

**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 22, 2020**

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on July 22, 2020, at the Virginia War Memorial, 621 S. Belvidere, Richmond.

**Members Present**

- Thomas Wozniak, Air Force Association
- Richard Oertel, American Legion
- John Cooper, AMVETS
- Michael Flanagan, Association of the United States Army
- Denice Williams, Disabled American Veterans
- William Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association
- Lauren Augustine, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Tim Whitmore, Korean War Veterans Association
- James Barrett, Marine Corps League
- James Cuthbertson, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Craig Cressman, Navy Mutual Aid Association
- Daniel Boyer, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Judy Reid, Women Marines Association
- John Lesinski, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- John Maxwell, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services

**Members Absent**

- John Manning, Fifth Baptist Church Veterans Ministry
- Robert Herbert, Legion of Valor
- Vernon Peters, Military Order of the World Wars
- Mike Boyle, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- Jon Ostrowski, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Preston Curry, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- David Sitler, Reserve Officers Association
- Perry Taylor, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Charles Montgomery, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Robert Barnette, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
- Kevin Hoffman, Virginia National Guard Association
- Michael Dick, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services

**Alternates Present (representing their VSO)**

- Richard Rinaldo, Legion of Valor
- Tyrone Anderson, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Terrence Moore, Reserve Officers Association
- Daniel Karnes, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America

- Andrew Czaplicki, Virginia National Guard Association

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

- Rich Mansfield, AMVETS

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

- Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Carlos Hopkins
- Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Kathleen Jabs
- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Claudia Flores, DVS
- Glendalynn Glover, DVS
- Walter Mercer, Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
- Cassy Horn Russell, DMA
- Zane Ruzicka, DMA

### **Guests**

- Mr. Monti Zimmerman, Military Officers Association of America

### **Items included in the Agenda Packet**

- Agenda (Agenda Item IV)
- December 18, 2019 draft meeting minutes (Agenda Item V)
- Reports (Agenda Item VI)
  - Board of Veterans Services (Agenda Item VI.a)
  - Veterans Services Foundation (Agenda Item VI.b)
  - Department of Veterans Services (Agenda Item VI.c)
- New Business (Agenda Item VII)
  - Summary of JLC 2020 Initiatives – as of May 11, 2020
  - Matrix of military and veteran-related bills and budget actions from the 2020 GA
  - Position papers for five proposed initiatives
- Amended 2020 JLC Work Plan (Agenda Item VII.e.)

### **Opening, Pledge of Allegiance, Thoughts & Meditation**

JLC Vice Chairman William Ashton called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

JLC Chaplain Denice Williams offered opening thoughts and meditation.

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

The roll was called, and 18 of the 25 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being represented. A quorum was determined. Mr. John Lesinski, Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) and DVS Commissioner John Maxwell were recorded as present. Mr. Tim Whitmore, representing the Korean War Veterans Association, arrived shortly after the roll was called, bringing the number of VSOs represented at the meeting to 19.

### **Introduction of Guests and DVS staff**

DVS Chief Deputy Commissioner (CDC) Steven Combs introduced the Commonwealth of Virginia officials and guests. Their names are recorded above.

### **Secretary Carlos Hopkins – Remarks**

Vice Chair Ashton recognized Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs (VADA) Carlos Hopkins, who spoke about pandemic response operations of the Virginia National Guard (VaNG) and DVS, including VaNG support for testing operations. He also covered some of the issues that VADA is working, including health insurance support for VaNG members on active duty in support of pandemic response operations, and military spouse licensure. Secretary Hopkins answered follow-up questions from JLC members regarding VaNG operations.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Vice Chairman Ashton asked for a motion to approve the Agenda. Mr. John Cooper made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Daniel Boyer, to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion carried **unanimously**. (See *Attachment 1*).

### **Approve December 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Vice Chairman Ashton asked for a motion to approve the December 18, 2019 meeting minutes. Mr. Daniel Boyer made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. John Cooper to approve the minutes as drafted. The motions carried **unanimously**.

## **REPORTS**

### **Board of Veterans Services**

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman John Lesinski, who also serves on the Board of Veterans Services (BVS), presented the BVS report. (See *Attachment 2*).

### **Veterans Services Foundation**

VSF Chairman John Lesinski presented the VSF report. He noted that the VSF had received over \$625,000 in donations in Fiscal Year 2020 (FY) 20, with significant donations from Smithfield, Altria and Dominion. He noticed that VSF would focus on increasing small donor support in FY21. (See *Attachment 3*).

### **Department of Veterans Services**

DVS Commissioner John Maxwell presented the DVS report. Commissioner Maxwell reviewed how DVS has continued to serve Virginia's veterans and family members in a COVID-19 environment, balancing the need to provide as many services as possible, while ensuring the health and safety of those we serve and of DVS employees. Commissioner Maxwell covered operations of the Benefit Services offices (29 open), the Virginia Veterans and Family Support (VVFS) program, state veterans cemeteries, employment and transition programs, veterans care centers (including COVID-19 protective measures), and the women veterans program. He noted that a future focus area will be on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and ensuring that DVS is reaching out to all segments of Virginia's veterans population. He emphasized how much DVS values its partnership with the JLC and how much it welcomes feedback from the JLC. (See *Attachment 4*).

Mr. James Cuthbertson asked Commissioner Maxwell about evidence that specific populations of veterans were underserved. Commissioner Maxwell cited the example of homeless veterans, but noted that additional data was something that he intended the DVS team to research in the coming months.

Mr. Rich Rinaldo noted that an item in the December 18, 2019 minutes referenced military service and credits for teachers. Mr. Rinaldo noted that the Secretary of Education may be focused on other issues, such as school re-openings, but asked if there was any update. Commissioner Maxwell said that he would look into this and get Mr. Rinaldo an answer.

Mr. James Barrett cited the example of an outdoor, plexiglass “visitation station” at the long-term care facility (LTCF) where he lives. He asked if DVS was doing the same thing. Commissioner Maxwell noted that something similar was in place at the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke. CDC Combs added that this was also in place at the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) in Richmond, and noted that the care centers were taking other steps to keep residents safely connected to their families, such as “drive by” visits.

