

**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 21, 2024**

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on March 21, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. at the Virginia War Memorial, 621 S. Belvidere Street, Richmond.

**Members Present- In Person**

- Richard Shook, Air Force Association
- Rich Mansfield, Air Force Sergeants Association
- William Aramony, American Legion
- Sha'ron D. Martin, Fleet Reserve Association
- Monti Zimmerman, Military Officers Association of America
- Mark Atchison, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Vernon Peters, Military Order of the World Wars
- Preston Curry, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Terrence Moore, Reserve Association of America
- Katherine Martinez, Student Veterans of America
- Rick Raskin, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Carl Holcomb, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
- Kevin Hoffman, Virginia National Guard Association
- Jose Ramos, Wounded Warrior Project
- Joyce Henderson, representing the Board of Veterans Services
- Brad Williamson, Chair, Veterans Services Foundation
- Chuck Zingler, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services

**Members Present - Zoom**

- Denice Williams, Disabled American Veterans
- Jack Hilgers, Legion of Valor
- Michelle Ramos Domingue, Navy Mutual Aid Association

**Members Absent**

- Glenn Yarborough, Association of the United States Army
- Thad Jones, Fifth Baptist Church Veterans Ministry
- John Clickener, Marine Corps League
- Dan Karnes, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Ann Crittenden, Women Marines Association

**Alternate Members attending, representing their VSO**

- Michael Flanagan, Association of the United States Army
- David Jennings, Marine Corps League

- Perry Taylor, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Patricia Fitzgerald, Women Marines Association

**Alternates Present (in person) not representing their VSO**

- William Feasanmyer, American Legion
- Joanne Smith, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Jay Marts, Virginia National Guard Association

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

- Rich Rinaldo, Legion of Valor
- John Down, Military Officers Association of America

**Commonwealth of Virginia Officials and Board Members Present**

- Delegate Jackie Glass
- Jordan Stewart, Assistant Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Monique Brabham, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Tramaine Carroll-Payne, DVS
- Steven Combs, DVS
- Kendra Ellison, DVS
- Jasmine Gore, DVS
- Brandi Jancaitis, DVS
- Eric Johnson, DVS
- Kayla LaFond, DVS
- Ravi Padma, DVS
- Catie Robertson, Senate Finance and Appropriation Committee
- Kayla Arestivo, Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)
- Mike Coleman, VSF
- Tim Pillion, VSF

**Guests**

- MacKenzie Heidelberg, Office of Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger
- Robert Pryor, Office of Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan
- Matthew Klym, AMVETS
- Lance Leshner, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Doris Wollett, VFW
- Brent Nagle, VFW
- Robert Poles, various VSOs
- Michael Scholewer
- Justin Lehew, LOV National Commander (virtual)
- Michael Sopko

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

- Draft Agenda
- Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Operations Update
- Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Report to JLC
- Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Report to JLC
- JLC 2024 Work Plan (Revised)

### **Item I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance**

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Chair Kevin Hoffman called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. Vice Chairman Monti Zimmerman led the JLC in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Item II. Opening thoughts and meditation**

JLC Chaplain Mark Atchison provided thoughts and meditation.

### **Item III. Roll Call of VSOs, Quorum Determination, and Introduction of Guests**

The roll was called, and 17 of the 23 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being physically present, therefore a quorum was determined. Four VSOs participated electronically as recorded, bringing the total to 21 of 23 VSOs. The Board of Veterans Services, Veterans Services Foundation, and the Department of Veterans Services were recorded as present.

### **Item IV. Approve Agenda**

Mr. Sha'ron Martin made a **motion, seconded** by Ms. Katherine Martinez, to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote. The approved agenda is attached.

### **Item V. Approve December 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Rick Raskin made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Sha'ron Martin, to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **Item VII. Reports.** Chairman Hoffman asked the BVS and VSF to deliver their reports.

- a. Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Report: BVS member Joyce Henderson delivered the BVS report, which is attached to the minutes.
- b. Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Report: VSF Chairman Brad Williamson delivered the VSF report, which is attached to the minutes.

### **Item VI. Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) Operational Update**

Commissioner Charles (Chuck) Zingler delivered the VDVS Operational Update. A copy of the VDVS Operational Update and Commissioner Zingler's PowerPoint presentation is attached.

