



VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION

Report to the Board of Veterans Services

April 16, 2021

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees held a virtual meeting on March 28, 2021.

The VSF Chairman, John Lesinski welcomed Anna Healey James, Senior Vice President of Public Policy & Government Relations of Sentara Health. Sentara is one of the largest not-for-profit health systems in Virginia. Sentara wanted to continue their strong support with the veteran population, so Ms. James reached out to Secretary Hopkins and VSF Executive Director, Karla Boughey to launch a partnership to help serve the needs of Virginia veterans and their families. Ms. James announced that Sentara would be making a \$150,000 donation to VSF to collaborate and focus on veteran homelessness and behavioral health services. This generous gift from Sentara will make a huge difference in the lives of many Virginia veterans and their family members.

Commissioner Maxwell provided a detailed report on behalf of VDVS. The agency continues to focus on their role as a port of entry for services needed by veterans. The Commissioner reminded everyone that he has served in this position for little over a year and has only operated during COVID-19. He continues to focus on teleworking and providing in person mission essential services. Commissioner Maxwell plans to begin a more robust admission program at the two care centers along with allowing residents to visit with their families. He added that the \$5.2M expansion project at the Amelia Cemetery will begin soon and is expected to be completed in early 2022. The Virginia War Memorial is open to visitors and has expanded their educational programs virtually to include Black History Month and Women's History Month.

Virginia Veteran and Family Support continues to seek ways to improve its resource connections for veterans and families, to include peer support and prevention of suicide among service members, veterans, and families (SMVF). This includes the expansion of Virginia's Identify SMVF, Screen for Suicide Risk, and Refer for Services (VISR) pilot and Crisis Intercept Mapping in conjunction with the VA and DBHDS. VVFS will not expend the entire Homeless Fund (\$210K) this year, mostly due to the eviction moratorium and the substantial amount of public funding for housing. Also, VVFS will not expend all funds designated for direct services (\$240K annually) and expects to spend \$140K-\$170K this CFY. This is due the reduced number of veterans and families requiring services during COVID.

Commissioner Maxwell noted the education portion of DVS is an approval agency for those wanting to use the GI Bill. They work with transitioning services and military spouses to find employment. The Altria Grant funding is utilized through a job training program. Originally Altria funding was expended for advanced manufacturing courses, but IT has now been added to the list of courses. DVS worked with VSF and the VCCS to develop a program to provide veterans and spouses with computers also using the Altria grant funding. Students request laptops by submitting an online application to VDVS at the Veteran Education Resource Initiative for Transition, Advising and Success (VERITAS) office at their campus. VDVS will review the application for eligibility and notify VERITAS of approval status. VERITAS will then provide the student a Virginia Department of Veteran Services Veteran Resource Guide to the student, issue the device to the student, and have the student sign a hand receipt.

Overall donations are down for the Foundation in FY21. However, plans were discussed aimed at new fundraising initiatives to take place before the close of the fiscal year on June 30th. Fundraising for many organizations are down as a result of COVID 19.

The Foundation welcomed four new trustees to the board. Lettie Bien, Paula Buckley, Philip Jones, and Laura Schmiegel were sworn in virtually by Secretary Hopkins.

The next Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2021. The meeting is currently planned to take place virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Lesinski, Chairman
Veterans Services Foundation