Vice Chairman Ashton thanked Commissioner Maxwell for his report.

Mr. Chad Arcand, Operations Director of the Virginia War Memorial (VWM), delivered copies of a flyer for a special “*Eyewitness to History*” virtual event that will be hosted by the Memorial on July 27, 2020, featuring Korean War veteran and former Governor L. Douglas Wilder. Copies of the flyer were distributed. CDC Combs recognized and thanked Mr. Tim Whitmore, JLC representative for the Korean War Veterans Association.

CDC Combs also noted that the terms of several of the members would be ending on June 30, 2021, and that DVS would work with the members and VSO leadership on nominations for appointment or reappointment, as necessary.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Review potential initiatives for 2021**

Vice Chairman Ashton turned the gavel over to JLC Assistant Legislative Officer Lauren Augustine.

Ms. Augustine explained that five proposals had been submitted prior to the meeting for consideration as potential JLC initiatives for 2021. She said the JLC representative making the proposal would explain the proposal and answer any questions from other representatives. After all proposals had been presented, a vote would be taken to either continue the proposal for final consideration at the October 21 meeting (where it could become part of the JLC’s 2021 package) or table the proposal.

A summary of the JLC 2020 initiatives was included in the agenda packet (see Attachment 5).

Mr. Richard Oertel asked whether the three JLC 2020 initiatives that were not passed by the General Assembly would be automatically carried forward for consideration as 2021 proposals. Ms. Augustine asked CDC Combs to explain. CDC Combs noted that these 2020 JLC proposals were

not automatically carried forward, but that a JLC representative could propose any or all of the three again for 2021.

The JLC representatives spoke to the proposals in this order:

- Mr. Ricard Oertel, American Legion, AL-2 (Income tax subtraction for certain low-income disabled veterans) – reintroduction of JLC 2020-03;
- Mr. Ricard Oertel, American Legion, AL-1 (Disabled Veteran State Park Passport). Mr. Oertel noted that this has the support of Delegate Kirk Cox, and that the American Legion’s proposal would help match the state benefit with that proposed at the federal level.
- Vice Chairman Bill Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association, FRA-1 (Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income);
- Vice Chairman Bill Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association, FRA-2 (Reform Tax Relief for Surviving Spouse of a Member of the Armed Forces “Killed in Action”);
  - Vice Chairman Ashton explained that the current benefit does not account for spouses of service members who died in the line of duty, only killed in action;
  - He noted that a change to the Virginia Constitution would be needed to expand this benefit, and that the process would need to start with a 1<sup>st</sup> Resolution in the 2021 session;
  - Mr. Cuthbertson asked for detail – how many affected and potential impact. Vice Chairman Ashton said that he would try to get this for the October 21 meeting;
  - Ms. Augustine noted that this would apply to all JLC proposals – that there is an opportunity for the members to flesh out their papers in advance of the October meeting.
- Mr. Andrew Czaplicki, Virginia National Guard Association, VNGA-1, No cost license plates for Guard members.
  - To recognize Guard members for their service
  - Mr. John Cooper suggested that it be noted on the paper which neighboring states offer this benefit
- Mr. Andrew Czaplicki, Virginia National Guard Association, VNGA-2, Free entry to state parks for Guard members
  - To recognize Guard members for their service
  - To help provide Guard members with keeping physically fit (state parks are good place for Guard members to stay active/get exercise)
- Mr. Andrew Czaplicki, Virginia National Guard Association, VNGA-3, Tax credits for employers who hire Virginia National Guard members and reservists – reintroduction of JLC 2020-05
  - To recognize Guard members for their service
  - To help Guard members and reservists with finding and maintaining employment

- Mr. Michael Flanagan, Association of the United States Army, AUSA-1, Microloans for Veterans – reintroduction of JLC 2020-06
  - Discussed study from Fall 2018 (DVS, William & Mary students);
  - Noted that MOAA would partner with AUSA on this one;
  - Will seek additional information on how many businesses may apply for this one.

Ms. Augustine asked if there were any additional proposals to be considered at this time. Hearing none, she re-capped the proposal numbers for the eight proposals, and noted that there would be a motion, second, discussion, and vote on each.

AL-1: **motion** by Mr. Oertel, **second** by Mr. Cressman, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

- There was discussion of combining the American Legion and Virginia National Guard Association proposals related to state park admission fees, but the consensus of the group was to leave these as separate proposals.

FRA-1: **motion** by Mr. Cooper, **second** by Mr. Boyer, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

- Mr. Rinaldo asked if it was still a state goal to be the most veteran-friendly state. Hearing an affirmative response, he noted that Virginia was one of only a handful of states that did not offer this benefit, which he found surprising given the impact that the military has on Virginia’s economy.
- Vice Chairman Ashton added that he knows of people who are leaving Virginia following their “second career” to retire in other states because of this tax.

FRA-2: **motion** by Mr. Boyer, **second** by Mr. Cooper, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. No discussion. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

VNGA-1: **motion** by Mr. Boyer, **second** by Mr. Cressman, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. No discussion. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

VNGA-2: **motion** by Mr. Cuthbertson, **second** by Mr. Corbett, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. No discussion. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

AL-2: **motion** by Mr. Oertel, **second** by Mr. Cooper, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. No discussion. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

VNGA-3: **motion** by Mr. Boyer, **second** by Mr. Corbett, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. No discussion. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

AUSA-1: **motion** by Mr. Cressman, **second** by Mr. Cooper, to continue this to October 21 meeting as potential 2021 initiative. No discussion. **Unanimous** vote to continue.

A summary of the eight proposals introduced at the July 22 meeting is listed below.

Position papers for the eight proposals, as either submitted at the meeting (five proposals) or re-introduced from 2020 (three proposals) are included with these minutes (see Attachment 6).