### **Item VIII. JLC Initiatives**

- a. After Action Review – 2024 Session: Chairman Hoffman led the after-action review of JLC initiatives from the 2024, reviewing successes and lessons learned. A copy of Chairman Hoffman’s presentation is attached to these minutes.

Assistant Secretary Jordan Stewart recognized Delegate Jackie Glass and her significant support for the Strategic Plan, noting that three of her compact bills passed during the 2024 General Assembly Session. The members expressed their appreciation for Delegate Glass’ efforts.

Delegate Glass highlighted the importance that veteran-related bills tie back to the Strategic Plan for a unified approach.

- b. Call for potential 2025 Initiatives:
  - Virginia National Guard Association – Guard tuition
  - Student Veterans of America – four initiatives
  - Veterans of Foreign Wars – claims sharks
  - Military Officers Association of America – state veterans cemeteries
  - American Legion – Specialty Dockets

### **Item IX. New Business**

- a. Report of the Constitution and Bylaws Review Committee
- b. Review of JLC member terms and nomination/appointment process
- c. Revisions to the JLC 2024 Work Plan
- d. Nominating Committee requests candidates for Chair & Vice Chair
- e. Other New Business, Open Discussion, and “Good of the Order

### **Item X. Public Comment Period**

No members of the public spoke during the comment period.

### **Item XI. Closing Remarks**

JLC Chair Kevin Hoffman thanked the members for their work on behalf of Virginia veterans and families.

### **Item XII. Adjourn**

Chair Hoffman adjourned the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

## APPROVED AGENDA

### Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations

March 21, 2023

10:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Virginia War Memorial

- I. Opening, Meeting Notes, and Pledge of Allegiance – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (10:30 – 10:35)
- II. Opening Thoughts & Meditation, *Mark Atchison, JLC Chaplain* (10:35 – 10:38)
- III. Roll call and introduction of member, quorum determination, and introduction of guests – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (10:38 – 10:45)
- IV. Approve Agenda – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (10:45 – 10:46)
- V. Approve December 14, 2023 meeting minutes – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (10:46 – 10:47)
- VI. Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Operational Update – *Chuck Zingler, DVS Commissioner* (10:47 – 11:17)
- VII. Reports (11:17 – 11:25)
  - a. Board of Veterans Services (BVS) – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman*
  - b. Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) – *Brad Williamson, VSF Chairman*
- VIII. JLC Initiatives (11:25 – 11:45)
  - a. After Action Review – 2024 Session – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman*
  - b. Call for potential 2025 Initiatives – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman*
- IX. New Business (11:45 – 12:05)
  - a. Report of the Constitution and Bylaws Review Committee – *Monti Zimmerman, Committee Chair*
  - b. Review of JLC member terms and nomination/appointment process – *Steven Combs, DVS*
  - c. Revisions to JLC 2024 Work Plan – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman*
  - d. Nominating Committee requests candidates for Chair & Vice Chair – *Sha'ron Martin, Committee Chair*
  - e. Other New Business, Open Discussion, and “Good of the Order” reports – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman*
- X. Public comment period – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (12:05 – 12:10)
- XI. Closing remarks – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (12:10 – 12:15)
- XII. Adjourn (12:15)



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Department of Veterans Services*

Charles M. Zingler  
Commissioner

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

### **Virginia Department of Veterans Services Update for the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations March 21, 2024**

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to deliver my first update to the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) as Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veteran Services (DVS). It conjures a very similar feeling of purpose, pride, honor, and challenge to my nearly 30 years of service. Like those days, we work with a committed and trained team anxious to serve others. In this case, we serve our nation, but more specifically our brothers and sisters in arms – our Veterans, their families, their survivors, and our service members soon to be transitioning to a new career, and hopefully a new and successful life journey.

In my short two months aboard, I have seen many challenges that face our Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF).

The industry that supports Veterans is large, complex, and difficult to navigate. I can imagine that it would seem exhausting and discouraging to all of us. We have accepted as our mission to take this on, every day. We at DVS will work to help make it work for our SMVF.

