the picture has been widely disseminated.

DVS has hired Captain Catherine Wilson, USN, NC (Ret) to be the Executive Director of the program. She will start full time on August 25<sup>th</sup> and then another report on the progress of the program will be made.

The detailed implementation of the Program is as follows:

1. The program set-up is designed to occur between July and December which includes hiring three regional directors (Hampton roads area, Roanoke southwest, and Northern Virginia).
2. The process of hiring an executive assistant for Catherine Wilson should be completed the first week she is here.
3. Catherine Wilson will develop the community fund distribution working with the community services boards, brain injury providers, and others to determine the method for the distribution of the community dollars. This will occur in the third quarter, January – March.
4. Next week there will be a second meeting with the National Guard to work on their re-integration program.
5. A Wounded Warrior training program will involve the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards. This will include all of the public mental health and substance abuse providers. They will be trained on the program and on the recognition of post traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, and how they fit within the military context.
6. On November 7, 2008 a major training conference for the public and private providers that will occur at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville. A TRICARE representative will also participate by instructing the providers regarding the process of signing up with TRICARE to get more services particularly in the rural areas.

Martha Mead attended the National Conference and Planning Academy in Bethesda on August 11, 2008 that was held by the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, DOD, and the VA. Their take home message was: “All of those federal entities are recognizing the urgency of addressing the problem of our troops with combat stress and traumatic brain injury.” They are offering technical assistance to the state and providing a lot of information. However, to date we’re not seeing a lot of federal money coming directly to the state. It is primarily going through the DOD and the VA. This is the reason that it is important

for the state to partner with them.

A homelessness presentation at the conference entailed the fact that homelessness is down 12%. There is information about vouchers being sent out by DOD for homeless veterans and it particularly targets those living out on the streets. Congress also is considering directing funds to prevent homelessness among veterans. Plenty of information is going to be presented on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) website on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Martin Kent, Senior Counsel to the Attorney General, offered suggestions about what the Office of the Attorney General could do for the JLC, DVS, the National Guard, the Dept of Military Affairs, et cetera. He said that Attorney General Bob McDonnell is eagerly waiting to see this year's JLC priorities and his intent is to get behind and support them. Mr. Kent concluded by saying that once the JLC has chosen the patrons for its priorities, the JLC should ask the patrons to consult with him (Mr. Kent) directly.

#### **The Council took a break for lunch between 12:15pm and 12:25pm.**

### **Reports**

#### Board of Veteran Services

Led by Chairman Wilder

BVS Chairman Paul Galanti was not present but sent in the written report included in the agenda packet.

#### Veteran Service Foundation

Led by Chairman Wilder

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman Frank Wickersham was not present but sent in the written report included in the agenda packet. Mr. Hilgers indicated that the report mentions an attachment, which is the VWWP fact sheet with pledge form. The pledge form offers an opportunity for individuals and organizations to support the program. This is particularly relevant to the JLC members, who supported legislation that required the Foundation to raise funds for the VWWP. It is more than appropriate for those members' organizations to assist in raising the \$150,000 required this year and next year.

Mr. Boyer stated that the VFW has challenged its posts to contribute \$1,000 each, which will be matched by the state organization with a potential of raising \$40,000. He looked forward to all of the other VSOs doing something similar.

Chairman Wilder mentioned that the JLC Chairman now is an *ex-officio* voting member of the VSF. This happened through legislation enacted during the past session of the General Assembly. With eight additional board members on the VSF, the members are eager to raise

funds. This represents a significant improvement in the quantity and caliber of members that are now ready to work, and VWWP is their top priority project.

### Department of Veterans Services

Led by Commissioner Burgess

Commissioner Burgess stated that his report was in the information provided to the members, but wanted to highlight that the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center is at the half way point in reaching full occupancy (i.e. 160 beds filled). He said that DVS is continuing to reach out to veterans organizations and the surrounding communities to make everyone aware of this facility and services provided to our veterans.

### JLC Constitution and By Laws Review Committee

Led By Mr. O'Neill

Mr. O'Neill requested an extension of time until the October JLC meeting to bring the Committee recommendations before the Council. Chairman Wilder so **moved** that this subject be continued to the next JLC meeting. The motion was **seconded** by Mr. Aucoin and Mr. Platte and **passed unanimously**.