**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations  
Proposed 2021 Initiatives – Summary From 07/22/2020 Meeting**

<b>Number</b>	<b>VSO</b>	<b>Proposal Identifier</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Approved at 07/22 mtg to continue forward to 10/21 mtg as 2021 JLC potential?</b>
<b>PROPOSALS SUBMITTED PRIOR TO 07/22 MEETING</b>				
<b>1</b>	American Legion	AL-1	Disabled Veteran State Park Passport	Yes
<b>2</b>	Fleet Reserve Association	FRA-1	Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income	Yes
<b>3</b>	Fleet Reserve Association	FRA-2	Reform Tax Relief for Surviving Spouse of a Member of the Armed Forces “Killed in Action”	Yes
<b>4</b>	Virginia National Guard Association	VNGA-1	No cost license plates for Guard members	Yes
<b>5</b>	Virginia National Guard Association	VNGA-2	Free entry to state parks for Guard members	Yes
<b>PROPOSALS INTRODUCED AT 07/22 MEETING</b>				
<b>6</b>	American Legion	AL-2	Income tax subtraction for certain low-income disabled veterans (proposed as JLC 2020-03)	Yes
<b>7</b>	Virginia National Guard Association	VNGA-3	Tax credits for employers who hire Virginia National Guard members and reservists (proposed as JLC 2020-05)	Yes
<b>8</b>	Association of the United States Army	AUSA-1	Microloans for Veterans Programs (continuation of JLC 2020-06)	Yes

**Discuss potential of considering additional proposals at October 21 meeting**

Vice Chairman Ashton said that the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented several VSOs, including

his, from holding summer meetings, and stated that the JLC may wish to consider allowing VSOs to introduce additional 2021 proposals at the October 21 meeting to ensure that these VSOs have sufficient time to consider ideas.

A **motion** was made by Mr. Boyer, **second** by Mr. Cooper, to permit JLC representatives to put forward new proposals at the October 21 meeting. No discussion. **Unanimous** vote to allow.

#### **Discuss potential of holding October 21 meeting electronically**

Vice Chairman Ashton noted that many organizations have switched to virtual meetings. He said that the JLC could consider a virtual meeting on October 21.

Mr. Oertel stated that, if conditions permit, the October 21 meeting should be held as an in-person meeting, as it permits better discussion. Mr. Boyer echoed Mr. Oertel's sentiments.

CDC Combs asked for feedback from the members – did they feel comfortable and safe the way that the room was set up for today's meeting? All answers were in the affirmative.

#### **Amended 2020 JLC Work Plan**

Vice Chairman Ashton stated that a proposed version of the amended JLC 2020 Work Plan had been distributed prior to the meeting and included in the agenda packet. He asked for a motion to approve.

A **motion** by Mr. Corbett, **second** by Mr. Boyer, to approve the amended JLC 2020 Work Plan as presented. No discussion. CDC Combs noted that he would add to the work plan that additional initiatives could be introduced at the October 21 meeting, and that updated drafts of the proposals would be distributed prior to the meeting. **Unanimous** vote to approve.

#### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Vice Chairman Ashton turned the gavel over to Mr. Boyer for election of the Chair and Vice Chair.

Mr. Boyer stated that the Nominating Committee nominates Mr. William Ashton for Chair. He called three times for any additional nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he closed nominations and called for all those in favor to say "Aye" and those opposed to say "Nay." By unanimous vote, Mr. William Ashton was elected Chair.

Mr. Boyer stated that the Nominating Committee nominates Ms. Denice Williams for Vice Chair. He called three times for any additional nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he closed nominations and called for all those in favor to say "Aye" and those opposed to say "Nay." By unanimous vote, Ms. Denice Williams was elected Vice Chair.

Per the JLC Constitution, they will assume their new position at the conclusion of the July 22 meeting.

#### **Other New Business and Open Discussion**

Mr. Rinaldo asked about electronic meetings and remote locations for JLC meetings.

CDC Combs noted that in “normal” circumstances, the Code of Virginia requires that a physical quorum be assembled in one place, with members then being allowed to participate remotely at locations which are also open to the public.

He said that with the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly voted to permit all-electronic meetings. He noted that a “hybrid” meeting of the JLC in October – with most members at the Virginia War Memorial but some connected electronically – would be difficult but not impossible.

Mr. Oertel added that the American Legion had attempted this, and found it very difficult to blend live and Zoom meetings, and that participants at remote locations had a lot of difficulty in hearing and participating. He advised against these types of meetings.

Mr. Lesinski asked about members connecting to the meeting electronically. CDC Combs replied that this might be difficult but not impossible. Several members repeated their comments about it being difficult to blend participation this way.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that DVS would be prepared to support an electronic meeting in October if restrictions do not allow an in-person meeting.

CDC Combs recapped the sense of the JLC – that the October 21 meeting will be held in-person at the Virginia War Memorial if conditions permit, but that DVS would be prepared to host the meeting electronically if an in-person meeting is not possible. He noted that a call on how to proceed would be made one week prior to permit DVS time to assist JLC members with electronic access.

Commissioner Maxwell elaborated on the 2020 Chamber event for military and veterans. Mr. Flanagan encouraged DVS to continue with these types of events.

Members discussed the importance of veterans on campus and transitioning into Virginia’s workforce.

Discussion followed about how state directors (like Commissioner Maxwell) want to build awareness of both federal and state veterans benefits. It was noted that this was important given that on-base transition efforts may not work well for all transitioning service members (TSMs). Mr. Cooper suggested that a virtual transition, summit, modeled on the Virginia Women Veterans Summit, may be a good idea for Virginia to consider – something with breakout sessions and classes for TSMs. Commissioner Maxwell said that a unique, opt-in forum, separate from federal efforts, may be a way to proceed, and said that DVS would look into this.

Mr. Rinaldo noted that several VSOs hold their national conventions in Virginia, and that this brings economic benefits to Virginia.

Vice Chair Ashton said that his “day job” was as the Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He said that in this role he works with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). He briefly described Project Atlas to the members, and also said that any members were welcome to contact him about SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. His work e-mail is [bill.ashton@usda.gov](mailto:bill.ashton@usda.gov).

Vice Chairman Ashton introduced Brigadier General Walter Mercer, US Army (Retired), who is the Chief Operations Officer with the Department of Military Affairs. Mr. Mercer gave a quick update on the Virginia National Guard, including that more than 1,000 Virginia Guardsmen had been activated so far in support of pandemic response missions, plus those serving on the Southwest border. On behalf of Major General Tim Williams, the Adjutant General, he thanked the JLC for their support of measures supporting the VaNG, especially the 2020 initiative related to state active duty pay for Guardsmen, which he characterized as a big win.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Monti Zimmerman introduced himself as a member of the Military Officers Association of America, and noted that he expected to be joining the JLC soon as MOAA representative.

