

Veterans Home at Holyoke
Board of Trustees Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Veterans Home at Holyoke (HLY) was held virtually and telephonically on Tuesday October 14, 2025. The meeting began at 5:31 PM.

Board Members via Teams: Chairman Collins, Trustee Bigda, Trustee Mass, and Trustee Ostrander.

Present via Teams: Michael Lazo, Executive Director (HLY); Robert Engell, Executive Director (VET); Debra Foley, Communications (HLY); Glen Hevy Deputy Director (HLY); JM Sorrell, Ombudsperson; Mel Gentile, Chief Financial Officer (HLY); Ciara Hanlon, Budget Director (HLY); Diane Diezen, Chief Medical Officer (HLY); Jeff Lenahan, Quality Manger (HLY); Matt Deacon, Kelly Jones, Director of Nursing (HLY); Kathleen Denner, Recording Secretary

Roll Call: Chairman Collins conducted the Roll Call as follows: Trustee Bigda, Trustee Mass, Trustee Ostrander, and Chairman Collins.

Pledge of Allegiance: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: No public comment for this month.

Approval of May 13, 2025 and August 12, 2025 minutes: A motion was made by Trustee Ostrander to approve May 13, 2025 and August 12, 2025 Board Meeting minutes and it was seconded Trustee Bigda . No Discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes), and Trustee Collins (Yes). It was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of May 13, 2025 and the August 12, 2025, Board meetings.

Old Business:

Follow up on “Funds transition”

Chairman Collins reviewed the history of the funds transition and how the funds were going to be handled. The legislature passed new language, and the State Treasurer will receive donations into state operated accounts. Chairman Collins read a brief description of the materials that are attached and sent to the board. Trustee Bigda confirmed that we have no choice regarding this decision. Chairman Collins confirmed that we do not. Trustee Mass shared that the board had put in place ways to grow the trustee funds for the future of the Veterans Home and expenses will be more with the new Home. He reminded the board that we can solicit funds for the purpose of growth and that it is a reasonable expenditure to spend money on development to grow the funds. He understands that the staff cannot do the work because they are state employees, but he has been asking for an RFP for a development fund, and we are

volunteers so now we cannot do that. Trustee Mass continued that the only way to increase the funds it to get additional donations and we can only do that with development. He would like to be at the top of the list of board requests.

In accordance with Section 4 of Chapter 14 of the Acts of 2025 amended Section 40 of Chapter 6 of the general laws has to provide us clear direction to the Board of Trustees, The Massachusetts Veterans Home Holyoke votes to transfer all funds held in the UBS Wealth Management USA, a private bank into the Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust using the Holyoke Canteen, retain revenue expendable trust in the Holyoke Trustee Fund Expendable Trust established for this purpose.

Moved by Trustee Mass and Seconded by Trustee Bigda. No further discussion.
Roll Call Vote: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes), and Trustee Collins (Yes). It was unanimously voted to approve.

New Business:

Council Visit to Holyoke and Tour (Mr. Lazo and Mr. Engell)

Chairman Collins thought the tour of the new building was fantastic and that the new building is breathtaking. Mr. Lazo shared tours were appreciated. He continued that the groundbreaking ceremony was in August 2023 and thought that three years was a long time out and now we are 10 months away moving in. He shared that the board is always welcome for a tour. The veteran's personal space and the building is going to be amazing.

Construction Update (Mr. Lazo)

See above.

CFO/Treasurer Update (Ms. Gentile)

Ms. Gentile reviewed the attached Trustee Fund Spending plan for FY25 YTD and the FY26 proposed budget. Ms. Gentile shared that they are still without an auditor out of the statewide contract system. Trustee Mass commented on an interest line item can be deleted due to the vote taken earlier this evening we will not be receiving any interest. Trustee Mass asked if we still need to be performing independent audits since all the funds were transferred to the state. Ms. Gentile said she did not have the answer to that but she would be asking for clarity about that. Trustee Mass added that if the state wanted to perform the audit, they could have the state auditor do an investigation, and we would be open to that. Chairman Collins confirmed that the line item could be deleted.

Ms. Gentile reviewed the UBS account. Request of monies to the investment account, Chairman Collins said the checking account. Trustee Mass asked for clarity on the investment from the checking account. Ms. Gentile will find out if there is one account for investment and one account for checking and is awaiting clarification from A&F. Trustee Mass agrees with whatever the recommendation is from treasurer's office for standard policy.

