

**Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2019**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at the Department of Military Affairs – Virginia National Guard Headquarters, 8000 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Building 430, Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present

- Carl Bedell
- Carl Bess
- Paige Cherry
- James Icenhour
- Nick Kesler
- Lyla Kohistany
- John Lesinski
- Jason Miyares
- Bryce Reeves
- Julie Waters
- Frank Finelli, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- Steven Combs, Deputy Commissioner, representing the Department of Veterans Services

Members Present by Conference Call

- Michael Dick
- Kathleen Murphy
- Frank Reyes

Members Absent

- Victor Angry
- John Cosgrove
- Gordon Helsel
- Susan Hippen
- Tammi Lambert
- Frank Wickersham, Chairman, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Kathleen Jabs, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Carrie Ann Alford, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Glendalynn Glover, DVS
- Matt Leslie, DVS
- Karla Boughey, Veterans Services Foundation
- Greg Escobar, Department of Motor Vehicles
- Mary Roberts, Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS)
- Karen Bladergroen, EVMS

- Walter Mercer, Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
- Cassy Russell, DMA

Visitors

- Frank Rennie, Chairman, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
- Dean Lane, Institute of World Politics

Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet

- Agenda
- Minutes from the November 15 meeting (Agenda Item IV)
- Reports (Agenda Item V)
 - Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
 - Veterans Services Foundation
- Benefits Working Group – Progress report (Agenda Item VIIc)
- Veterans and the Arts Working Group – Progress report and recommendation (Agenda Item VIIc)
- Flyer for 2019 Virginia Women Veterans Summit
- Updated By-Laws for Member Handbooks

Call to Order

Chairman Jim Icenhour opened the meeting at 10:17 with the Pledge of Allegiance. He then welcomed the BVS members and asked Ms. Carrie Ann Alford to call the roll. The roll was called and a quorum was determined with 11 of 21 current members physically present. One member arrived shortly after the meeting started for a total of 12 members at the meeting site. Three members participated via conference call, for a total of 15 members present.

Chairman Icenhour asked the guests to introduce themselves. Their names are recorded above. He thanked them all for attending.

Approval of Agenda

Senator Bryce Reeves, made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Carl Bedell to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried **unanimously**. (*Attachment 1*)

Approval of November 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Senator Reeves, made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Nick Kesler, to approve the November 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Reports

Welcome to DMA HQ: Brigadier General Walter Mercer (VaNG, Ret.) greeted the Board on behalf of Major General Timothy Williams, the Adjutant General. He thanked the members for all they do for veterans and assistance given during the legislative session. He said that at the end of the meeting there would be a tour available for anyone interested to see the new building and all the artifacts collected by the Virginia National Guard.

Chairman Icenhour recognized RADM Frank Rennie (USN, Ret), the Chairman of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF), and noted that he would become an *ex officio* member of

the Board in January.

Mr. Rennie explained that the VWMF is a 501(c)(3) that supports the education programs of the Virginia War Memorial, such as the *Virginians at War* film series, and that the VWMF was also raising funds to support the current construction project.

Chairman Icenhour thanked Mr. Rennie for attending.

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Chairman Frank Wickersham was not in attendance, so Chairman Icenhour directed everyone to the JLC report included in the agenda packet. (*Attachment 2*).

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman Frank Finelli gave a report on the VSF's activities and fundraising progress, as reflected in the VSF report included in the agenda packet. He corrected the amount of FY19 revenue to date as \$480,000 and said the VSF is on track to meet its goal of raising \$600,000 in FY19, with a path to increase fundraising to \$800,000 in FY20 and \$1,000,000 in 2021 for support of DVS programs. He pointed to the tri-fold brochure he had handed out and stated that 100% of donations to VSF go to DVS programs for veterans. (*Attachment 3*).