He noted that he believes that Delegate Dan Helmer would be willing to support the JLC initiatives, including the tax exemption.

Mr. Zimmerman asked about the study that was supposed to have been completed and presented last year related to military retirement. Vice Chair Ashton noted that it was completed last year, and that several options could be very expensive.

Mr. Barrett noted his previous work on the staff of the House Appropriations Committee, and that one of the former committee chairs noted that any proposed legislation should be put forward with a proposal on how to pay for it, and recommended the JLC keep this in mind. Vice Chair Ashton thanked him for this advice, noting that some ideas do go forward without a specific offset proposal.

Mr. Boyer questioned the notion of the JLC being able to propose an offset, saying that the General Assembly has a broader view of available resources – information that the JLC may not have. Vice Chairman Ashton added that the General Assembly member proposing the bill would likely have more information on this than the JLC.

Ms. Augustine asked for clarification regarding counting retirees – did the members mean 20-year retirees or all transitioning service members/veterans? It was clarified that in the context of JLC proposals related to tax exemption for retirees, the members were referring to 20-year retirees.

### **Adjournment**

Vice Chair Ashton thanked the JLC members for their vote of confidence in himself and Ms. Williams as the new JLC Chair and Vice Chair. There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**  
**Virginia War Memorial**  
**621 S. Belvidere, Richmond**  
**July 22, 2020**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

- I. Opening & Pledge of Allegiance – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman* (10:00 – 10:05)
- II. Opening Thoughts & Meditation, *Denice Williams, JLC Chaplain* (10:05 – 10:10)
- III. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, and introduction of guests – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
- IV. Approve Agenda – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman* (10:15 – 10:17)
- V. Approve December 18, 2019 meeting minutes – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman* (10:17 – 10:20)
- VI. Reports (10:20 – 10:40)
  - a. Board of Veterans Services (BVS) – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman*
  - b. Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) – *John Lesinski, VSF Chairman*
  - c. Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) – *John Maxwell, VDVS Commissioner*
- VII. New Business (10:40 – 12:20)
  - a. Review potential initiatives for 2021, *Lauren Augustine, JLC Assistant Legislative Officer*
    - a. Potential initiatives submitted prior to meeting (*introduced by sponsor*)
    - b. Potential initiatives submitted at meeting (*introduced by sponsor*)
  - b. Vote on each proposed initiative to continue forward or be rejected for 2021, *Lauren Augustine, JLC Assistant Legislative Officer*
  - c. Discuss potential for consideration of additional potential initiatives at October 21 meeting – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman*
  - d. Discuss potential for October 21 meeting to be held electronically if current operating posture permits – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman*
  - e. Review/approve amended JLC 2020 Work Plan – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman*
  - f. Election of Chair and Vice Chair, *Dan Boyer, JLC Nominations Committee Chair*
  - g. Other New Business and Open Discussion – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman*
- VIII. Public comment period – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman* (12:20 – 12:25)
- IX. Closing remarks and prepare for October 21 meeting – *Bill Ashton, JLC Vice Chairman* (12:25 – 12:30)
- X. Adjourn (12:30)

## ATTACHMENT 2



101 N. 14TH STREET, 17<sup>TH</sup> FL.  
RICHMOND, VA 23219

*Michael Dick,*  
Chairman

*Tanmi Lambert,*  
Vice Chairman

*Victor Angry*

*Carl Bedell*

*Senator John Bell*

*Carl Bess*

*Paige Cherry*

*Delegate Buddy Fowler*

*Delegate Dan Helmer*

*James O. Icenhour, Jr.*

*Thuraya Kent*

*M. Lyla Kohistany*

*John Lesinski*

*Senator Mammie Locke*

*Delegate Kathleen*  
*Murphy*

*Kathy Owens*

*Senator Bryce Reeves*

*Efrain (Frank) Reyes*

*Delegate Marcus Simon*

*Julie Waters*

*Bill Ashton*

*Vice Chairman, Joint*  
*Leadership Council of*  
*Veterans Service*  
*Organizations*

*Jack Lanier*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Veterans*  
*Services Foundation*

*Linda Schreiner,*  
*Chairman, Virginia*  
*War Memorial*  
*Foundation*

*John M. Maxwell,*  
*Commissioner, Virginia*  
*Department of*  
*Veterans Services*

### COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

#### REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (JLC) July 22, 2020

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) held an electronic meeting on June 10.

To prepare for the next in-person BVS meeting (August 20), the June 10 meeting focused on:

- The role of the BVS (as a board), to include its powers, duties and the responsibilities of BVS members in ensuring that the BVS fulfills its role;
- A review of how the BVS is structured, with Points of Contacts (POCs) assigned to each of the major service areas/programs of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) and work groups formed to address specific issues or new initiatives;
- An overview of the BVS ByLaws and the adoption of minor changes of the ByLaws to bring them current with the Code of Virginia and other updates;
- The role of the BVS in shaping state veterans policy and priorities, which can be through a variety of means, including budget, legislation, the DVS strategic plan, and engagement with DVS leaders; and
- Initial discussion of state veterans services in a (post) COVID-19 operating environment. As part of this discussion, VDVS Commissioner John Maxwell reviewed VDVS' current operating posture and anticipated changes in the weeks and months ahead.

The BVS greatly values its links to and coordination with the other boards that are represented *ex officio* on the BVS, including the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, the Veterans Services Foundation, and the Virginia War Memorial Foundation. Reports were received from each of these boards.

The BVS also received an update on an issue of vital importance for all Virginians: the work of the cross-agency Virginia team that is part of the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and Families. Important updates were also provided by the legislative members of the Board. Their service on the BVS reflects the importance that both the legislative and executive branches of our state government place on ensuring that Virginia is and remains the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

Our next meeting will be at 10:00 a.m. on August 20, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Dick".