Ms. Gentile shared the quote for the proposed veteran's day gifts of long sleeve shirts for the veterans. Ms. Gentile is asking for approval for the funding of approximately \$2,500.

There was a motion to spend approximately \$2,500 on t-shirts for shirts for the veterans. The motion was made by Trustee Bigda and was seconded by Trustee Ostrander.

Roll Call Vote: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes), and Trustee Collins (Yes). It was unanimously voted to approve.

Holyoke Veterans Home Executive Director Update (Mr. Lazo)

Mr. Lazo reported that the current census is 119 with three beds available. There are 125 on the waitlist. We have zero COVID positive veterans and only one staff with COVID. No changes to measles with none in Massachusetts. There are some surroundings states. Mr. Lazo shared that we are changing our isolation unit 2 South, turning it into a women's unit. We have three women on our waitlist that are approved and awaiting admission, with no appropriate space to bring them in. This will raise our available beds to 126.

Recreation team is doing a great job providing quality entertainment and activities. Weekly trips continue. The first care center spaghetti supper was held on the 17th for care center 4 and the next one is tomorrow for care center 3, very successful. We are planning Thanksgiving and Holiday meals.

Mr. Lazo thanked the sailors of the USS Constitution and USS Harford for coming to visit the Home during navy week. He also thanked the veteran community partners and the activities they sponsor for the veterans.

Mr. Lazo reported that the quality survey for the VA is coming up in January as long as the federal budget is corrected. We should have CMS at any time, the survey window will open in December, with government closed CMS should not happen too.

Mr. Lazo shared that the Pinnacle scores this month are 100% favorability rating, a 4.93 out of 5 recommend to other score and overall satisfaction score of five out of five. Staffing 366 employees, which is 318 FTE's, 96% of staff report to work. Number remains strong at 6.27 HPPD, RN is 1.11, LPN is .88, and CAN is 4.27. There are 7 new staff members with 5 being clinical

Mr. Lazo said there is a state hiring freeze, as of now most of our roles are exempted. We are at 98.7% organic staff for September.

Mr. Lazo continued that the capital improvement progress outside is scheduled to be complete by Thanksgiving. In current Home the elevators are wonky but are kept going.

Jered Sassen from the VA who is a National Service Officer who meets with veterans to assist with claims and benefits. He comes on the second Wednesday of the month.

Trustee Mass asked if at the next meeting an update for the Adult Day Health (ADH) for new building, interested in new hiring for that and training for ADH and how veterans in community can get on the waitlist. Could we have for the next meeting. Mr. Lazo shared that we pull together notes for the next meeting

Quality / KPI update (Jeff Lenahan)

Mr. Lenahan presented attached PowerPoint to Board.

Mr. Lenahan shared the Quality Initiatives for QAPI – getting CMS certified is completed so we retired that initiative and added Fall Reduction. They completed all the MDS retro submissions to CMS back to April 15 of 2025. Emily Moriarty completed a Root Cause Analyze course. Jodie Alaimo has completed her RAC-CT MDS CMS certification.

Mr. Lenahan shared the ongoing projects are CMS Certification Survey, VA survey, survey preparation, joint policies for the two Homes, facility assessment and QAPI plan, Flu and COVID vaccine distribution.

Change in Legislation on Funds

a. *SECTION 4. Section 40 of chapter 6 of the General Laws, amended*

i. *Requires vote of BOT to transfer Invested USB and Westfield Saving bank account to come into compliance of the law.*

See above.

Term of Trustee Jourdain is complete / Awaiting Nomination Chairman Collins

Chairman Collins shared that he has reviewed with Mr. Engell and we are awaiting clarity of how we will be moving forward due to Secretary Santiago's departure.

Next board meeting is scheduled for Veterans Day so we will schedule for Wednesday the 12th at 5:30 pm.


No Executive Session Scheduled for this meeting


Adjourn: Chairman Collins concluded the meeting.


Roll Call Vote: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes), and Trustee Collins (Yes). It was unanimously voted to end the meeting at 6:21 pm.


Respectfully submitted, Kathleen Denner, Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees


Attachments:

 BOT.QI.Oct 2025.pptx

 FY26 Trustee Fund Spending Plan.xlsx

 UBS Summary Report October.pdf

 veterans-10-9-tops.xls

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