### JLC 2009 Legislatives Objectives

Led by Chairman Wilder

Chairman Wilder directed the Council to the JLC Guiding Principles for Priority Legislative Objectives sheet included in the packets. He also mentioned the need to have a JLC "Sponsor" for each priority objective. Finally, he said that advocating is essential and that the best way is to schedule an appointment with your delegate or senator with you as the constituent. He noted that the Proposed Prioritization Process sheet also is included in packet, as is the Summary of Meeting with Del Kirk Cox, 7 July 2008 and Background Information for JLC Priority Legislative Objectives sheet.

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 (2008 objective #1)
2. Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans (2008 objective # 5)
3. Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen Soldiers (2008 objective #6)

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

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. Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children  
Discussion followed on each of the state legislative issues urged by the DoD

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

1. Assistance/incentives for doctors to accept TRICARE (Del. Mark Cole, HB 213)
2. “Military Personnel Bill of Rights (Del. Brian Moran, HB1193, Item #2)
3. BVS “Workforce Task Force” – possible legislative initiatives
4. Missing in America” project – is legislation required?
5. Homeless Veterans Study
6. Military Family Relief Fund donations tax exempt
7. Tax Exempt all Virginia Residents on military duty serving outside of Commonwealth under certain conditions
8. Provide burial vaults for Virginia State Veteran Cemeteries
9. Lower threshold to 80% disabled for disabled vet license plates

Discussion followed on each of the “Other” issues.

Chairman Wilder reviewed each of the following state legislative objectives for 2009 proposed by Commonwealth VSOs.

**The American Legion** proposed that the Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services, shall commission a study, not to exceed \$100,000 in cost, to examine the current level of services provided to homeless veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the need for and cost of additional services. The goal of the study shall be to identify the resources required to address the unique needs of homeless veterans as part of the Commonwealth’s 10-year plan to end homelessness.

**Association of the US Army (AUSA)** proposed the following:

1. Fully Fund TurboVet System: AUSA recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and General Assembly appropriate \$900,000 to deploy Phase III of the Turbo Vet system.
2. Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans: AUSA recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and General Assembly pass legislation to amend the Virginia constitution that would require local governments to grant real estate tax exemptions for 100% disabled veterans without regard to means testing.
3. Provide Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen Soldiers Called to Active Duty: AUSA recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and General Assembly provide an income tax exemption to Virginia citizens who serve in the National Guard or Reserve and who are activated into full time service outside the Continental United States in excess of 90 days.
4. Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children: AUSA recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and General Assembly enact HB395, *Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children*.

**Disabled Veterans of America (DAV)** proposed the following:

1. The Disabled American Veterans, Department of Virginia will support the Tax Relief for 100% Severely Disabled Veterans (carry over from 2008).
2. The Disabled American Veterans, Department of Virginia will support the lowering of the threshold from 100% disabled to 80% disabled, as verified in writing by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to be able to obtain DV license plate automobile tags from the Division of Motor Vehicles.

**Legion Of Valor** proposed that a full personal income tax exemption for Virginia residents on military active duty who are stationed outside the Commonwealth under certain conditions be provided by the state.

**Marine Corps League** proposed to support the *Missing in America Project* by recommending new Virginia legislation be developed, or existing laws be changed, to protect funeral homes, the cremated remains (cremains), the state, and the VA and State Cemetery Systems for accepting these unclaimed cremains and providing a dignified burial at a veterans cemetery.

**Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** proposed the following:

1. Turbo Vet
2. Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans
3. Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (MOAA offers to be JLC Sponsor)
4. BVS "Workforce Task Force"

MOAA withdraws its support and sponsorship offer of "Tax Relief for Citizen Soldiers" as a priority item as it is not being championed by its military sponsors.

**National Association for the Uniformed Services (NAUS)** provided a list of its national goals and objectives for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Mr. Ellis stated that appropriate input would be provided to the JLC objectives proposed by the other Virginia VSOs.

**Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)** proposed the following:

1. Fully Fund TurboVet System: VFW recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and General Assembly appropriate \$900,000 to deploy Phase III of the Turbo Vet system.
2. Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans: VFW recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and the General Assembly pass legislation to amend the Virginia constitution that would require local governments to grant real estate tax exemptions for 100% disabled veterans without regard to means testing.
3. Burial Vaults for Virginia State Veterans Cemeteries: VFW recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and the General Assembly approve funding to purchase Burial Vaults, which would be issued at no cost to support the interments of deceased veterans.
4. Provide Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen Soldiers Called to Active Duty: VFW recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and the General Assembly provide an income tax exemption to Virginia citizens who serve in the National Guard or Reserve and who are activated into full time service outside the Continental United States in excess of 90 days.

5. Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children: VFW recommends that the JLC adopt as a priority legislative objective that the Governor and the General Assembly enact HB395, *Interstate Compact for Military Children*.

**Virginia National Guard Association** proposed making disbursements from the Virginia Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) nontaxable. Currently, funds provided through the MFRF are considered taxable income. Taxing the benefits paid creates additional burdens on the military members and their families.

Chairman Wilder noted that the JLC received additional input, which also could be considered:

1. **The American Legion**, Department of Virginia, at its Annual Convention passed a resolution calling for the Commonwealth of Virginia to establish and award “A Commonwealth of Virginia Military Service Metal” to those citizens of the Commonwealth who have served in defense of the Commonwealth and the United States.
2. **The Military Order of the World Wars** representative, Mr. Townsley passed out a copy of an Associated Press article “Special Court Convenes for US Veterans” and proposed that Virginia adopt such a system that could provide a compliment to the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.

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 Tax Relief for Virginia Citizen Soldiers. Though this is a worthy issue and supported by several VSOs, some tax relief exists and the current state revenue shortfall will not support it. There was no objection from those assembled.
- Under “State Legislation urged by DoD” Chairman Wilder proposed eliminating Unemployment Compensation for spouses when a military sponsor is transferred. There was some discussion and all concurred to support this issue but not make it a priority objective.
- Under “Other” Chairman Wilder proposed eliminating assistance/incentives for Doctors to accept TRICARE because it did not appear to be a Virginia National Guard issue and though there may be a problem with other beneficiaries, there is insufficient information to carry this forward. After some discussion, there was no objection from those assembled.
- Under “Other” Chairman Wilder proposed eliminating “Military Bill of Rights” as it was covered elsewhere. No objection was received from those assembled.
- Under “Other” Chairman Wilder proposed eliminating Tax Exemption for all Virginia residents on military duty serving outside of the Commonwealth under certain conditions. The issue was discussed and it was **moved and seconded to continue** this item to 2009. The motion **passed unanimously**.

Chairman Wilder then called the sponsors to provide support for the remaining issues.

- Missing In America Project: John Bonnell **moved** that the BVS and DVS take this as a project and form a taskforce to study the project. The motion was **seconded and passed unanimously**.
- Virginia Military Service Metal: Chairman Wilder moved that this be eliminated as a priority objective. Mr. O'Neill objected and said that the idea is to recognize military service during time of war which would mean a lot to the stature of the military man once he puts on civilian clothes. The American Legion can study the cost and present the Council with hard figures. Mr. O'Neill asked that this be tabled for this meeting and be reintroduced at the next scheduled JLC meeting. Chairman Wilder said that would be too late to include it in the 2009 legislative objectives, and that it be tabled until next year. The Chairman amended his original **motion to table this issue until next year**. It was **seconded** by Mr. Bonnell. The **motion carried with one member opposed**.
- Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children: Mr. Boyer **moved** that this be placed on the priority objective list, which was **seconded** by Mr. Platte. The motion **passed unanimously**.
- BVS Workforce Task Force: Mr. Boyer **moved** that this project not be included in the legislative objectives list. Mr. Townsley **seconded** the motion. During discussion, the comment was made that it appeared to be a worthwhile project, but was too vague for forwarding at this present time. Mr. Hilgers added that the task force was formed under the Secretary of Public Safety and this actually is an executive branch issue, which is going to the Governor one way or another. The motion to not include the Workforce Project **passed unanimously**.
- Homeless Veterans Study: Mr. Townsley **moved** to have this project placed in the priorities list. Mr. O'Neill **seconded** the motion. During discussion, Mr. Coleman questioned how it would impact on DVS funding. Is an additional \$100,000 required? Mr. Combs answered that additional funding would be needed. Without further discussion, the motion **passed unanimously**.
- Military Family Relief Fund Donations Tax Exempt: Mr. Coleman **moved** that this be made a priority objective. Mr. Boyer **seconded** the motion. During discussion, Mr. Edwards asked, if it is an exemption in the federal income tax would it automatically become a state exemption or does the state have to have a separate exemption? Mr. Coleman said that this initiative is asking for a state exemption from state income taxes and that there is no impact on the federal side. Mr. Hilgers said that the issue is about income from a charitable organization and not a tax-exempt donation. He recommended that the **motion be amended** to change "Donations" to "Disbursements." The change was accepted and the **motion passed unanimously**.
- Provide Burial Vaults for Virginia State Veterans Cemeteries: Mr. Boyer **moved** that this be a priority objective. Mr. Ellis **seconded** the motion. During discussion, the cost was questioned and Mr. Boyer responded that it would be about \$270,000 per year, plus \$16,000 one time for a vehicle that hauls and lowers vaults to grave sites. He mentioned that the Horton cemetery already has one such vehicle, but Amelia does not. The new cemetery in Dublin will come equipped with one. Though it was number three on the VFW submission, it unanimously was supported as a resolution at the VFW state convention. It is an equity issue and a financial issue. Equity in the sense that a veteran buried in a national cemetery gets a free vault. The first 1,250 veterans buried in the new Dublin Cemetery will get a free vault. That is not the case in the Horton or Amelia