Michael Dick  
Chairman

## ATTACHMENT 3



### **VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION** **Report to the Joint Leadership Council** **July 22, 2020**

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees held virtual meetings on May 13th and June 24th, 2020.

Since the March 18<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting was canceled due to COVID-19, the first electronic meeting was held on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Frank Finelli, VSF Chairman started the meeting by welcoming the new DVS Commissioner, John Maxwell and newly appointed VSF Trustee, Kyle Craig from Abingdon, Virginia. It was announced that as of May 12, 2020 VSF had received \$409,620.00 in donations. This was about a \$200,000 drop from total donations received at the same time in FY19, due primarily to two corporate donations that were still being worked.

On June 24, 2020 the final VSF Board of Trustees Meeting for FY20 was also held electronically. The VSF Chairman welcomed everyone and began the meeting with an overview of FY20. The Chairman reported if expected donations were received by June 30<sup>th</sup>, VSF would close out the fiscal year with over \$625,000 in donations. It took a great deal of hard work and a successful collaboration with Secretary Hopkins, Commissioner Maxwell and the DVS team to achieve this success. The Chairman stressed that these relationships were imperative to meet future goals.

Secretary Hopkins reported that since the Governor declared a state of emergency, DMA has been engaged in COVID-19 responses. They've worked closely with the Department of Health and our long-term care facilities for N95 mask fittings and have helped local providers obtain Title 31 funding. Members have also provided support at recent protests, with 70 personnel assisting the State Police.

Commissioner Maxwell presented a synopsis of the DVS return to work plan. He noted that the Veteran Care Centers are operating as they have been since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. Commissioner Maxwell noted the eviction ban is about to be lifted and he is expecting the homeless veteran population to increase. Commission Maxwell is looking forward to working with the Foundation to meet the needs of Virginia veterans and their families as we face many uncertainties of the future.

Mr. John Lesinski, Development Committee Chair, reported that a robust fundraising/outreach plan was being drafted which will ask everyone to start developing email address lists for the Foundation for use in digital campaigns.

Senator Walter Stosch, Finance Committee Chair, reported that the newest budget is a placeholder and that he is anxious to employ funds towards the unmet needs of veterans. The committee will also be reviewing the transactional cost of receiving donations and will be working with DVS to come up with the final cost analysis.

Mr. Jack Hilgers, Procedures and Policies (P&P) Chair reported that the P&P Committee is working with DVS to update joint policies on fundraising, in-kind donations, fund management, and fund allocation and expenses. A draft of the policies were approved by the Board along with revisions to the VSF Bylaws and the DVS-VSF MOU.

Senator Walter Stosch provided the Nominating Committee Report offering the names of John Lesinski to serve as Chairman, Nicole Carry as First Vice Chair and Jack Lanier as Second Vice Chair. The Board unanimously approved the nominations. The new officers began their terms on July 1, 2020.

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, Brad Antle, Frank Driscoll, Frank Finelli and Al Pianalto retired from the VSF Board. Each Trustee served two full terms and their leadership is a direct result of the success of the Foundation. Since the Board was unable to meet in person, we hope to plan a get together to recognize them prior to the September or December Board meeting.

The next Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2020. The location is TBA.

Respectfully Submitted,  
John Lesinski  
Chairman  
Veterans Services Foundation

## ATTACHMENT 4



### COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

#### *Department of Veterans Services*

John Maxwell  
Commissioner

Telephone: (804) 786-0220  
Fax: (804) 786-0302

#### **Virginia Department of Veterans Services Update for Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations July 22, 2020**

Over the past five months, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) has experienced challenges and change. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department transitioned to a mostly remote operations model in March to protect employees and clients. However, VDVS began a phased and limited resumption of in-person services on 22 June. VDVS remains committed to serving veterans and families and we've seen some outstanding innovation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Memorial services and military funeral honors (as available) recommenced on 22 June at our three state veterans cemeteries. Services are limited to 50 people or less. For a three month period (mid-March to mid-June) only direct interments (without a memorial service or honors) were allowed. Our cemeteries saw a 20% drop in interments during this period.
- Benefit Services and Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) offices began to see veterans and families through appointments at select offices starting on 29 June and have reopened a majority of the offices for appointments only by 13 Jul.
  - We started with offices in which social distancing protocols and PPE were readily implemented, allowing us to learn lessons for the more challenging offices (those with physical distancing and extensive employee health concerns).
  - Benefit and veteran/family support services will continue to be provided on both an in-person basis and virtually through email, telephone, and USPS.
  - We saw a noticeable decrease in the number of clients assisted, especially for VVFS, but expect that to pick up somewhat with the return of some in-person services.
  - In addition, community resources have been in a constant state of flux making care coordination more difficult.
- Education, transition and employment services have continued, and the VETE team adapted well as they switched to providing virtual services. Transition services and V3 certification are seeing substantial interest from clients. The transition assistance team coordinated with the Virginia Chamber on two hiring fairs. The Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) program continues in full force and hiring numbers are consistent with pre-COVID levels.
- Planning is underway for the 2020 Veterans and Military Affairs Virtual Conference/V3 Awards, co-hosted with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, on August 19.
- The 2020 Virginia Women Veterans Virtual Summit (June 17-19) had over 1,300 participants.

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- The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) program remains popular.
- The interior sections of the Virginia War Memorial, which were also closed due to COVID-19, reopened for inside visitation on 29 June. The Virginia War Memorial hosted a Memorial Day observance that was broadcast on television in Richmond and Hampton Roads, in addition to being livestreamed. Nielsen ratings and livestream counts indicate that at least 37,000 viewers saw the ceremony.
- Operations at the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) in Richmond and the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke have continued, but they remain closed to visitation. Both centers have had residents and staff members test positive for COVID-19. Fortunately, the instances have been infrequent and have had limited impact on residents and employees.
  - Construction continues on the Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center in Virginia Beach and the Puller Veterans Care Center in Fauquier County. The projects are scheduled for completion in early 2022, with the first residents being admitted shortly thereafter.

