

**Board of Veterans Services  
Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)  
September 11, 2025**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (the BVS) was held on September 11, 2025 at 10 a.m. at the Virginia War Memorial.

**Members Present**

1. Matthew Miller, BVS Chairman
2. Jennifer Carroll-Foy (virtual)
3. Tara Durant
4. Robert Eisiminger
5. Claudia Flores
6. Malcolm Frost (virtual)
7. Vanessa Gattis
8. Jackie Glass
9. Joyce Henderson
10. Kevin Hoffman
11. Carlton Kent (virtual)
12. Terrence McKnight
13. Kayla Owen
14. Russet Perry (virtual)
15. Jeri Prophet
16. Wendell Warner
17. Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services
18. Bill Aramony, Joint Leadership Council (virtual)
19. Joel Griffin, Veterans Services Foundation
20. Pamela Seay, Virginia War Memorial Foundation

**Members Absent**

1. Michael Feggans
2. Scott Davidson
3. Joe Campa
4. Vincent Griffith
5. Jason Ballard
6. Joshua Thomas

**Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present**

1. Joyce Reed, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
2. Kendra Ellison, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
3. Nikia Clay, DVS
4. Cecil Graham, DVS
5. Dara Hechter, DVS (virtual)
6. Patrice Jones, DVS

7. Griffin Ramsey, DVS
8. Darius McKenney, Veterans Services Foundation
9. Jonathan Patrick, DVS
10. Chase Stanga, DVS
11. Jamaal Swain, DVS
12. Gariel Wilkerson, DVS

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

- Draft Agenda
- DVS Update for the Board of Veterans Services
- Virginia Veterans Network Update
- VETE Update to the BVS
- SOS Update to the BVS
- JLC Update to the BVS
- VSF Update to the BVS
- VWMF Update to the BVS

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

Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Chair Matthew Miller called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and led the BVS in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

The roll was called, and 14 members were represented in person and a physical quorum was determined. There were no objections to five members joining virtually. One member (Ms. Henderson) arrived in person shortly after the meeting started, bringing the total number of members physical assembled to 15 of 26 members present, with five members virtually present, for a total of 20 of 26 members present.

The names of the state officials and guests who were present are listed above.

**Item III. Approve Agenda** Ms. Prophet made a **motion, seconded** by Ms. Gattis, to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous assent. The approved agenda is attached.

#### **Item IV. Approve March 20, 2025 and April 25, 2025 meeting minutes**

Senator Durant made a **motion, seconded** by Ms. Owen, to approve the minutes of the meetings. The motion carried by unanimous assent

#### **V. Introduction of DVS staff and guests**

Chairman Miller called on Deputy Commissioner Combs to introduce DVS staff and asked other guests to introduce themselves.

#### **Item VI. DVS Operational Update**

- a. DVS Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs delivered the Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) Operational Update. He highlighted the growth of the Virginia Veterans Network platform and the new features on the digital hub. The Deputy Commissioner also highlighted upcoming events at the Virginia War Memorial including a new exhibit and celebrations for the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthdays of both the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps.
- b. Data Analyst, Chase Stanga highlighted the new features of the Virginia Veterans Network 2.0. He described a virtual artificial intelligence chatbot that the platform will launch after it undergoes testing. Mr. Stanga explained that the chatbot will support veterans in real-time and will be a great example for other state agencies interested in launching their own chatbot.
- c. Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Jonathan Patrick, presented updates about the Suicide Prevention and Opioid Addiction Services (SOS) program. The Suicide Prevention and Opioid Addiction Services (SOS) team led national training sessions this summer and is preparing for veteran-specific death reviews in partnership with the Chief Medical Examiner's Office.

#### **Item VII. DVS Operational Update (continued)**

- a. Cecil Graham, Central/Southwest, V3 Regional Program Manager, presented the Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment (VETE) Update. The Transition & Employment program is working to create new virtual hiring events, and the launch of OnDemand training modules to support employment readiness for transitioning service members. He also highlighted the Virginia Veterans Laptop Project, which provides refurbished laptops available to Active Duty Service Members, Veterans and Military Spouses.
- b. Virginia War Memorial Director, Clay Mountcastle, presented two options for the name inscription of the new Carillon Memorial. He requested board member feedback for the criteria by which someone would be eligible to have their name on the memorial.

#### **Item VII. Reports**

- a. Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Chair Bill Aramony delivered the JLC report.
- b. Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Vice Chair Joel Griffin delivered the VSF report.
- c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF) President Pamela Seay delivered the VWMF report.

#### **Item VIII. New Business**

- a. Good of the Order Reports:
  - a. Kayla Owen: Introduced herself as a new member of the board. She discussed the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). She discussed that line of duty deaths are not currently included in VMSDEP and

that there is some confusion with the residency requirements. She asked if the board is able to make a working group to advise on this issue

- b. Jackie Glass: Noted that she is interested in learning more about the data supporting the program

**Item X. Public Comment**

N/A

**Item XI. Closing remarks and prepare for next meeting**

Chairman Miller told the board that he plans to meet with each member and individually as he starts his tenure as chair and thanked everyone for attending.

**XII Adjourn**

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

**BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES (BVS)**  
**DRAFT AGENDA**

**September 11, 2025**  
**10-10:50 a.m. and 12-1 p.m.**  
**Virginia War Memorial**  
**621 S. Belvidere St**  
**Richmond VA 23220**

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Matt Miller, BVS Chairman* (10:00-10:02)
- II. Roll Call, Introduction of Members, and Quorum Determination – *Matt Miller, BVS Chairman* (10:02-10:10)
- III. Approval of Agenda – *Matt Miller, BVS Chairman* (10:10-10:11)
- IV. Approval of Minutes of the June 5, 2025 meetings– *Matt Miller, BVS Chairman* (10:11-10:12)
- V. Introduction of DVS staff and guests – *Matt Miller, BVS Chairman* (10:12-10:14)
- VI. DVS Operations Updates (10:14-10:50)
  - a. DVS Operations, Priorities, and Updates – *Steven Combs, DVS Deputy Commissioner*
  - b. VVN update – *Chase Stanga, VVN Data Analyst*
  - c. SOS update – *Monique Brabham, Deputy Director, Virginia Veteran and Family Support*

**ATTEND PATRIOT DAY CEREMONY – RECONVENE AT 12:00 (BOX LUNCHES AVAILABLE)**

- VII. DVS Operations Updates (continued) (12:00-12:20)
  - a. VETE – *Patrice Jones, Director*
  - b. Virginia War Memorial and Carillon – *Clay Mountcastle, Director*
- VIII. Reports (12:20-12:35)
  - a. Joint Leadership Council – *Bill Aramony, JLC Chair*
  - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Joel Griffin, VSF Chair or representative*
  - c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation Update – *Rick St. John, VWMF Chair or Pam Seay, VWMF President*
- IX. New Business (12:35-12:50)
  - a. “Good of the Order” reports from BVS members and open discussion
- X. Public Comment – *Matt Miller, BVS Chairman* (12:50-12:55)
- XI. Closing remarks and prepare for next meeting– *Matt Miller, BVS Chairman* (12:50-1:00)
- XII. Adjourn (1:00)