While our veterans have earned benefits for your service, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is still working with old technology and processes (appointments, telephones, and one-on-one meetings & interviews). I can only imagine how many failed calls, hang-ups, or times put on hold can be tolerated.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has invested in the Virginia Department of Veterans Services to directly aid our SVMF through their needs. We are working hard to deliver new technologies and programs to expedite the timelines to get support. We are working on a better transition assistance program to coach and mentor transitioning service members and their spouses through career change, education, and training. We have experts that work with them to prepare benefits claims for what I believe is the highest success rate in the country.

We have a focused team of professionals trained on services facing the most distressed in our Veteran community: addiction counseling, suicide prevention options, avenues to access low-cost housing and to transition from homelessness to permanent supportive housing, food, clothing, and reintegration after

time in jail or prison. We help our SMVF navigate healthcare and access to a broad range of providers across the state and nation.

BUT, we can't serve and support our SMVF if we don't know them. Here in Virginia, like most states (and the federal VA), it is assessed that roughly 30% of our veterans, let alone family members, are known. So, in this first report to you, I want to share later this spring DVS will be unveiling a new portal called the Virginia Veterans Network that will connect our SMVF to:

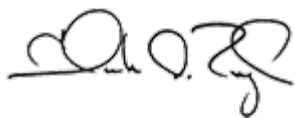
- Thousands of Vet-friendly businesses, healthcare providers, and services;
- Programs that honor our history, Servicemen and Women;
- Veteran directed community programs across the Commonwealth;
- New capabilities and service offerings at our skilled nursing facilities, VA hospitals, and community-based outpatient clinics;
- Podcasts that explain our programs how you can leverage them for your benefit; and
- Upcoming events at our memorials, cemeteries, and museums.

We want our SMVF to know specifics on the new services we are working on, and the new laws and policies our Governor and our General Assembly are working to help our entire military and veteran community. Registering in this new portal will give us the opportunity to do just that while connecting our SMVF to additional statewide resources.

In ending, I look forward to getting to meet and speak with you and the VSOs you represent over the coming weeks, months, and years. While I am familiar with your honored history, I want to know you. We at DVS want to know you. We want this to be a forum for you to give us your feedback; the good, the bad and the ugly. Only then can we truly see you and your members ... and serve you.

My commitment to you is that we will work every day to serve you and your families. We will listen to understand you and your experience, and especially your frustrations. We will listen to you to measure our successes, but also our areas for improvement. For those who have not been served well, we will work to re-earn your trust. And we will never fail to give our best.

Thank you for your significant service to our Nation and may God bless you, your families, and your loved ones.



Charles (Chuck) Zingler  
Commissioner



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

## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

Michael Dick,  
Chairman  
Victor Angry  
David Ashe  
Delegate Jason Ballard  
Carl Bedell  
Joe R. Campa  
Delegate Mike Cherry  
Scott Davidson  
Robert Eisiminger  
Mario Flores  
Delegate Buddy Fowler  
Vincent Griffith  
Joyce Henderson  
Carlton Kent  
John Lesinski  
Senator Mamie Locke  
Terence E. McKnight  
Matthew Miller  
Senator Bryce Reeves  
Melissa Watts  
Kevin Hoffman,  
Chair, Joint  
Leadership Council of  
Veterans Service  
Organizations  
Brad Williamson,  
Chair, Veterans  
Services Foundation  
Rick St. John  
Chair, Virginia War  
Memorial  
Foundation  
Charles Zingler,  
Commissioner, Virginia  
Department of  
Veterans Services

### REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL March 21, 2024

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) met on December 15, 2023, at the Virginia War Memorial.

DVS Commissioner Gade gave an overview of the *Statewide Strategic Plan 2024 – 2029 Making Virginia the Best State for Veterans*. He noted that the plan included budget and legislative recommendations in preparation for the 2024 General Assembly session.

Mr. Michael Coleman, representing the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF), presented the VSF report

Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Vice Chair Monti Zimmerman reviewed the four JLC Initiatives for the 2024 General Assembly session.

Chairman Michael Dick and the BVS legislative members reviewed the upcoming General Assembly Session. Senator Bryce Reeves, co-chair of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus (GAMVC) noted that GAMVC meetings would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of session.

Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF) Chair Kathy Owens called the members attention to the VWMF Fall 2023 newsletter and highlighted some of the recent and upcoming programming at the Virginia War Memorial.

Dr. Sarah Burgos, PhD, Curator of the Museum of the Virginia National Guard (MVANG), and Brigadier General Todd Hubbard, Director of the Virginia National Guard Joint Staff, delivered an update on the MVANG.

The BVS adopted its 2024 work plan. The next scheduled meeting is June 20 at the Virginia War Memorial, but BVS may hold a virtual meeting in April focused on BVS work group efforts for 2024.

The terms of legislative members Senator John Bell and Delegate Kathleen Murphy ended in January. We look forward to welcoming their successors.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Dick  
Chairman





**VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICE FOUNDATION**  
**Report to the Joint Leadership Council**  
**March 21, 2024**

The Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees will hold their quarterly meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond, Virginia.

There has been one new appointee to the Board, Mr. Craig Colucci. Mr. Colucci is a Governor appointee and a Lieutenant Colonel US Army (Retired). Currently a business owner based out of Virginia Beach, Mr. Colucci has dedicated his life to serving our great nation and is a longtime supporter of veterans. We are proud to have him join us.

VSF is currently seeking to fill 5 vacancies on our Board, as well as find 2 replacements for expired appointments.

The Foundation's Executive Director has produced new initiatives for the branding of the foundation as well as its fundraising strategy. The Director continues to work alongside the Chairman and Strategic Planning Consultants in efforts to maximize fundraising momentum.

Financially, the Foundation is on sound footing with a balance at the end of January 2024, of \$3,187,145.13. We are in planning for the FY25 budget and will meet with DVS key stakeholders on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April to discuss upcoming financial needs.

The Foundation has launched a new CRM system to help retain donor information in a more efficient and safe manner. We have also hired a new grant writer to support the Foundation's efforts to be awarded more funding from both grants and corporate sponsorships.

The next VSF Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2024, at a location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kayla Arestivo  
Executive Director  
Virginia Veterans Services Foundation

# JLC 2024 Work Plan

## 2024 General Assembly (10 Jan – 28 Feb 2024)

- Attend JLC Day ICW **JLC Meeting 1** (VFW Post 9808 Link-Up)
- Attend Virginia National Guard Reception 17JAN (Optional)
- Attend GAMVC Reception ICW JLC Meeting (Date TBD, Optional)
- Attend GAMVC meeting every Wednesday at 0800 starting 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday
- Implement duty roster to provide coverage during the entire session

## First Quarter Meeting (21 March 2024)

- Conduct AAR of 2024 General Assembly actions
- Call for potential 2025 legislation.
- Report of the Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee
- Nominating Committee requests candidates for Chair & Vice Chair

## April – June

- Identify potential initiatives
- Research impacts from previous session
- Submit draft proposals for review
- 30 days out – 2025 potential initiatives distributed
- VSOs socialize with their members for feedback and suggestions

## Second Quarter Meeting (27 June 2024)

- JLC Sponsors present to the body
- Initiatives are initially accepted or rejected to move forward
- Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair

## July – August

- Updated position papers for all 2025 initiatives sent to JLC members and posted on JLC webpage
- JLC Chair submits JLC 2025 Initiatives to VDVS Commissioner

## Third Quarter Meeting (19 September 2024)

- Adopt 2025 Initiatives
- Approve Appointed Officers for 2024 - 2025
- Discuss plan for engagement with Executive and Legislative branch officials prior to and during 2025 General Assembly session

## **November – December**

- Distribute list of legislators (and legislators-elect) to JLC members with “contact assignments” for each JLC member to contact 5-7 legislators or legislators-elect about the JLC and its 2025 Initiatives
- Sponsors find and confirm patrons for JLC 2025 initiatives
- Hold VSO legislative forums; participate in legislators’ forums/town halls
- NLT November 30: JLC Chair submits Annual Report to VDVS Commissioner and Board of Veterans Services

## **Fourth Quarter Meeting (On/around December 12, 2024)**

- Review Governor’s Proposed Budget
- Receive DVS Agency proposed budget and legislation
- Review and approve any additional 2025 initiatives
- Review list of potential patrons
- Brief election results and impacts