

**Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
August 25, 2021**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held electronically on Wednesday, August 25, 2021.

Members Present

- Victor Angry
- Carl Bess
- Paige Cherry
- Michael Dick
- Jenny Dye
- Buddy Fowler
- James Icenhour
- Thurraya Kent
- Kathy Owens
- Denice Williams, Acting Chair, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
- Jack Lanier, 2nd Vice Chair, Veterans Services Foundation
- Linda Schreiner, Chair, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
- John Maxwell, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Members Dialed in via Zoom

- John Bell
- Mario Flores
- Dan Helmer
- Kathleen Murphy

Members Absent

- Carl Bedell
- John Lesinski
- Mamie Locke
- Bryce Reeves
- Marcus Simon

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Mario Avent, Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS)
- Steven Combs, VDVS
- Claudia Flores, VDVS
- Glendalynn Glover, VDVS
- Thomas Herthel, VDVS
- Robert Jukic, VDVS (Zoom)
- Quintrel Lenore, VDVS
- Phil Trezza, VDVS

Members of the Public

- Pam Seay, Virginia War Memorial Foundation

Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet (sent via e-mail and posted on BVS webpage)

- Draft Agenda
- Draft Minutes of the June 29, 2021 meeting
- VDVS Operations Update
- VDVS Strategic Priorities Brief
- JLC Report to BVS
- Veterans Services Foundation Report
- Virginia War Memorial Report
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion Initiative

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Michael Dick called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Chairman Dick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call and Quorum Determination

The roll call determined with an in-person quorum of 13 of 22 members present at the meeting site and four members present online via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda *(See Attachment 1)*

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Jack Lanier made the **motion, seconded** by Ms. Kathy Owens, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes of the June 29, 2020, Meeting

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 29, 2021. Mr. Jack Lanier made the **motion, seconded** by Mr. James Icenhour, to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

Introduction of VDVS staff and guests

VDVS Commissioner Maxwell introduced the VDVS team members. The names are recorded above.

Update on VDVS *(See Attachment 2)*

Chairman Dick asked VDVS Commissioner Maxwell to provide an update on the VDVS Operational Status.

Commissioner Maxwell noted the two new positions for VDVS: the Women Veterans Program Assistant Program Manager and the Military Spouse Liaison, and commented both are essential positions. He commented on the growing needs of veterans and noted that homelessness and housing are the greatest needs followed by behavioral health. He commented that VDVS is postured and working with providers.

Commissioner Maxwell noted the number of claims submitted is lower than previous years, but this drop was expected given COVID posturing. He highlighted, however, the number of contacts with veterans is higher than pre-COVID years, indicating the outreach to veterans is effective. He commented on anticipated expansion to assist veterans in a virtual capacity.

He noted an uptick in cemetery internments and therefore space is used more quickly than originally anticipated. He commented the staff is working toward National Shrine Status.

Commissioner Maxwell commented on the popularity of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). He noted VDVS is seeing an increase in applications and the funds allotted by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for stipends are fully utilized.

He commented the Virginia Transition and Assistance Program (VTAP) has rebranded to V3 Transition. He noted an uptick in the *Boots to Suits* Program through which VDVS connects to transitioning service members.

He noted the hard work by the Care Centers in preventing the spread of COVID.

Commissioner Maxwell received a question on how many state veterans cemeteries there are in Virginia and replied that there are three. Mr. Tom Herthel noted a recent survey on the need for phased expansion at the cemeteries to ensure VDVS can meet the memorial needs of Virginia's veterans and families.

Commissioner Maxwell commented on veteran suicide data and noted VDVS receives data from the VA, which lags. The Virginia Department of Health data is in line with the VA and recognized by the Center for Disease Control as legitimate data. He offered for the Director of VVFS to provide a brief at a future date on veteran suicides. The Commissioner noted the 2018 data is anticipated to be received by the Virginia Department of Health. Chairman Dick noted the data is included in the read-ahead packages.

Senator Bell thanked the Commissioner for the information.

Commissioner Maxwell noted the situation in Afghanistan and commented VDVS will maintain support and will be watchful for signs of stress for veterans and family members.

Mr. Lanier asked for a future presentation on the contributing factors of suicide. Chairman Dick asked the Commissioner to comment on recent trends.

Commissioner Maxwell noted that he is unable to comment since he does not have data. Mr. Herthel noted 2019 is the most recent data but that VDVS does not have tracking data. Commissioner Maxwell noted VDVS virtual peer group sessions to assist veterans.

Ms. Jenny Dye asked about veterans referred for mental health treatment to the state hospital system. Commissioner Maxwell noted VDVS will gather information to answer the question more completely.