The following items are important considerations as we move forward:

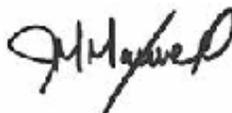
- Working through the challenges of providing in-person services with new requirements (appointments, PPE, and hygiene/disinfecting protocols).
- Determining community resources that are still available in light of economic uncertainty and rebuilding community relationships
- Initiating an effort to improve our outreach to all veterans through improved diversity and inclusion practices and processes.
- Updating our technology: there are applications which can make us more efficient.
- Examine policy changes that may benefit VDVS' provision of services.
- Management of any budget shortfalls that are created by the COVID 19 pandemic.

We are developing a communication strategy that focuses are five lines of effort:

- Generationally appropriate themes and methods
- Increase the VDVS digital footprint
- Building upon relationships with media and stakeholders
- Targeted marketing and communication plans
- Develop an agency of brand ambassadors

VDVS is open to feedback and we look forward to collaborating with the JLC and other stakeholders to improve outreach and offerings to Virginia's veterans and their families.

Respectfully submitted,



John Maxwell

## ATTACHMENT 5 – SUMMARY OF JLC 2020 INITIATIVES – AS OF MAY 11, 2020

INITIATIVE	RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
<b>JLC 2020-01</b> <i>2nd Resolution – Personal Property Tax Exemption</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve legislation, and send to the voters via ballot initiative, creating a standardized, statewide personal property tax exemption for one vehicle for 100% service-connected, total and permanent disabled veterans.	<b>Budget Amendment:</b> N/A <b>Legislation:</b> <b>HB1268 (Helmer): Passed House (93-7); Passed Senate (40-0); Approved by GOV</b> <b>HJ103: Agreed to by House (91-4); Agreed to by Senate (40-0);</b> GOV action not required as this is a resolution <b>WILL BE ON THE BALLOT November 3, 2020</b> <b>SB446/SJ33 (Reeves) &amp; SB820/SJ58 (Morrissey): SB820/SJ58 were incorporated into SB446/SJ58, which were Continued to 2021</b>
<b>JLC 2020-02</b> <i>Counting Military Absentee Ballots After Election Day</i>	That the General Assembly enact and the Governor sign legislation that directs Virginia registrars receive and count military overseas absentee ballots postmarked on or before election day and which arrive by 5:00 p.m. on the second business day before the State Board of Elections meets to certify the results of the election.	<b>Budget Amendment:</b> N/A  <b>Legislation:</b> <b>HB191 (J. Cole): Incorporated into HB203</b> <b>HB203 (Tran): Continued to 2021</b> <b>SB455 (Reeves): Passed House with substitute (93-2); Senate agreed to House substitute (38-0); Approved by GOV</b>
<b>JLC 2020-03</b> <i>Income Tax Subtraction for Certain Low-Income Disabled Veterans</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federally adjusted gross income, not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption.	<b>Budget Amendment:</b> 0 #1s Reeves Language Only <i>Not included in Senate budget</i>  <b>Legislation:</b> <b>HB125 (Miyares); HB1619 (Helmer): Passed House (100-0); Senate continued to 2021</b> <b>SB456 (Reeves): Continued to 2021</b>
<b>JLC 2020-04</b> <i>Virginia National Guard Emergency Response Pay</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly ensure Virginia’s continued commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard, through raising the minimum National Guard Emergency Response Pay (ERP) to equal the currently used DOD pay table plus a 2-10% increased adjustment, depending on rank.	<b>Budget Amendment:</b> Budget Language included in Item 472  <b>Legislation:</b> <b>HB1718 (Freitas): Left in committee</b> <b>SB753 (Reeves): Passed Senate (40-0); Passed House (98-0) with Amendment; Senate agreed to House amendment (39-0); Approved by GOV</b>
<b>JLC 2020-05</b> <i>Tax Credits for Employers who Hire VNG and Reserves</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve Tax credits for employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members.	<b>Budget Amendment:</b> 0 #2s Reeves Language Only. <i>Not included in GA-budget</i> <b>Legislation:</b> <b>HB230 (Freitas) – incorporated HB1620; HB1620 (Helmer): Continued to 2021</b> <b>SB218 (Suetterlein); SB457 (Reeves): Both bills Continued to 2021</b>
<b>JLC 2020-06</b> <i>Microloans for Veterans Program (MVP)</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly provide an appropriation in the amount of \$1,000,000 in FY20 and \$1,000,000 in FY21 for the Microloan for Veterans Program fund.	<b>Budget Amendment:</b> Del. Keam 128 #5h - \$1M in FY21&22; Sen. Reeves 464 #2s \$1M in FY21&22. <i>Not included in GA-approved budget</i>  <b>Legislation:</b> <b>SB458 (Reeves): 2/3: Passed Senate (40-0); Left in House Appropriations</b>

## **ATTACHMENT 6 – PROPOSED 2021 INITIATIVES**

### **AMERICAN LEGION 1 (AL-1)**

#### **Disabled Veteran State Park Passport**

**OBJECTIVE:** To expand the Disabled Veterans Passport for free entry into state parks and discounted services to all disabled veterans

**BACKGROUND:**

- Currently a veteran must have a 100% service-connected permanent disability to receive free entry to state parks and a 50 percent discount on camping and swimming fees, picnic shelter rentals, and other Department of Conservation and Recreation equipment rentals.
- In 2010 HB3 was proposed to expand eligibility to all service-connected disabled veterans. The fiscal impact at the time was estimated to be a revenue loss of under \$38,000/year. This bill had bipartisan support but did not make it out of sub-committee for reasons not related to its worthiness.
- On 22 June 2020 the United States Senate passed S327, Wounded Veterans Recreation Act, unanimously to make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available, without charge and for the lifetime of the passholder, to any veteran who has been found to have a compensable or non-compensable service-connected disability.
- H.R. 4930, a companion bill to S327. has been submitted in the House of Representatives.

**DISCUSSION:** The National Park Service, recognizing the importance of outdoor activities and access to historic sites as rehabilitation for those who have become disabled in service to the Country, has already unofficially loosened requirements to allow those with less than a 100% disability to be issued a National Park Pass free for life. The Congress of the United States is in the process of officially making this law and Virginia should follow suit.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the General Assembly enact and the Governor sign legislation that that would expand the Virginia Disabled Veteran's Passport to any Virginia veteran who has been found to have a compensable or non-compensable disability.