PRESENTATIONS

Review of 2019 DVS Budget and Legislation

Ms. Alford gave a brief power point presentation of where DVS stood as of the end of the 2019 General Assembly Session in terms of budget and legislation. She reviewed budgetary numbers from the biennial budget and stated that the General Assembly did not make any changes to the DVS base budget – only to the amendments proposed by Governor Northam in the December 2018 introduced budget. The final result was that DVS received \$250,000 (GF) in new funding for benefits staff, DMA did not receive any new funding, and the Secretariat received some funding and language amendments regarding active duty instillations.

Ms. Alford reviewed the agency's three pieces of legislation (six bills with companions in both chambers for each) during the 2019 session. All six bills passed and were signed by the Governor.

- SB1705 (McPike) / HB2744 (Fowler) was legislation that sunsets the Virginia War Memorial Board as of January 1, 2020.
- SB1241 (Reeves) / HB2632 (Helsel) expanded the size of the Board of Veterans Services to 25 seats, with one new seat each for the senate, house and a citizen member, and the Chairman of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation added as an ex officio member. She noted that the citizen member must be a veteran. This will ensure continued robust support of the Virginia War Memorial with the Virginia War Memorial Board sunseting on January 1. This legislation also has a January 1, 2020 enactment date. Ms. Alford encouraged everyone to think of veterans they know who should apply for the new citizen member seat and encourage them to apply.
- SB1265 (DeSteph) / HB2672 (Carr) was legislation to clarify the Virginia War Memorial's Code section with the expansion project finishing up this year. It clarified the role of the Shrine of Memory and other parts of the Virginia War Memorial.

She highlighted two JLC priorities for the Board: JLC 2019-04 the personal property tax initiative. She is already receiving calls about this from veterans who have heard about it. She asked the BVS to refer anyone with questions about this to her. There may be confusion as it is a 3-year process to amend the constitution and there are two more years to go.

She also highlighted JLC2019-06 that expands eligibility for benefits under the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) to qualifying survivors and dependents of veterans who are at least 90% service-connected disabled, but where the disability may not be due to service in an armed conflict. The legislation was patroned by Del. Luke Torian. As with the original group (qualifying spouses and dependents of veterans who are 90% or greater disabled due to service in an armed conflict), the new group of recipients will receive a waiver of tuition and required fees at public colleges and universities. The difference is related to the receipt of a stipend to offset the cost of room, board, books, and supplies: the original group will receive the stipend but the new group will not.

Deputy Commissioner Combs said that DVS is encouraging people to apply now even though the legislation does not go into effect until July 1 because it will take our VMSDEP staff time to process the additional applications. BVS members should encourage people to apply now. A flyer was distributed after the meeting (*Attachment 4*).

Ms. Alford also highlighted some of the other military and veteran bills that were passed and signed by the Governor during the 2019 session.

The powerpoint presentation was distributed to the members via email after the meeting.

Presentation on Art Therapy Collaboration between EVMS and VVFS

Ms. Mary Roberts and Ms. Karen Bladergroen of Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) gave a detailed presentation on the joint EVMS-DVS project “Arts for Optimal Health.” Topics covered in the presentation included the project’s mission and values, participation, budget, goals, and results achieved. Chairman Icenhour and Ms. Roberts and Ms. Bladergroen for their excellent presentation.

A copy of the presentation was distributed to the members after the meeting.

New Business

Legislators Post-Session Reports

Senator Reeves provided a short update on the 2019 session, including the successful legislation he had carried related to the BVS. He noted that his legislation supporting increased state active duty pay for members of the Virginia National Guard had passed the Senate unanimously, but was left in House Appropriations.

He mentioned that localities in his district are losing millions in income on the real property tax exemption with high growth. Recommendations that include unfunded mandates on the localities or any form of tax exemptions will not be looked upon favorably by the General Assembly and local officials.