VDVS Strategic Priorities *(See Attachment 3)*

Commissioner Maxwell noted the continued work to establish VDVS as a point of entry for veterans and family members. Specifically, he noted the awareness challenge, informing veterans and their family members of VDVS services. He commented on referrals to services for veterans both within the agency and outside of the agency.

He highlighted the compact with Virginia Veterans and noted the need to build and optimize technology to enrich services and increase outreach. He noted the strategic priorities and lines of efforts that support the priorities. He commented on the need to invest in the VDVS team.

Commissioner Maxwell discussed lines of efforts for suicide prevention to coordinate with stakeholders to identify veterans at risk. He noted supportive services and financial resources. He further commented on the need for a case management system to holistically connect veterans and their families to services.

Commissioner Maxwell commented on the need to enhance ability to meet increasing numbers of clients, to include housing coordination. He noted the need to recruit and retain VDVS staff and the need to create pathways to grow within the agency. He commented on the need to strengthen agency infrastructure to include VDVS IT.

Commissioner Maxwell highlighted the line of effort for communications and the need to improve awareness VDVS as a primary port of entry. He discussed service line enhancements for the New Care Centers, Military Spouse Liaison and Women Veterans.

Commissioner Maxwell asked for questions. Kathy Owens asked if VDVS works with non-profits to assist the homeless. Commissioner Maxwell confirmed that VDVS connects veterans to resources to include non-profits. VDVS assists with housing by connecting veterans to resources.

Mr. Carl Bess commented on the port of entry and suggested the faith community, salons, barbershops etc. since those are facilities veterans solicit and are community based. Commissioner Maxwell noted Community Veterans Engagement Boards to assist veterans connect to community resources.

Chairman Dick commented on the effort of BVS to assist with developing measures and metrics. He asked the Commissioner the status of implementing objectives to fulfill the priorities. Commissioner Maxwell noted vacancies within VDVS that once filled would allow for more of a steady-state analysis. He also noted the presence of other critical positions and the efforts expended by current staff to work through the pandemic and enhance services.

Chairman Dick commented on the importance of a BVS metrics working group to assist VDVS to measure progress. Commissioner Maxwell noted the need to measure presence, outreach, screening, and training.

Mr. Victor Angry noted Prince William County stood up a Veterans Committee of several

districts and noted the goal is to put veteran issues under one umbrella within the county. He noted various organizations that offer services and commented on the critical need to increase awareness of services. He commented that he is a volunteer firefighter to demonstrate that opportunities exist for veterans as a solution to suicide.

Commissioner Maxwell noted VDVS welcomes opportunities as described by Mr. Angry.

Mr. James Icenhour noted that the Fort Eustis area has the same type of effort. He noted representatives from the military basis and business communities to hire veterans.

Chairman Dick noted community organizations are important to tie in with the state and commented it is a constant effort. Mr. Icenhour commented on referrals one-on-one is effective.

Commissioner Maxwell provided information and background on the One Virginia Plan. Commissioner Maxwell noted the importance of training on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and commented on the leadership development plan VDVS is developing. He noted his goal is to get staff to reflect on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Chairman Dick thanked the Commissioner and turned the floor over to the acting JLC Chair Denice Williams to present the 2022 proposed JLC initiatives for the BVS to provide comment and feedback.

2022 JLC Proposed Initiatives

Acting JLC Chair Williams thanked the BVS for the support and commented the initiatives are not yet adopted or prioritized, noting that effort is planned for the September 9 JLC meeting.

Acting JLC Chair Williams presented these proposals:

1. By AMVETS for a VDVS Suicide Prevention Coordinator. She commented this initiative aligns with the compact as outlined by the Commissioner.
2. By the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) requesting partial state tax exemption for military retirees staggered by age groups.
3. By FRA for an increase in funding for VDVS, so that the spousal burial fee at state veterans cemeteries could be eliminated.
4. By FRA proposal for grants for post-911 veterans pursuing education, to support them in between school semesters.
5. By the Marine Corps League to amend the Code of Virginia exempting VSO honor guards from being recognized as a paramilitary organization.
6. By the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) comparing military retirement exemptions with neighboring states and asked for an income subtraction for qualifying retirees.
7. By MOAA to expand the definition of qualifying tax exemption for a surviving spouse of a veteran who died on active duty.
8. By the Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association for \$50,000 to provide grants for employers who hire National Guard and Reserve members.
9. By the Virginia National Guard Association for an adjustment to the income tax deduction; and

10. By the Virginia National Guard Association to provide free admission to state parks for Guardsmen.

Acting Chair Williams turned the floor back to Chairman Dick.

Chairman Dick asked for BVS feedback on the proposals. Mr. Steven Combs noted the JLC used the Board's feedback last year to rewrite and modify some of the proposals for 2021.

Chairman Dick asked for feedback on the Suicide Prevention Coordinator and summarized the initiative.

