

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on September 9, 2021 at 10 a.m. at the Virginia War Memorial, 621 S. Belvidere St, Richmond VA 23220.

Members Present

- Richard Oertel, American Legion
- John Cooper, AMVETS
- Denice Williams, Disabled American Veterans
- Monti Zimmerman, Military Officers Association of America
- James Cuthbertson, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Vernon Peters, Military Order of the World Wars
- Michelle Ramos Domingue, Navy Mutual Aid Association
- Preston Curry, Paralyzed 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
- John Lesinski, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- John Maxwell, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- Thomas Wozniak, Air Force Association
- Michael Flanagan, Association of the United States Army
- William Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association (NOTE: participated by Zoom until approximately 10:45 a.m.)
- Lauren Augustine, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Robert Herbert, Legion of Valor
- James Barrett, Marine Corps League
- David Sitler, Reserve Association of America
- Perry Taylor, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Daniel Boyer, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Charles Montgomery, Vietnam Veterans of America

Alternates Present (representing their VSO)

- Richard Shook, Air Force Association
- Robert Sempek, Association of the United States Army
- Sha'ron Martin, Fleet Reserve Association
- John Clickener, Marine Corps League
- Terrance Moore, Reserve Association of America
- Rick Raskin, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America

Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)

- Bill Aramony, American Legion
- Richard Mansfield, AMVETS
- Mark Atchison, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Meredith Burns, Navy Mutual Aid Association

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Glendalynn Glover, DVS
- Brandi Jancaitis, DVS (via Zoom)
- Robert Jukic, DVS
- Matt Leslie, DVS
- Martina Murray, DVS
- Phillip Trezza, DVS
- Donna Williams, DVS
- Cassy Russell, Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
- Larry Jarrell, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- Karla Boughey, Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)

Guests

- Jay Marts, AMVETS
- Richard Van Norton, Jr., AMVETS

Items included in the Agenda Packet

- Draft Agenda
- Draft Minutes July 14, 2021 meeting
- BVS Report to JLC
- VSF Report to JLC
- VDVS Operations Update
- Summary/Voting Sheet for proposed initiatives
- Position Papers for:
 1. AMVETS-1, Suicide Prevention
 2. FRA-1, Partial Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income
 3. FRA-2, State Veterans Cemeteries – Spousal Burial Fees
 4. FRA-3, Grant to assist recipients of post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits
 5. MCL-1, VSO Color and Honor Guards
 6. MOAA-1, Income Tax Deduction for low-income veterans
 7. MOAA-2, Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses
 8. VaA/ANGEA-1, Grants for Employers who hire National Guard and Reserves
 9. VNGA-1, Income Tax Deduction for National Guard Members
 10. VNGA-2, Free Entry to State Parks for National Guard Members

Call to Order

Acting Chairman Denice Williams called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Thoughts and meditation

The JLC Chaplain, Mr. Kevin Hoffman, provided thoughts and meditation, recognizing the legacy of service of former JLC member Don Kaiserman, who recently passed away.

Roll Call of VSOs, Quorum Determination, and Introduction of Guest

The roll was called, and 17 of the 20 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. The three *ex officio* members were recorded as present.

Chairman Williams asked the guests to introduce themselves. Their names and organizational affiliation are recorded above.

Approval of the Agenda (Attachment 1)

Chairman Williams asked for a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. John Clickener made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Monti Zimmerman, to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Approve July 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Williams asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 14, 2021 meeting as drafted. Mr. Rick Raskin made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. John Clickener, to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Reports / Updates

Chairman Williams turned the floor over to Chairman Michael Dick from the Board of Veteran Services (BVS) for his report.

BVS Report (Attachment 2)

Chairman Dick provided an overview of the Board's August 25 meeting, noting the continued work by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) on the agency strategic plan and how, as a key stakeholder in the Plan, the BVS will work to assist VDVS in developing metrics to measure agency progress in achieving objectives.