He also discussed his work on veterans dockets at the local, state, and national levels, and his leadership of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus (GAMVC), which serves as an important forum for addressing military- and veteran-related issues during the session. He stated that GAMVC has the highest rate of bill passage of any GA caucus and ideas for legislation should be sent to legislators as soon as possible.

Delegate Miyares updated the members on veterans legislation he carried in the 2019 session, including the passage of HB1655, the enacting legislation for the constitutional amendment, approved by the voters in November 2018, that ensures that the real property tax exemption for the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran applies to the spouse's principal place of residence, even if the spouse moves to a different residence (under previous law, the spouse had to remain in the residence that he/she had owned with the disabled veteran).

Delegate Miyares also noted that he had carried HB1756, which would have provided for an income tax subtraction for veterans with a permanent service-connected disability, but that the bill had been left in Appropriations. He said he is always looking to carry two veteran-related bills each Session and requested ideas for bills be sent to him. He said he was also looking to see what the HJ674 working group discovers and reports.

Delegate Kathleen Murphy's HB2113, which would have required public colleges and universities to provide a refund of the tuition and mandatory fees to veterans who were forced to withdraw due to a service-connected medical condition, passed the House unanimously but was passed by indefinitely in Senate Finance.

Working Group Reports

The chairmen of the three current working groups submitted their reports to the board.

Mr. Carl Bedell, Chair of the Benefits work group, noted that his group is examining the continued growth of demand for the services offered by the DVS Benefits Services section, and any obstacles that may hinder the ability of the section to meet demand. He noted that issues such as staffing levels, competitive salaries, and appointment availability is affecting the service line staff's ability to provide the highest quality service to Virginia veterans.

Mr. Bedell said that his work group will present a white paper with recommendations at the August 22 BVS meeting. (*Attachment 5*).

Ms. Julie Waters, Chair of the Veterans and the Arts work group, gave her working group's report. She noted that other states have showcased veteran artwork in temporary exhibits and permanent installations, that this was a low-cost way to bring awareness to veterans who are artists and promote artistic enterprise by individual veterans, that it adds meaningful beauty to state buildings, that that it aids in tourism promotion and support of veteran entrepreneurs.

Ms. Waters presented this recommendation:

The Department of Veterans Services work with the Department of General Services and the Art and Architectural Review Board (AARB) to create a plan and timetable for promoting and displaying veterans' artwork in, and/or around Virginia government buildings and properties. Artwork would include, but not be limited to: paintings, drawings, sculptures, photography, poetry mounted on various mediums, and hosted events with live performances, such as readings, music, film or video performances.

Ms. Waters made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Bedell to approve the recommendation. The motion passed **unanimously**. Chairman Icenhour said that he would send a letter to DVS Commissioner John Newby requesting DVS work with DGS and the AARB to create a plan and timetable for promoting and displaying veterans' artwork in, and/or around Virginia government buildings and properties.

Vice Chairman Michael Dick, Chair of the Education work group, gave a verbal report by phone and submitted a written report after the meeting (*Attachment 7*). He noted that the workgroup has not been as active as he would have liked, but did not that he had reviewed the survey prepared by BVS member Nick Kesler for the Veterans Entrepreneurial Working Group and was using that as a basis for a survey for the Education work group. He noted that he would circulate it to the other members of the work group before sending it to select colleges and universities. He also discussed potential visits to these schools.

Discussion about outreach & role in supporting DVS/Legislators

Chairman Icenhour called on the members to continue to be engaged in outreach and represent the Board and Agency. He gave a couple of examples of how he had been active in outreach activities in his community, including the Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony in Williamsburg on March 29. He to the extent that their busy schedules permit, they should be getting out into the community to events and especially during session, going to town hall meetings in their areas and coming to Richmond to talk to legislators to support DVS budget and bills.