Ms. Kathy Owens asked if there was a funding amount for this position. Chairman Dick asked the Commissioner. The Commissioner responded and provided financial information.

Mr. James Icenhour asked if the BVS supports this initiative, would VDVS submit it as a budget request. The Commissioner responded and noted VDVS has an opportunity to provide comment on legislative initiatives proposed by the General Assembly applicable to the agency. Mr. Combs noted that budget initiatives may be submitted for consideration in the introduced budget or a General Assembly member is able to submit a budget amendment request for consideration.

Senator John Bell commented that a question will be asked if VDVS is able to absorb the cost in its existing budget and also noted travel money would need to be included in the estimate. If the agency is unable to absorb the cost, VDVS will need to communicate the priority.

Delegate Kathleen Murphy commented that the process is more efficient to have the request in the introduced budget.

Chairman Dick thanked Senator Bell and Delegate Murphy. Chairman Dick noted these are JLC initiatives and the role of BVS is to determine if they agree to support the JLC proposals or recommend changes. The Chairman also commented that BVS may encourage VDVS to consider some of these initiatives as a priority to submit for consideration in the introduced budget.

Senator Bell recommended BVS submit a letter from the Board to the Governor requesting that funding for a Suicide Prevention Coordinator in VDVS be included as a budget item. Senator Bell also noted that letters presented to committees are powerful as well.

Chairman Dick asked for further comments. Ms. Owens noted the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families, and asked if the funds from the Challenge are used for this effort or if this was funded previously. Commissioner Maxwell noted that there is no funding to support the Governor's Challenge.

Ms. Owens asked about an online training tool. Mr. Combs noted that AMVETS has an online training tool and they are working to share it with VDVS and others.

Chairman Dick asked if BVS members endorse this proposal concept. Mr. James Icenhour noted this proposal aligns with the Governor's Challenge and noted his support. He concurred with the approach outlined by Senator Bell. Ms. Thurraya Kent commented on the lessons learned from the Women Veterans Coordinator initiative as a model to ensure this initiative is worked efficiently and effectively.

Senator Bell provided background on the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus (GAMVC) discussions on veteran suicide and made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Murphy, to support funding for a dedicated suicide prevention coordinator in VDVS. The vote was unanimous vote.

Chairman Dick summarized the proposal on income tax deduction and opened up the floor. Mr. Icenhour noted an adjustment to the tax rate might be needed prior to this effort to support any decrease in state revenue.

Senator Bell commented on the initiative and noted the fiscal impact, commenting on the percentage of veterans. He also offered suggestions on initiatives with less of a financial impact. Ms. Owens commented on the number of veterans that remain in Virginia and noted it should be considered but that it requires a fiscal impact statement.

Chairman Dick commented the percentage of veterans remaining in Virginia is high and also asked for a fiscal impact. Chairman Dick asked for additional comments – none were made.

Chairman Dick summarized the initiative for additional funding for VDVS, in order to eliminate the spousal burial fee and asked for comments. Mr. Icenhour commented he favored this proposal. Chairman Dick asked about the funding impact.

Senator Bell commented this needs to be ranked along with the Suicide Prevention Coordinator and if this can be absorbed within the existing budget. Chairman Dick asked VDVS for comments. The Commissioner commented that VDVS relies on the spouse burial fee for cemetery operations, and that it could not be eliminated without an offsetting increase in additional state funding.

Chairman Dick summarized the post-911 grant initiatives and asked about if the grant is the fiscal impact and asked for clarification. Ms. Owens provided clarification on the application for funds. Chairman Dick asked about the significance of the issue. Mr. Icenhour commented this is a VA program and the initiative should include working with the VA to resolve.

Chairman Dick summarized the initiative for the VSO honor guards. Chairman Dick commented that VSO honor guards should not be conceived as causing civil disorder given their training. Delegate Fowler commented he will research the Code. Mr. Angry commented that honor guards are not part of groups causing concern. Senator Bell commented the Code needs to be reviewed and recommended further research before deciding.

Chairman Dick summarized the MOAA initiative for income tax subtraction for qualifying veterans as detailed in the proposal. Chairman Dick asked for comments. Chairman Dick asked for a fiscal impact.

Mr. Icenhour and Delegate Fowler asked for clarity with the numbers proposed. Chairman Dick summarized the initiative by asking for more clarity before proceeding with this initiative.

Chairman Dick summarized the initiative to expand tax exemption to include Died on Active Duty in addition to Killed in Action (KIA).

Mr. Icenhour noted unfunded mandates on local governments. Mr. Angry commented about the nature of a combat theater for tax exemption for consideration in modification. Chairman Dick commented there are members who die on active duty due to willful misconduct and recommended further definition of the recommendation.

Senator Bell commented clarification is needed given the complexity and suggested researching previous denials to help craft language.