cemetery. The cost per each family is \$800 - \$1200. DVS can purchase double depth burial vaults at about \$450. Mr. Miller asked if DVS has plans to include the cost in its base budget. Mr. Combs responded that this could be a request that would be submitted up to the Governor's office, especially if it is a JLC priority objective. The discussion continued with considerations about different cemeteries needs until the question was called. The motion **passed unanimously**.

- Lower the Threshold to 80% for Disabled Veterans License Plates: Mr. Townsley **moved** that this be on the priority objectives list. It was **seconded** by Mr. Miller. During discussion, it was mentioned that 80% disabled veterans have a lot of the same mobility issues as that 100% disabled veterans and it's a matter of pride. They can get a disabled tag but they want people to know, yes I am a disabled veteran. Mr. Coffield commented that he is not for it. He is 100% disabled veteran and he is really proud of it. We're talking about lowering the percentage to 80%, why not lower it to 10%. The question was called and only one member voted in favor of the motion and remaining members opposed. The **motion did not carry**.
- Special Courts for Veterans. This issue was **withdrawn** by the sponsor because additional information would be needed to determine its effect on the Virginia court system. Mr. Townsley asked that DVS study the issue, and this was agreed to by all assembled.

Chairman Wilder said that in the interest of moving things along, he would ask, if there were no objections, that TurboVet funding and Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans be placed on the JLC priority list because there was general support for both. Hearing no objection, Chairman Wilder asked the members to move on to listing the objectives on the JLC priority list and assign primary sponsors. The resulting JLC priority list with sponsors follows.

#### JLC Priority Legislative Objectives for 2009

#### JLC Sponsors

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. TurboVet System   | AUSA            |
| 2. Real Estate Tax Relief for 100% Disabled Veterans                     | DAV             |
| 3. Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children | MOAA            |
| 4. Homeless Veterans Study   | American Legion |
| 5. Military Family Relief Fund   | VNGA            |
| 6. Burial Vaults for State Veterans Cemeteries                           | VFW             |

Chairman Wilder noted that most position papers had been completed, but they should be given a final review and updated as needed by the end on August.

#### Public Comment Period

There were no members of the public present that asked to speak

#### Election of new officers

Led by Mr. Miller

The nominations committee recommended that Mr. Dan Boyer be nominated for JLC Chairman and that Ms. Jenny Holbert be nominated for Vice Chairman. Chairman Wilder called for nominations from the Floor. There being none, the Chairman closed the nominations and **moved** that the nominees be elected by acclamation. The motion was **seconded** by Mr. Miller and the nominees were **elected by acclamation**.

### **Preparation for next meeting**

Led by Chairman Wilder

Chairman Wilder reported that the next JLC meeting will be held on October 15, 2008, and that he would like the legislative position papers to be finalized by the end of August.

### **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 3:10 p.m.