“Good of the Order” Reports

Chairman Icenhour afforded the members an opportunity for “good of the order” reports. He began by announcing that the House Transportation Committee requested the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) study the issue of license plates with military award recognition and fees attached to the plates. Currently some are no fee, some have a fee to get the plate. DVS has requested BVS and JLC participation. Chairman Icenhour will be one of the volunteer liaisons to the working group and he called for other volunteers. Vice Chair Mike Dick and board member Carl Bedell volunteered to participate as well. Chairman Icenhour thanked them and said he would send them more information about the meetings.

Public Comment

Mr. Matt Leslie, Deputy Director of the DVS Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program, updated the members about Virginia's key role (Virginia is one of seven participating states) in the inaugural Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF). Organized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental

Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the states will help develop a plan to implement the National Strategy for Preventing Veterans Suicide.

Mr. Dean Lane of the Institute of World Politics introduced himself and thanked the members for the opportunity to attend and learn more about the Board.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Icenhour reminded the members that the next meeting will be held August 22, at 10 a.m. at the Amelia Cemetery.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Icenhour called for a motion to adjourn. Delegate Jason Miyares made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Carl Bedell to adjourn. The motion carried **unanimously**. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1
BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

Dept. of Military Affairs (Virginia National Guard) HQ
8000 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Bldg. 430, Richmond, VA

Remote access location: 1123 Crest Ln., McLean, VA 22101
Call in: 804-298-3525 Access code 53705500

May 2, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

REVISED AGENDA

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)
- II. Roll Call and Quorum Determination – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman*, (10:02 – 10:05)
- III. Introduction of DVS staff and guests, introduction of new legislative member – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman* (10:05 – 10:10)
- IV. Approval of Agenda and Nov. 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
- V. Reports (10:25 – 10:40)
 - a. Welcome to DMA HQ – *General Walter Mercer, (Ret.) DMA Chief Operations Officer*
 - b. Joint Leadership Council – *Frank Wickersham, JLC Chairman*
 - c. Veterans Services Foundation – *Frank Finelli, VSF Chairman*
- VI. DVS (10:40-11:20)
 - a. Review of 2018 DVS legislation and budget – *Carrie Ann Alford, DVS Policy Director*
 - b. VVFS Partnership with EVMS – *Mary Roberts, EVMS*
- VII. New Business: (11:20-12:20)
 - a. Legislators’ post-session reports – *Senators Reeves & Sen. Cosgrove; Delegates Helsel, Murphy & Miyares*
 - b. Discussion about outreach & role in supporting DVS/Legislators – *Jim Icenhour, Chairman*
 - c. Reports from Working Groups – *Michael Dick, Carl Bedell, Julie Waters*
 - d. “Good of the Order” Reports – *All Members*
- VIII. Public comment (12:20 – 12:25)
- IX. Announcement of next meeting & Adjourn – *Jim Icenhour, Chairman* (12:25)

ATTACHMENT 2

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES May 2, 2019

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) met on April 17, 2018, also at the new headquarters of the Virginia National Guard in Richmond.

We received an update on the DVS legislation and budget as it stands post-Session, from Carrie Ann Alford, DVS Director of Policy and Planning, as well as beginning our process of reviewing policy initiatives for 2020.

We received an update on the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans and Families, from Ms. Brandi Jancaitis, Military and Veterans Affairs Manager with the Virginia Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). We also heard a presentation from JLC member John Cooper on suicide prevention that he gives to groups around Hampton Roads. The JLC decided to send a formal letter of support to Governor Northam regarding the Governor's Challenge and affirm that the JLC stands at the ready to assist.

On January 16, 2019 we held our JLC "storming the hill" day and had a productive and exciting day meeting with the General Assembly Military & Veterans Caucus (GAMVC), legislators, aides and in the afternoon hearing from the Speaker and Lt. Governor, as well as staff from Senator Warner, Del. Eileen Filler-Corn, House Minority Leader and Sen. Dick Saslaw, Senate Minority Leader. Of our seven initiatives for 2019, six became legislation, two were passed by the general assembly and one study related to an initiative was passed. The final matrix of our initiatives is included with this report.