Commissioner Maxwell noted active duty service members providing operational support within CONUS due to a crisis such as a hurricane.

Chairman Dick noted the suggestions to further define the eligibility for an expanded exemption.

Chairman Dick summarized the initiative to promote the hiring of National Guard and Reserve Members. Ms. Owens asked for clarification on the retention requirement. Delegate Fowler noted that many employers desire to hire National Guard and Reserve members. Ms. Owens commented on the possibility for these members to deploy if required therefore the grants provide incentives.

Senator Bell commented the retention requirement would add to this recommendation. Mr. Angry also commented that this recommendation is needed and asked if V3 recognizes Guard and Reserve or if this recommendation is an additional effort. Commissioner Maxwell confirmed there are VA definitions of veterans and the National Guard members are state assets. Chairman Dick commented that if National Guard members are called to state active duty, it does not fall under the federal VA definition of a veteran. Ms. Owens commented that V3 is intended for veterans that can no longer be called to deploy but this initiative allows for National Guard members that can still be called to deploy.

Senator Bell asked if the National Guard leadership commented on this initiative. Chairman Dick said the Acting Chair of the JLC will confirm.

Chairman Dick summarized the income tax deduction initiative for the National Guard. Mr. Icenhour asked for the fiscal impact to make a knowledgeable assessment. Mr. Angry asked for clarification on the ranking. Mr. Combs confirmed it applied to E1 – E9 and O1-O3 currently. Mr. Icenhour and Mr. Angry commented this needs clarification in the proposal.

Chairman Dick summarized the state park admission proposition for the Guard. Chairman Dick asked if this should be expanded to active duty as well subject to the fiscal impact. Mr. Icenhour responded and commented that it could be a large number of members if expanded and requested more information on the impact. Ms. Owens noted that National Guard members in Virginia pay Virginia State Taxes but not all active duty pay Virginia State Taxes.

Senator Bell commented on the importance of coordinating with the National Guard leadership and noted the need for more data.

Chairman Dick commented of the 10 initiatives, BVS endorses the Suicide Prevention Coordinator proposal. For the other nine, Chairman Dick noted more fiscal clarification to include the GI Bill and income tax deduction proposals. Chairman Dick noted the Board supports the request for funding to eliminate the spousal burial fee. Chairman Dick noted more research required on the VSO color guard proposal and more refinement on the proposal for tax exemption expansion. Chairman Dick noted the willingness to support the grant to hire Guard and Reserve members. Chairman Dick noted the willingness to support admission to state parks.

After further discussion Chairman Dick noted the Board does not support the GI Bill proposal and the partial state tax exemption at this time given the fiscal impact.

Chairman Dick commented the Board supports the Suicide Prevention, the grant to promote hiring, the spousal burial fee, and parks admission. Mr. Icenhour recommended the Board waits to rank until the JLC ranks their initiatives. Acting JLC Chair Williams requested the opportunity to clarify the proposals for which BVS members requested. Chairman Dick confirmed the Board will wait until the JLC ranks their initiatives.

Chairman Dick asked for questions and comments none heard.

Reports *(See Attachments 4, 5, 6)*

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to dispense with the presentation of the reports in Agenda Item VIII given the meeting running over the 2 hour set time frame. Mr. Jack Lanier made the **motion seconded** by Mr. James Icenhour. The motion carried by unanimous decision.

Chair and Vice-Chair Nominations

Chairman Dick noted that Ms. Tammi Lambert, the previous Vice-Chair, had resigned due to assuming a new job in Texas and therefore the Vice-Chair seat is vacant. Chairman Dick noted the nomination of Ms. Thurraya Kent for Vice-Chair and asked if there were other nominations. None heard. Mr. James Icenhour made a **motion** to close the nominations and elect M.s Thurraya Kent. Mr. Victor Angry **seconded the motion**. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Chairman Dick turned the floor over to new Vice-Chair Kent for the nomination and election of a Chair. Mr. James Icenhour nominated Michael Dick to continue as Chair. The Vice-Chair asked for any additional nominations. Mr. Jack Lanier **moved** to close the nomination and elect Mr. Michael Dick to continue as Chairman, **seconded** by Mr. James Icenhour. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

New Business

Chairman Dick asked for reports. None heard. Chairman Dick distributed appointment certificates signed by the Governor to Ms. Kathy Owens, Ms. Thurraya Kent, and Ms. Jenny Dye.

Public Comment

No comment heard.