## **FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION 1 (FRA-1)**

### **Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income**

**OBJECTIVE:** To reform the Virginia state tax law, creating a partial exemption on military retirement income beginning in 2021.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

- Currently Virginia does not exempt military retirement income, while three of Virginia's neighbors (NC, WV, MD) have some level of state tax exemption on military retirement income.
- The personal income tax laws of over half the states provides various exclusions from gross income in determining tax liability, including an exclusion for combat-related special compensation and death benefit payments received by a surviving spouse or other beneficiary designated by a military veteran.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- Non-military income, including all income derived from federal or military contracts, consulting or full-time employment will be taxed at the full gross income percentages.
- The qualifying retirement income must be received as a result of an honorable discharge and retirement from full-time, active-duty service in the armed forces of the United States, or reserve components thereof, including the National Guard.
- For each taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2021,
- Beginning in 2021: A military retiree under the age of 65 may subtract \$2,500 and \$5,000 for those 65 years old from federally adjusted gross income before determining Virginia tax.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly support changes to the current Virginia tax laws for a partial exemption of military retirement pay to reduce state tax on military retirement income.

## **FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION 2 (FRA-2)**

### **Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouse of a Member of the Armed Forces “Killed in Action” to also include “Died on Active Duty”**

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

- a. To reform the Virginia state law, Tax Relief for Surviving Spouse of a Member of the Armed Forces “Killed in Action”

#### **BACKGROUND:**

- a. Virginia Code Title 58.1, Chapter 32, section 58-1-3219.9 states:
  - i. On March 23, 2015, legislation was approved by the Virginia General Assembly providing for an exemption of real estate taxes for the surviving spouse of a member of the United States Armed Forces who was Killed in Action as determined by the United States Department of Defense
- b. Disabled Veterans or Surviving Spouses Real Estate Exemption:
  - i. The Commonwealth of Virginia exempts from taxation the real property, including the joint real property of husband and wife, of any veteran who has been rated by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs or its successor agency pursuant to federal law to have a 100% service connected permanent and total disability, and who occupies the real property as his or her principal place of residence.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- a. Approximately only 1% of the American population served in our Armed Forces
- b. Virginia Code states a surviving spouse is eligible for exemption of real estate taxes if the spouse is “Killed in Action” verified by Department of Defense
- c. Disabled Veterans who are 100% Permanent and Total rating by the Veterans Administration are eligible for the tax exemption. If this Veteran dies of a service connected disability his/her spouse will continue the entitlement.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- a. Legislation introduce in the General Assembly to amend the Code of Virginia to change “Killed in Action” to died on active duty

## **VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION 1 (VNGA-)**

### **No cost license plates for Guard members**

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure Virginia's continued commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard by changing the current 50% reduced price for license plates and registrations to 100% reduction in cost of license plates.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

1. Virginia currently offers a 50% reduction in cost for National Guard members to register their vehicles in the Commonwealth if they register them using Guard plates. These plates contain a logo indicating National Guard membership.
2. Currently less than 20% of Guard members opt to get the plates.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

1. Further reducing the cost of license plates for National Guard members would incentivize more members to obtain the National Guard plates which would in turn further highlight their contributions and awareness of the Guard members in our communities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly further reduce the cost of license plates so all Guard members that register with Guard plates receive them at no cost.

## **VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION 2 (VNGA-2)**

### **Free entry to state parks for Guard members**

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure Virginia's continued commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard by offering free entrance to state parks for all members.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

1. Numerous states offer free admission to state parks for their National Guard Members.
2. Federal parks are now free for active service members which includes the National Guard members.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

1. Virginia National Guard Soldiers will mobilize into federal service from Fort Hood Texas in the spring of 2021. They will be able to visit all of the State parks in Texas without paying an entrance fee. Those same Soldiers will have to pay a fee to use a state park in Virginia.
2. The cost of this effort is relatively low and in extending free admission to our National Guard members we recognize their continued service to the Commonwealth during times of need. This year alone approximately 1,500 Guard members have mobilized in response to COVID 19 and civil disturbances throughout the Commonwealth.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly grant no cost admission to Virginia State parks to members of the Virginia National Guard.

## **AMERICAN LEGION 2 (AL-2)**

### **Income tax subtraction for certain low-income disabled veterans**

**OBJECTIVE:** To allow individual income tax subtraction for the amount of annual retirement compensation received for service as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or the Virginia National Guard, for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federal adjusted gross income not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Virginia currently allows qualifying taxpayers to claim a subtraction for up to \$20,000 of disability income. Disabled veterans who already claim this subtraction would not qualify for the new program or would have to drop this subtraction and claim the new one.
- D.C. and Maryland offer exemptions ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
  - North Carolina offers a full exemption for retirees with five years of service as of August 12, 1989; otherwise, retirees may claim a deduction of up to \$4,000.
  - Kentucky offers exemptions of \$41,110 and West Virginia \$20,000.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- While Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) is not subject to federal or Virginia taxation, Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP) are generally subject to both federal and Virginia taxation.
- Available reports do not provide specific data on the exact number of 100% service-connected disabled veterans in Virginia, however, the VA has given a reasonable estimate of **1,371** disabled Virginia veterans who would qualify for this benefit.
- Department of Taxation considers implementation of this bill as routine, and does not require additional funding.
- No subtraction would be permitted if another Virginia subtraction or deduction for such service has been claimed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federal adjusted gross income, not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption.

**VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION 3 (VNGA-3)**  
**Tax Credits for Employers Who Hire National Guard and Reserves**

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure Individual and corporate income tax credit; employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Provides for taxable years 2019 through 2023 a non-refundable tax credit against individual and corporate income taxes for wages paid by an employer to an employee who is a Virginia National Guard member or Reserves.
- Income of a self-employed National Guard member or Reservist attributable to his business would also qualify for a non-refundable tax credit against individual and corporate income taxes for wages paid for taxable years 2020 through 2024.
- For taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2020, but before January 1, 2025, a self-employed National Guard member shall be allowed a credit against the tax levied pursuant to § [58.1-320](#) or [58.1-400](#) for income attributable to his trade or business during the taxable year.