The Council provides advice and assistance to the Governor, General Assembly and the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) on matters of concern to the veterans community and provides a conduit of information to and from the veterans service organizations on policy and legislation, pending and enacted, as well as information on existing services.

Our next meeting will be at the Dept. of Military Affairs (Virginia National Guard) Headquarters on Wednesday, July 24 at 10 a.m. at the American Legion Headquarters building in Richmond.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank G. Wickersham, III
Chairman

ATTACHMENT 3
VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION
Report to the Board of Veterans Services
May 2, 2019

The Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees has held one Board meeting since the last BVS meeting on November 15, 2018. The Veterans Services Foundation met on March 28, 2019 at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Virginia. The Development and Finance Committees also met on the same date and at the same location. The Development Committee hosted a workgroup meeting on January 15, 2019 at the DVS Headquarters in Richmond and the Procedures and Policies met on March 13, 2019 in Richmond.

The Development Committee had the opportunity to meet with the Virginia Veterans and Family Support (VVFS) Director, Carol Berg and her staff during the work group session in January. With fundraising as the top priority for the Foundation, the need to collaborate and communicate with Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and various program staff are important. Having the opportunity for the committee members to meet with the VVFS staff was a very valuable experience. The VVFS staff is a highly dedicated and passionate team who was excited to share information about the great work that is taking place in their respective Regions for the benefit of our Virginia Veterans. Their participation was greatly appreciated.

The Procedures and Policies Committee met in Richmond two weeks prior to the Board meeting. The committee members received an update on the progress of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Foundation and DVS. The MOU has not been finalized but everyone remains hopeful an agreement will be reached soon. Work on revising the Foundation's by-laws continues along with the discussion of the Foundation's policies.

All members of the board continue to work on the proposed fundraising plan implemented by the Development Committee. Board members received additional marketing materials at the March 28, 2019 meeting to help with outreach. The need to enhance the Foundation's Social Media presence was discussed. All were encouraged to "like" the Foundation's page on Facebook.

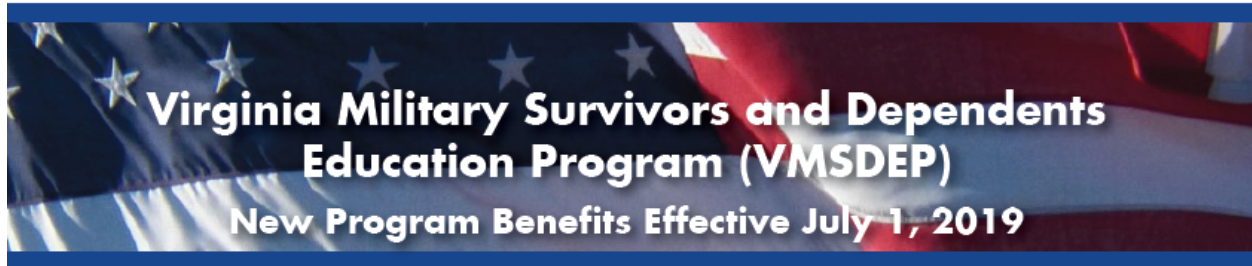
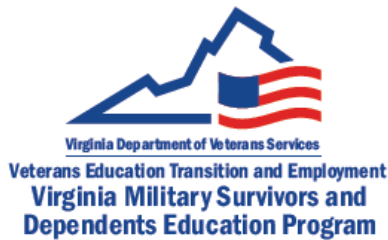
The Foundation closed the second quarter of FY19 with a total of \$231,909 in donations and expenditures at \$374,826. The Foundation will need to collaborate with DVS to identify key donor relationships in regions across the Commonwealth to help increase revenue to sustain the rate of expenses over time.