Chairman Dick discussed the BVS review of the JLC's potential initiatives for the 2022 session. He said that Board members hailed the initiative related to suicide prevention as a critical effort for the Commonwealth and was going to send a letter to the Governor and General Assembly supporting the creation of a dedicated suicide prevention position in VDVS. He noted that the Board was also in favor of the recommendation of funding to cover the cost of the spousal burial fee at Virginia state cemeteries, and that Board members provided suggested ways to improve or clarify the recommended actions within several other proposals.

VSF Report (Attachment 3)

Chairman John Lesinski of the Veterans Services (VSF) reported that the VSF had not met since the last JLC meeting on July 14, but that the Foundation was scheduled to meet immediately following today's JLC meeting.

Chairman Lesinski said that the relaxation of some COVID-related restrictions was welcome news for the Foundation, as it signaled the return of community fundraising events, which are essential for

increasing revenue and providing outreach opportunities. He noted two scheduled golf tournaments: the Dave Marchant Memorial Virginia Veterans Tournament at the Piankatank River Club in Hartfield on September 17 and the George C. Marshall MOAA Chapter's annual tournament at the Lexington Golf and Country Club on September 10.

VDVS Operational Update (*Attachment 4*)

Commissioner John Maxwell provided an overview VDVS operations. He noted that Ms. Jasmine Scott, a U.S. Army veteran, joined the VDVS team on August 25 as the new Women Veterans Program Assistant Manager. He said that VDVS would onboard the newly-created Military Spouse Liaison tomorrow (September 10).

Commissioner Maxwell stated that the annual *Commonwealth's Patriot Day Ceremony* would be held at the Virginia War Memorial on September 11 at 11 a.m. He invited the members to attend.

Commissioner Maxwell recognized Mr. Matt Leslie, Deputy Director of the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program, and asked him to provide an update on housing for veterans, evictions, and actions at the federal and state level.

Mr. Leslie noted that a recent decision by the Supreme Court had ended the CDC's eviction moratorium, but the Virginia General Assembly recently passed protections that last until June 2022 which include working with the Virginia Rent Relief Program.

The Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP) is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development and provides rental assistance to households in need (including veterans).

He encouraged JLC members to share information about the Virginia Rent Relief Program with their members. Go to <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp> for more information.

Proposed Initiatives for 2022

Chairman Williams directed the members to the *Proposed 2022 Initiatives – Summary and Voting Sheet* included in the agenda packet.

The members then proceeded to vote on whether to adopt the proposed initiatives as JLC initiatives for 2022, and then on the ranking (priority) of each initiative. The table on the next page presents a summary of the voting.

**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Proposed 2022 Initiatives – Summary and Voting Sheet**

Order (in your packet)	VSO	Proposal Identifier	Subject	Include in 2022 JLC Package?	Priority?
1	AMVETS	AMVETS-1	Suicide Prevention	Yes. 17 Y – 0 N	1
2	Fleet Reserve Association	FRA-1	Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income	No. 4 Y – 13 N	N/A
3	Fleet Reserve Association	FRA-2	State Veterans Cemeteries – Spousal Burial Fees	Yes. 14 Y – 3 N	4
4	Fleet Reserve Association	FRA-3	Grant to assist recipients of Post-9/11 GI Bill Education Benefits	No. 5 Y – 10 N – 2A	N/A
5	Marine Corps League	MCL-1	VSO Color and Honor Guards	Yes. 11 Y – 6 N	3
6	Virginia Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America	MOAA-1	Income Tax Deduction for low-income Veterans	Withdrawn by MOAA	N/A
7	Virginia Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America	MOAA-2	Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses	Yes. 16 Y – 1 N	2
8	Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association	VaA/ANGEA-1	Grants for Employers Who Hire National Guard and Reserves	Yes. 14 Y – 3 N	5
9	Virginia National Guard Association	VNGA-1	Income Tax Deduction for National Guard members	Yes. 10 Y – 7 N	7
10	Virginia National Guard Association	VNGA-2	Free entry to state parks for Guard members	Yes. 11 Y – 6 N	6

New Business and Open Discussion

Chairman Williams and Commissioner Maxwell presented Governor's Appointment Certificates and Governor's pins to Mr. Monti Zimmerman, Mr. Vernon Peters, Mr. Robert Barnette, and Ms. Michelle Ramos Domingue. The certificates and pins are for appointments made by Governor Northam in late 2020/early 2021.