Wrap Up & Adjournment

Mr. James Icenhour made a **motion, seconded** by Ms. Kathy Owens, to adjourn the meeting. In the absence of any objections, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

ATTACHMENT 1
BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

AGENDA

August 25, 2021

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)
- II. Roll Call and Quorum Determination – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:02 – 10:10)
- III. Approval of Agenda – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
- IV. Approval of Minutes of the June 29, 2021 meeting – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:15 – 10:20)
- V. Introduction of VDVS staff and guests – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:20 – 10:25)
- VI. Update on current VDVS operational status – *John Maxwell, VDVS Commissioner* (10:25 – 10:35)
- VII. VDVS Strategic Priorities – *John Maxwell, VDVS Commissioner* (10:35 – 10:50)
- VIII. JLC 2022 Proposed Initiatives – *JLC Acting Chair Denise Williams* (10:50 – 11:20)
- IX. Reports (11:20 – 11:35)
 - a. Joint Leadership Council – *Denise Williams, JLC Acting Chair*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Jack Lanier, VSF 2nd Vice Chairman*
 - c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation – *Linda Schreiner, VWMF Chairman*
- X. Nomination and Election of BVS Chair / Vice-Chair (11:35 – 11:45) – *all members*
- XI. New Business: (11:45– 11:55)
 - a. “Good of the Order” Reports – *all members*
 - b. Other new business – *as requested by members*
- XII. Public comment (11:55 – 12:00) – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman*
- XIII. Wrap Up & Adjourn – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (12:00)
* Next Meeting December 16, 2021

ATTACHMENT 2

VDVS Operational Update



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

John Maxwell
Commissioner

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

Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) Operations Update for the Board of Veterans Services August 25, 2021

With the beginning of Fiscal Year 2022 there will be some new faces in VDVS. First, the Virginia Women Veterans Program (VWVP) Assistant Program Manager is scheduled to begin today. This position will increase the agency's bandwidth to reach women veterans, build support and strengthen linkages to resources, and improve women veterans' access to VDVS services, federal benefits, and community partners.

We are also looking forward to further enhancing services to the military family with the onboarding of the Military Spouse Liaison on September 10, 2021. The Military Spouse Liaison will conduct outreach and advocacy on behalf of military spouses in the Commonwealth.

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program continues to combat veteran homelessness. There has been a steady uptick in the past few months in requests for security deposits and first month's rent, funding for which comes from donations to the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF). In addition, the Supportive Services for Veterans Families providers needed significant funds for hotel stays due to a shortage of shelter beds from social distancing requirements and the VVFS homeless fund is helping to fill these gaps.

The number of total clients (which captures services to existing/repeat clients) served by VVFS was significantly higher in July 2021 (301) than July 2020 (223). Just over 40% of clients require housing and homeless assistance (41% in June), followed by behavioral health (21%).

VDVS Benefits ended FY21 with an annual claims success rate at 80% (goal is 75%). We filed 14,368 claims in FY21, which was lower than the 16,873 from FY20. We established a process to meet with veterans virtually by mail, email, scanning and other technology to develop and file disability claims while in-person services were halted. Our outreach resulted in 226,643 contacts in FY21, which is greater than the 193,730 from FY20, and it also exceeded FY18 and FY19 numbers.

The Cemeteries division had another record month in July with 212 interments and is anticipating elevated numbers of interments in FY22. Last year's 24% increase in burials resulted in a high depletion rate of columbarium niches at all three cemeteries. The U.S. Department of Veterans

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101 North 14th Street, 17th Floor, Richmond, Virginia 23219
www.dvs.virginia.gov

Affairs (USDVA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is reviewing grant requests for additional columbaria space at both Amelia and Dublin.

The crypt expansion project at Amelia continues to be six weeks ahead of schedule, with completion expected in early 2022. Renovation projects for the chapel, maintenance building and public restrooms at Amelia are scheduled to begin this month, followed by repairs/additions at the Dublin cemetery. Cemeteries purchased a digital carillon for Amelia which will be installed next month; it will provide patriotic chimes and bugle calls on the half-hour. The Cemeteries Director is exploring funding options for similar carillons for Suffolk and Dublin.

The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) ended the fiscal year with a record number of applications submitted. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) also exhausted funding for the first time to supply the VMSDEP stipends. SCHEV reported a 19% increase in unique students receiving stipend funds. The challenge for both agencies will be forecasting the program's growth to ensure proper staffing and budgeting for the stipend. VDVS and SCHEV continue to collaborate on finding the data needed to assist with forecasting.

VDVS's Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) has played a critical role in providing transition assistance to many of the approximately 20,000 talented service members and their spouses who transition each year and contribute to the economic vitality of Virginia. In an effort to continue to carry out this important mission, VTAP rebranded into V3 Transition, aligning it more closely with our well-known Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program.

V3 Transition will continue to build on last year's success in which the team provided services to 3,135 Transitioning Service Members (TSMs) and veterans, and reached over 78,000 TSM's through services like the Virginia Welcome Letter and the Transition Connection Newsletter. The Boots 2 Suits (B2S) service, which provides professional clothing to transitioning service members and military spouses, grew substantially from 171 applications in FY20 to 568 applications in FY21. To date in FY22 there are 53 applications, and 792 transitioning service members have used this resource over the past three years. 71% of the 792 transitioning servicemembers that used the Boots 2 Suits services responded they plan to remain in Virginia upon separation.