The Smithfield donation for \$150,000 to the VVFS Homeless Veteran Fund along with the PGA donation of \$88,827 from the 2018 Dominion Energy Charity Classic benefitting V3 were received on April 2nd. These donations bring our FY19 revenue total to approximately \$580,000. Dominion Energy has also confirmed their support for the 2019 Charity Classic scheduled for October 17-19 at the Country Club of Virginia in Richmond.

The next Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2019. Location TBA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Frank Finelli
Chairman
Veterans Services Foundation

ATTACHMENT 4



OVERVIEW

VMSDEP is a Commonwealth of Virginia program which provides education benefits to spouses and children of military service members killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled as a result of military service. Military service includes service in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, or the Virginia National Guard.

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is responsible for managing the program and collaborates with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and Virginia's public colleges and universities to assist survivors and dependents of qualified Veterans in attaining their educational goals.

TIER 1 ELIGIBILITY

The eligible student must be: Admitted to a public college or university in Virginia; and the spouse, or the child between the ages of 16 and 29, of a qualifying Veteran.

A qualified Veteran is one who: Is rated totally and permanently disabled or at least 90% permanently disabled due to military service and meets the domiciliary requirement as defined in the Code of Virginia § 23.1-608.

TIER 2 ELIGIBILITY

The eligible student must be: Admitted to a public college or university in Virginia; and the spouse or the child between the ages of 16 and 29 of a qualifying Veteran or military service member.

A qualified Service Member or Veteran is one who: Was killed, became missing in action, taken prisoner of war, or is rated totally and permanently disabled or at least 90% permanently disabled due to direct involvement in covered military combat (includes military operation against terrorism; a peacekeeping mission; a terrorist act; or any armed conflict) and meets the domiciliary requirement as defined in the Code of Virginia § 23.1-608.

TUITION BENEFITS (TIER 1 & TIER 2)

Eligible students, as confirmed by DVS, are guaranteed waiver of all tuition and mandatory fees for eight semesters at a Virginia public college or university and Eastern Virginia Medical School.

STIPEND (TIER 2 ONLY)

Eligible students may receive a stipend to offset educational expenses such as room, board, books, and supplies. SCHEV works with DVS and the public colleges and universities in disbursing funds. The amount of the stipend is determined annually by SCHEV and is dependent on the student's enrollment status; the number of participating students; and the available funding.

APPLY

Apply online at www.dvs.virginia.gov.

CONTACT

Department of Veterans Services/VMSDEP
101 North 14th Street, 17th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Phone: (804) 225-2083
Email: VMSDEP@dvs.virginia.gov

Apply Online at www.dvs.virginia.gov

ATTACHMENT 5

Benefits Working Group – Report to the Board, May 2, 2019

Team:

- Carl Bedell, Chair
- Nick Kesler
- Jim Icenhour
- John Lesinski
- Susan Hippen
- Carrie Ann Alford, DVS Support Staff

Current Status:

The Working Group Chairman has conducted several interviews with Tom Herthel, the Director of Benefits. The group has begun research on other states to their veterans regarding benefits services to identify potential additional service offerings or areas and strategies for continued growth.

The main focus of the working group is to study and recommend strategies for continued growth and the obstacles that may hinder that growth in DVS' Benefits Services line. Continual issues with staffing, competitive salaries and appointment availability is affecting the service line staff's ability to provide the highest quality service to Virginia veterans.

The Working Group will present a white paper with potential recommendations at the August 22 board meeting.

Course of Work:

This Working Group will:

- ✓ Interview Benefits staff to understand issues affecting employee retention and issues affecting or limiting service offerings;
- Research other comparable states to identify potential additional service offerings DVS could offer; and
- Analyze budget/funding issues and shortfalls and develop justifications for budget or funding increases.

Background:

DVS advocates for Virginia veterans and connects them to benefits and services they have earned. The DVS operates 31 Benefits offices across the Commonwealth, providing veterans assistance in submitting disability claims, and providing information on current federal and state veterans' programs, and services.