Mr. Combs recognized Mr. Larry Jarrell, the Military and Veterans Program Manager for the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Adjourn

Chairman Williams adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m. The next meeting is Wednesday, December 15 at 10 a.m. at the Richmond Times-Dispatch Building, 8460 Times-Dispatch Boulevard, Mechanicsville VA 23116.

ATTACHMENT 1

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
September 9, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Virginia War Memorial
621 S. Belvidere St, Richmond VA 23220

AGENDA

- I. Opening & Pledge of Allegiance – *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (10:00 – 10:05)
- II. Opening Thoughts & Meditation, *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chaplain* (10:05 – 10:10)
- III. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, and introduction of guests – *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
- IV. Approve Agenda – *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (10:15 – 10:20)
- V. Approve July 14, 2021 meeting minutes – *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (10:20 – 10:25)
- VI. Reports (10:25 – 10:50)
 - 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. JLC 2022 Initiatives – *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (10:50 – 11:50)
 - a. VSO Sponsors will present their VSO proposed initiative(s)
 - b. JLC Acting Chairman Denice Williams will share BVS feedback/suggestions
 - c. JLC members will vote on whether to adopt (approve) the proposed initiatives
 - d. JLC members will then vote to prioritize the adopted initiatives
- VIII. New Business and Open Discussion, *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (11:50-12:00)
- IX. Public comment period – *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (12:00-12:05)
- X. Closing Remarks and Prepare for next meeting – *Denice Williams, Acting JLC Chairman* (12:05 – 12:15)
- XI. Adjourn (12:15)

ATTACHMENT 2

Board of Veterans Services Report



101 N. 14TH STREET, 17TH FL.
RICHMOND, VA 23219

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL September 9, 2021

*Michael Dick,
Chairman
Thuraya Kent,
Vice Chairman
Victor Angry
Cari Bedell
Senator John Bell
Cari Bess
Paige Cherry
Jenny Dye
Mario Flores
Delegate Buddy Fowler
Delegate Dan Helmer
James O. Icenhour, Jr.
John Lesinski
Senator Mamie Locke
Delegate Kathleen
Murphy
Kathy Owens
Senator Bryce Reeves
Delegate Marcus Simon
Denice Williams
Acting Chair, Joint
Leadership Council of
Veterans Service
Organizations
Jack Lanier
2nd Vice Chair, Veterans
Services Foundation
Linda Schreiner,
Chairman, Virginia
War Memorial
Foundation
John Maxwell,
Commissioner, Virginia
Department of
Veterans Services*

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) met in person at the Virginia War Memorial on August 25. Due to the pandemic, this was our first in-person meeting since November 2019. Although not every member was able to attend, it was good to be back together again.

During our meeting, VDVS Commissioner John Maxwell provided an operational update and presented a briefing on efforts to achieve the department's strategic priorities. He discussed the Compact with Virginia's Veterans and discussed the lines of effort, within each objective, leading toward established goals. The lines of effort included suicide prevention, technological improvements, capacity to meet increasing numbers of veterans and family members requiring services, agency infrastructure needs, and strategic communication improvements. As a key stakeholder in the VDVS Strategic Plan, the Board will form a working group to assist VDVS in developing metrics to measure agency progress in achieving objectives.

