

Veteran Advocate Nominating Committee

Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2023
2:00 - 3:30 pm

Date of meeting: Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Start time: 2:05 pm

End time: 3:25 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members participating remotely		Vote I*
1	Daniel Shark (chair) – Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)	X
2	Rep. Gerard J. Cassidy – Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs (VFA)	-
3	Brooke Doyle – Department of Mental Health (DMH)	X
4	Jeffrey Farnsworth – Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)	X
5	James C. Fratilillo – American Legion	X
6	Major General Gary W. Keefe – Mass. National Guard / Board of Trustees of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home	X
7	Bill LeBeau – Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)	X
8	Tom Lyons – Board of Trustees of the Chelsea Soldiers' Home	X
9	Cheryl Poppe – Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)	X
10	Sen. John Velis – Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs (VFA)	-

* (X) Voted in favor; (O) Opposed; (A) Abstained from vote; (-) Absent from meeting or during vote

Proceedings

Daniel Shark, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, called the meeting of the Veteran Advocate (VA) Nominating Committee to order at 2:05 pm. He welcomed members and explained that EOHHS Assistant Secretary Beckman had named him as her designee to chair the Committee. He noted that all votes taken during the meeting would be conducted via roll call.

Lauren Cleary, Associate General Counsel for EOHHS, provided an overview of the Open Meeting Law (OML). She explained the limitations related to Committee members' communications outside of a formal

Committee meeting on matters which might pertain to the Committee's work. She emphasized the importance of transparency, particularly during any executive sessions, and explained that documents and minutes from the Committee's meetings are part of the public record.

David Giannotti, Public Education and Communications Division Chief within the State Ethics Commission, provided the Committee with a brief overview of the state's conflict of interest and ethics regulations. He explained that members of the Committee are considered special state employees and are required to complete conflict of interest trainings. He detailed the restrictions placed on members by the nature of their service on the Committee and stressed that members should view the State Ethics Commission as a resource and should not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns related to potential conflicts of interest and any required disclosures. For additional details, refer to the meeting materials on the [Committee's webpage](#).

Commissioner Doyle joined the meeting at 2:30 pm.

Committee members briefly introduced themselves and their respective affiliations.

Assistant Secretary Shark highlighted the importance of the Committee's work and provided a brief overview of the statute creating the Office of the Veteran Advocate and the Committee responsible for nominating the three candidates for the Veteran Advocate position to the Attorney General, State Auditor, and the Governor. He explained that the Committee is responsible for submitting salary recommendations for the candidates, commensurate with their experience as well as similar state positions. He explained that any person appointed to the position of Veteran Advocate shall be selected without regard to political affiliation and on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in veteran welfare, justice, auditing, law, health care, management analysis, public administration and investigation or criminal justice administration.

Assistant Secretary Shark facilitated a discussion regarding potential options for sourcing qualified candidates, including working with EOHHS Human Resources to develop a job description for posting on MassCareers, engaging a talent acquisition firm, and soliciting recommendations from Committee members themselves. Members expressed support for an approach that prioritized the development and refinement of a job description by EOHHS and members of the Committee, before posting on MassCareers and disseminating broadly across a variety of sources, such as industry journals and weekly newsletters. In response to a suggestion from Secretary Poppe, Assistant Secretary Shark noted that, if possible, materials related to the creation of the Office of the Child Advocate would be shared to help guide the Committee's work in developing a job description for the Veteran Advocate.

Assistant Secretary Shark explained that a Mass.gov webpage and mailbox have been created for members of the public to submit general comments and questions for the Committee. He noted that the next Committee meeting would be scheduled for the following week on Tuesday, February 28 at 2pm.

Vote I to adjourn:

Assistant Secretary Shark requested a motion to adjourn. Adjutant LeBeau introduced the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lyons and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.