Since 2015, DVS has improved Benefits operations by opening eight new Benefits offices, a Center of Excellence, and focusing on employee training and quality.

ATTACHMENT 6

Veterans in the Arts Working Group – Report to the Board, 2 May 2019

Team:

Ms. Julie Waters, Chair
Mr. Carl Bedell
Mr. Victor Angry
Mr. Frank Reyes
Ms. Carrie Ann Alford, DVS Support Staff

Subject: Initial Report and Recommendation

Background:

This working group was convened to study the issues surrounding Veterans and the Arts. Through the assistance of Ms. Alford, the group focused research and attention on arts as an economic and small business endeavor in Virginia and how policy recommendations can support and strengthen current or potential efforts.

Veterans bring unique and rich experience to the world of art. The members of this working group has spoken with representatives from various state entities:

Virginia Commission for the Arts
CreatiVets (nonprofit from outside Virginia)
Creative Forces
VWM/Mighty Pen Project
DVS Transition and Employment Services
Arts2Work (nonprofit from DC)
Hylton Arts Center
Virginia Film Office and RIFF

The arts bring therapeutic, social, and commercial value to the veteran community. As we learned today, DVS is already partnering with EVMS on therapeutic programs. DVS also offers veterans a range of artistic and alternative therapy options through the Virginia Veterans & Family Support service line. From a therapeutic and social standpoint, this working group has determined that a wide range of services in the arts are available to veterans. However, while veterans are active in the arts in Virginia, when it comes to entrepreneurship and arts as a career, resources do not tend to focus on the arts.

This working group is still researching several possible recommendations and anticipates presenting more recommendations at the August 22 meeting. These potential collaborations include with partnering with existing Virginia state government organizations and arts programs in Virginia, to increase veteran participation in film, writing, visual arts, music, and theater. This working group is also interested in finding better ways to connect veterans to existing government and nonprofit services for entrepreneurship and small business owners.

This working group is prepared to make one recommendation for the full board to consider. Showcasing veteran artwork has been done in other states, whether in temporary exhibits or permanent installations. It is a low-cost way to bring awareness to veterans who are artists and promote artistic enterprise by individual veterans, and add meaningful beauty to state buildings and aid in tourism promotion and support of veteran entrepreneurs.

Recommendation:

1. The Department of Veterans Services work with the Department of General Services and the Art and Architectural Review Board (AARB) to create a plan and timetable for promoting and displaying veterans' artwork in, and/or around Virginia government buildings and properties. Artwork would include, but not be limited to: paintings, drawings, sculptures, photography, poetry mounted on various mediums, and hosted events with live performances, such as readings, music, film or video performances.

ATTACHMENT 7

Education Working Group report – submitted verbally in the meeting.

May 3, 2019

From: Michael Dick

To: James Icenhour, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services

‘cc: Carrie Ann Alford, Department of Veterans Services

Subj: Education Working Group Report

1. Presented below is a written summary of the oral report I gave to the Board meeting on May 2, 2019.

- My apologies for the relative recent inactivity of this Working Group. This situation is my responsibility alone.
- On January 4, 2019, the Education Working Group had a meeting via conference call to chart a way forward. Minute of that meeting have been published separately. Execution of that plan has been slow due to my conflicts.
- Current status is that I reviewed the survey Nick Kesler used for the Veterans Entrepreneurial Working Group and have taken a stab at drafting a survey for use by the Education Working Group. I intend to take one more look at the draft questions and circulate it to the other members of the Working Group for comments within the next week. Upon revision and development of a final version, I will send it to the targeted schools and solicit responses.
- I have been in contact with relevant offices at Old Dominion University, Virginia Commonwealth University, George Mason University, and Virginia Tech. I am anticipating a response from Liberty University in the near future.
- Upon receipt of responses to the survey, we will seek to arrange visits to selected schools.

2. Again, my apologies for the inactivity of the Working Group.