The JLC Acting Chair, Ms. Denice Williams, presented the ten JLC proposed initiatives for consideration and feedback by the Board. Members received the initiatives as read-ahead material and came prepared to offer input. The Board members hailed the initiative related to suicide prevention as a critical effort for the Commonwealth. The Board is also in favor of the recommendation of funding to cover the cost of the spousal burial fee at Virginia state cemeteries. Other input by Board members addressed ways to improve or clarify the recommended actions within the proposals. The Board looks forward to reviewing the final drafts along with the recommended priorities of the adopted initiatives.

Finally, the Board held elections for the position of Chair and Vice-Chair. It is my honor to announce our new Vice Chair, Ms. Thuraya Kent. Ms. Kent is serving in her first term as a Board member. She is a retired Navy Captain and will provide tremendous leadership for the Board. I was also humbled and honored to accept the Board's nomination and vote for continued service as Chairman for my second term. I look forward to working with the JLC to advocate for Virginia's Veterans and their families during the upcoming 2022 General Assembly session.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Michael Dick
Chairman

ATTACHMENT 3
Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Report



VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION
Report to the Joint Leadership Council
September 9, 2021

The Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VVSF) Board of Trustees has not held a Board of Trustees meeting since the last Joint Leadership Council meeting of July 14, 2021. The next VVFS Board of Trustees meeting will be in person and scheduled for later today, September 9, 2021, also at the Virginia War Memorial. We are excited to have the opportunity to meet many of the VVFS trustees in-person for the first time.

Work on various VVFS projects continue through the summer. The Procedures and Policies Committee met jointly with the Finance Committee on August 31, 2021. Procedures and Policies Committee Chair, Jack Lanier has been working closely with VVFS 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 is 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 will have a busy year identifying the needed funding sources to support the DVS 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 and October.

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. VVFS is very fortunate to have many dedicated and generous supporters. They invest a great deal of their time, and work hard to host fundraisers year after year.

Commissioner Maxwell and the VDVS Directors are diligently working to prepare for the needs of veterans. VVSF is preparing for the financial means that may be needed in the future.

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. VVSF looks forward to working with Commissioner Maxwell and the VDVS team as they work to determine the level of support needed for veterans in the upcoming years. A strong collaboration between the VVSF and VDVS will result in identifying and assisting additional veterans through the programs and services of VDVS.

Overall donations were down for the Foundation 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 4
VDVS Operations 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
Joint Leadership Council
September 9, 2021

On August 25, Ms. Jasmine Scott joined the VDVS team as the new Women Veterans Program Assistant Manager. Ms. Scott is a US Army veteran and former Logistics Officer. She will increase the agency's bandwidth to reach women veterans, build support and enhance access to services.

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 has seen a steady uptick in the past few months in requests for security deposits and first month's rent, funding for which comes from monies donated to the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF). In addition, the Supportive Services for Veterans Families providers needed significant funds for hotel stays due to shortage of shelter beds from social distancing requirements. The VSF 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%).

The Cemeteries division had another record month in July with 212 interments and is anticipating elevated numbers of interments in FY22. 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 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) reported a 19% increase in unique students receiving stipend funds and exhausted funding for the first time to supply the VMSDEP stipends.

VDVS's Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) 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 established and well-known Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program.

V3 Transition will 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 service members that used the Boots 2 Suits services responded they plan to remain in Virginia upon separation.

Census at the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) is approximately 75% and continues to grow slowly. At Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC), census is hovering just under 80%. The SBVCC emergency generator replacement project will be 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.

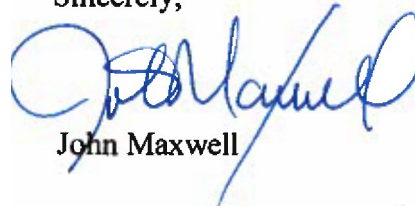
The Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center (Virginia Beach) and Puller Veterans Care Center (Vint Hill, Fauquier County) continue to make progress. The Vint Hill site has had some significant rain events in the past six weeks which slowed construction progress.

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. 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". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent and the last name "Maxwell" following in a similar style. The signature is positioned above the printed name "John Maxwell".

John Maxwell