The State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education and Training is completing its participation in the USDVA risk-based survey pilot. The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA), Education Counsel, and the USDVA developed the pilot to test effective data collection processes and a risk-based survey process that complies with both the Colmery Act and the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020. Many provisions of the Isakson and Roe bill went into effect on August 1 and encourage or mandate that schools improve their processes and improve their access to GI Bill beneficiaries.

VDVS Communications continues its aggressive earned media strategy, and that has resulted in more earned media than any other comparable state agency over the past five years. Additionally, social media usage and engagement are being used increasingly to distribute messaging in real time and to analyze predictive behavior, which makes communications even more efficient. VDVS' use of social media continues to track well above government standards and continues to grow.

Census levels at the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) are in the 70-75% range and continue to grow slowly. Levels at Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) are hovering around 80%. The lower census has resulted in lower revenues, but supplemental state and federal funding has supported our operations. The SBVCC emergency generator replacement project will

complete in mid-September. Both care centers were awarded USDVA grants for renovation projects to help the care centers prepare for future pandemic response. The projects are in the design stages.

The Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center (Virginia Beach) and Puller Veterans Care Center (Vint Hill, Fauquier County) continue to make progress. The Vint Hill site has had some significant rain events in the past six weeks which slowed construction progress. We are assessing the schedule impact with the contractor, and are anticipating that the final completion date may slip.

The Virginia War Memorial recently hosted the third and final program in the annual Summer Teacher Institute. This virtual program "*So What Happened in Afghanistan?*" explored this complicated topic to help prepare teachers to address the War in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of U.S. troops with their students. Participating educators received recertification points for attending this program. Just in the past week, the War Memorial hosted virtual programs which saluted the 231st birthday of the United States Coast Guard and honored Purple Heart recipients. The War Memorial team is busily preparing to host the Commonwealth's Patriot Day ceremony on September 11 at 11 a.m. This ceremony is currently planned as an in-person event.

I consider it a privilege to work with a team that remains passionate and dedicated to providing outstanding service to veterans and their families in a challenging environment. As always, I value the input of each of you and stand ready to answer questions and provide additional details as requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Maxwell", is written over the printed name.