**DISCUSSION:**

- The amount of the credit shall be:
  - 25%, if such member was in a military pay status for 65 days or more during such taxable year; or
  - 15% if such member was in a military pay status for 45 days or more during such taxable year.
- The credit should not be allowed if such member was in a military pay status for less than 45 days during such taxable year.
- The taxpayer should be allowed to carry unused credits over for up to five taxable years within the taxable years of 2024 to 2028.
- The amount of the credit claimed shall not exceed the total amount of tax imposed pursuant to § [58.1-320](#) or [58.1-400](#) upon the employer for the taxable year.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly approve Tax credits for employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members

## **ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY 1 (AUSA-1)** **Microloans for Veterans Program**

**OBJECTIVE:** To establish the Microloans for Veterans Program, through the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority's system of microloans, available solely to Virginia veteran entrepreneurs establishing business ventures based in Virginia.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Entrepreneurship is the “third leg of the stool,” (along with Education and Employment) for Virginia veterans. It is a key for veterans and the New Virginia Economy.
- Current programs, such as the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Boots to Business program, Bunker Labs, Capital Post, and the Arsenal are focused on training and mentorship and businesses that are established and can provide proof of revenue. SBA loans can be almost impossible for veteran start-ups to access.
- The Virginia Small Business Financing Authority (VSBFA) is Virginia's business and economic development financing arm, providing financing for small businesses and economic growth in Virginia. The VSBFA already has the authority to administer microloan programs and are willing to administer a microloan for veteran entrepreneurs.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- MVP would place veteran entrepreneurs on a more equal footing with civilian entrepreneurs and encourage the growth of small businesses in Virginia.
- MVP sets up a public-private partnership between VSBFA, DVS, Virginia Community College System and private banks to assist veterans and incentivize veterans to complete financial education and business planning classes with lower interest rates (1-2% below market rate) and extended payback periods.
- The program would have two tiers –
  - a) Tier 1: Loan amounts up to \$10,000 through VSBFA; Requirements: Honorably discharged, minimum credit credentials, repayment and interest rate terms set by VSBFA, and a willingness to sign on to education and mentorship requirements, unless comparable credentials can be produced.
  - b) Tier 2: Loan amounts up to \$50,000 through Virginia banking institutions (such as V3 partners); Requirements: Successfully completed all education and mentorship requirements of Tier 1 and paid back the loan early or on time.
- The two tiered system minimizes risk, keeps state funds circulating more quickly and promotes successful small businesses in Virginia by providing a wide range of educational and support tools to the veterans.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Governor and General Assembly provide an appropriation in the amount of \$1,000,000 in FY22 for the Microloan for Veterans Program fund.

## **ATTACHMENT 7 – AMENDED JLC 2020 WORK PLAN**

### **ADOPTED JULY 22, 2020**

#### **January 8 – March 7 (2020 General Assembly):**

- Attend JLC Day on January 15, 2020 and join the Virginia National Guard at their Reception that evening.
- Advocate for 2020 JLC Initiatives & Promote role of JLC. Goal: every JLC Member meets with at least two Senators and two Delegates.
- Legislative Committee and Policy Paper Sponsors work with DVS Policy Director and legislative patrons; speak to bills at committee hearing, answer legislator questions.

#### **April 29 (Spring Meeting): CANCELLED**

#### **July 15 (seven days prior to Summer Meeting):**

- Distribute summary of 2020 General Assembly actions on JLC initiatives and other bills/budget items.
- Distribute potential 2021 JLC Initiatives to members for review.
- JLC members share potential 2021 JLC Initiatives with their VSO leadership and membership to solicit feedback, comments, additional ideas, etc.

#### **July 22 (Summer Meeting):**

- Sponsors of each potential 2021 JLC Initiative presents to JLC. A vote will be taken on each to either continue forward or be rejected for 2021.
- Elect JLC Chair and Vice Chair.

#### **July 24 (two days after Summer Meeting)**

- Call for volunteers interested in serving as a JLC Appointed Officers for 2020-2021.

#### **August 22:**

- JLC Chair appoints JLC 2020-2021 JLC Officers (appointments will be approved at the October meeting).

#### **September 15:**

- Position papers (for policy initiatives reviewed at July 22 meeting) distributed to JLC members for distribution to their VSO leadership and others in their VSO to solicit feedback, comment, additional ideas, etc. Feedback to the Legislative Officer, Assistant Legislative Officer, and DVS Legislative Team.
  - DVS Legislative Team works with sponsors on technical review.
  - JLC Legislative Officer/Assistant reviews and approves position papers.
  - JLC Chair reviews and approves positions papers.
- Initial (draft) papers for any NEW initiatives that members intend to propose due to JLC Chair, Vice Chair, and Legislative Officer/Assistant for review.

**September 21 (30 days prior to Fall Meeting):**

- Approved draft positions papers (for policy initiatives reviewed at July 22 meeting) forwarded to JLC Members for final review.
- Initial (draft) papers for and NEW initiatives forwarded to JLC Members for final review.

**October 21 (Fall Meeting):**

- Final Review of all proposed 2021 JLC Initiatives.
- Adopt and prioritize 2021 JLC Initiatives.
- Approve JLC Appointed Officers for 2020-2021.

**October 29 (One week after Fall Meeting):**

- Adopted Position papers distributed to JLC members for distribution to their VSO leadership.
- Adopted Position papers sent to Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and General Assembly.
- Post position papers on JLC website.

**November & December:**

- NLT November 30 – JLC Chair submits Annual Report to DVS Commissioner and Board of Veterans Services.
- Hold VSO legislative forums; Participate in legislators’ forums/town halls.
- Sponsors find and confirm patrons/co-patrons for initiatives, and meet with Executive and Legislative branch members.

**December Meeting (December 16):**

*Scheduled depending on the release date of the Governor’s introduced budget*

- Review Governor’s Proposed Budget.
- Receive DVS Agency proposed budget & legislation.
- Review and approve any additional 2021 Initiatives that were not voted on in October.
- Review list of approved General Assembly Patrons.
- Adopt 2021 Meeting Schedule.
- Adopt 2021 Work Plan.