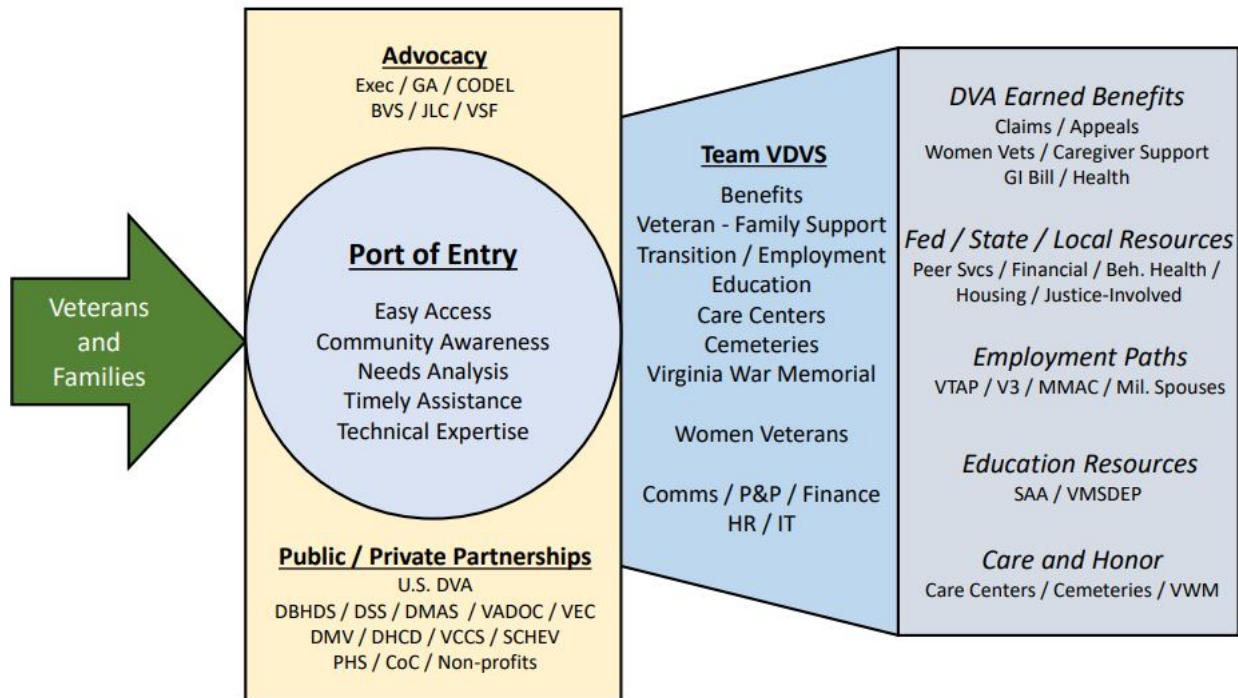
John Maxwell

ATTACHMENT 3

VDVS Strategic Priorities



Port of Entry to Services





Compact with Virginia's Veterans



- The Virginia Department of Veterans Services will unify the state's efforts in veterans services
 - With a highly trained and professional workforce, we will serve as a primary port of entry to federal, state and community resources, connecting veterans and their families to earned benefits
 - We will optimize technology advances to enrich services and increase outreach
 - We will advocate for veteran quality of life enhancements and prioritize accessibility of services for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families throughout the Commonwealth
-



Fulfilling the Compact



Strategic Priorities

- Make Virginia the most veteran friendly state in the Nation
- Serve as a primary port of entry
- Invest in the VDVS Team

Lines of Effort

- Suicide Prevention through focused stakeholder coordination and programs
 - Technological improvements (e.g. web applications and external interfaces with veterans and clients) that support service delivery
 - Capacity to meet increasing numbers of veterans and families who require agency's current services
 - Agency infrastructure – Strengthen the backbone of direct services delivery
 - Internal programs and positions
 - Improvements to VDVS information technology networks
 - Communicate to veterans, and their families, and the public through outreach, marketing, social media, videography
-



Fulfilling the Compact



Lines of Effort

- ***Suicide Prevention***
 - Better coordination with stakeholders to identify SMVF at risk and improve outcomes
 - Connect veterans to supportive services and financial resources
 - Provide readily available assistance for new clients
 - ***Technological Improvements***
 - Case management for holistic connection to services
-



Fulfilling the Compact



Lines of Effort

- ***Capacity to meet increasing numbers***
 - Improve veterans' and their families' access to services through entry points into VDVS
 - Enhance ability to connect SMVF to employment and other support services during transition
 - Enhance housing coordination services
 - Recruitment / retention of VDVS staff
 - ***Agency Infrastructure***
 - Strengthen capability and capacity to improve support of VDVS staff and their services delivery
 - VDVS IT networks and applications designed to meet VITA standards
-



Fulfilling the Compact



Lines of Effort

- *Communicate*
 - Communicate to veterans, their families, and the public through marketing, social media, videography
 - Improve awareness of VDVS as a primary Port of Entry to services
 - Service line enhancements
 - New Care Centers: Jones & Cabacoy and Puller Veterans Care Centers
 - Military Spouse Liaison
 - Women Veterans
 - Response to increased media inquiries
-

ATTACHMENT 4

Joint Leadership Council Report to JLC



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

101 N. 14th St., 17th Floor
RICHMOND VA 23219

*Air Force Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Fifth Baptist Veterans
Ministry
Iraq & Afghanistan
Veterans
of America
Korean War Veterans
Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers
Association
of America
Military Order of the
World Wars
Navy Mutual Aid
Association
Navy Seabee Veterans of
America
Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Officers
Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of
America
Virginia Army/Air
National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines
Association*

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES August 25, 2021

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as Acting Chair for the Joint Leadership Council. I am a member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Veteran Service Organization. I have been a member of the JLC since 2018.

I am a retired Marine Corps officer, having served 30 years.

The Joint Leadership Council met in person on July 14 at the Virginia War Memorial. This was our first in-person meeting since last year. We had an opportunity to thank Chairman Bill Ashton for his dedicated service to the JLC and for his leadership as Chairman. We plan to nominate a new Chairman and Vice Chairman at our September meeting.

During our July meeting, we received a briefing by Commissioner Maxwell on the lines of efforts supporting his strategic priorities and the objectives for achieving the goals in support of the Compact. We also received reports from the BVS and Veterans Service Foundation.

Members of the JLC presented their VSO legislative initiatives for the 2022 General Assembly Session. In total, we received ten initiatives for consideration. We will present them to the BVS as we did last year. We welcome discussion and feedback on the initiatives in preparation for our September meeting, during which we will vote on adoption of priorities and ranking.

There are 16 nominations submitted for JLC member appointments to fill upcoming vacancies. Many of our current members served their full terms and several more are requesting re-appointment. We are planning a swearing-in ceremony for all new appointments during the September meeting at the War Memorial. Until then, it is my honor and privilege to serve as Acting Chair and I remain committed to advocating for matters of concern on behalf of Virginia's Veterans.

Respectfully submitted,

Denice Williams
Acting Chairman

THE 25 ORGANIZATIONS OF THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL HAVE MORE THAN 250,000 MEMBERS

ATTACHMENT 5

VSF report to BVS



VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION

Report to the Board of Veterans Services

August 25, 2021

The Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VVSF) Board of Trustees has not held a meeting since the last Board of Veterans Services (BVS) meeting held on June 29, 2021. The next VVFS Board of Trustees meeting will be in person and scheduled for September 9, 2021 at the Virginia War Memorial. We are excited to have the opportunity to meet many of the VVSF trustees for the first time.

Work on various Foundation projects continues through the summer. The Procedures and Policies Committee met on July 27, 2021. The Committee Chair, Jack Lanier has been working closely with the VVSF staff to confirm all deadlines are met when updating various VVFS documents required for consideration at the first quarter board meeting. The Procedures and Policies Committee recommendations will be presented to the full Board for approval in September.

The Finance Committee with the guidance of the Committee Chair, Walter Stosch are working to finalize the various budget matters that need to be considered by the board for fiscal year 2022 (FY22).

The Development Committee Chair, Robin Beres has been working on a variety of articles and fundraising messages to be used for upcoming campaigns. With fundraising as a top priority, the Development Committee anticipate a busy year identifying the needed funding sources to help support the VDVS programs.

With COVID 19 restrictions easing, the return of Community Fundraisers events have started. This is a very welcome return for the Foundation. These events are essential for increasing revenue and providing outreach opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. There are two established events planned in September.

On September 17, 2021 the Knights of Columbus Assembly 3349 will hold the Dave Marchant Memorial Virginia Veterans Tournament at the Piankatank River Club in Hartfield, Virginia. The George C. Marshall MOAA Chapter will host their 13th Annual Golf Tournament at the Lexington Golf and Country Club on September 10, 2021. VVSF is very fortunate to have many dedicated and generous donors. They invest a great deal of their time and hard work to host fundraisers year after year.

The past months have been very challenging and the unexpected consequences of COVID 19 remains. The Foundation is committed to increasing revenue to meet the needs of all Virginia veterans. The Foundation looks forward to working with Commissioner Maxwell and the VDVS team as they evaluate and determine the level of support needed for veterans this year and in the future. A strong collaboration between the Foundation and VDVS will result in a positive outcome in assisting additional veterans through the programs and services offered through VDVS.

Overall donations and expenses are down in FY21, much of what can be attributed to the overall impact of the pandemic. A complete end of the year report will be provided to the trustees at the September 9, 2021 Board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Lesinski, Chairman
Veterans Services Foundation

ATTACHMENT 6

VWM Report to the BVS



Read-ahead information for the BVS meeting on Wednesday August 25, 2021

POC for the Virginia War Memorial Foundation: Pam Seay, President

Since the last BVS meeting, our focus has been on moving ahead with signature events while being prepared to take a step backwards if COVID indications dictate that.

Sips on the Skyline, scheduled for September 24, is our popular fund-and friend-raiser. This event allows us to thank our family of supporters and introduce the Memorial to a new generation and new community. Tickets are available on our website. We are grateful to our loyal sponsors who have come through with generous support to make this event happen. We welcome suggestions from BVS members as to potential attendees for this event. And of course, I hope to see you at the event.

Our *Leadership in America* lecture series was postponed during the construction of the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion and then suspended during COVID. But, we are coming out of a five-year hiatus with a real bang. Well-known author Rick Atkinson who has written extensively about World War II, West Point, and now the American Revolution, will be our speaker on October 6 as we re-launch this popular series. A book signing and light reception will follow the talk.

Public commemorations for the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and for POW/MIA day are organized. As always, we are grateful for help from our colleagues at DVS for promoting these important public events.

Our next Veteran art show will open September 13. Maureen Stewart, a ten-year Air Force Veteran will be our featured artist. The Veterans Art Gallery is a natural extension of our popular Mighty Pen Project which has provided free creative writing seminars to veterans for the last eight years.

Stay tuned for more information about "War in Pieces", a premiere of four one-act plays written by Veterans as part of our Mighty Pen Project. Our collaboration with Richmond's Firehouse Theater was another COVID casualty for a year but these compelling plays are now in rehearsal and will be presented in October.

I have reported before about an upcoming exhibition, *Who They Were: Lives Worth Knowing*, which will profile thirty individuals whose names are engraved on our Shrine. We hope this exhibition will encourage not only visitation, but also gifts of collections to the Memorial so that we can provide more context and background for other individuals memorialized here. I am pleased, and relieved, to report that the funding for the exhibit and the accompanying video and the exhibition film is coming along.

Certainly our Livestreams, Teachers Institutes and adult learning programs are the mainstay of our offerings. We never forget that we offer all of these programs as a way to honor our military veterans and to help a growing audience recognize their valor and sacrifice.

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