

Veteran Advocate Nominating Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2023

1:30 - 2:30 pm

Date of meeting: Thursday, March 9, 2023

Start time: 1:30 pm

End time: 2:30 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

| Members participating remotely | | Vote 1* | Vote 2 |
|--------------------------------|--|---------|--------|
| 1 | Daniel Shark (<i>chair</i>) – Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) | X | X |
| 2 | Sean Collins – Board of Trustees of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home | A | X |
| 3 | Brooke Doyle – Department of Mental Health (DMH) | - | X |
| 4 | Jeffrey Farnsworth – Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) | X | X |
| 5 | James C. Fratolillo – American Legion | X | X |
| 6 | Gary W. Keefe – Mass. National Guard | X | X |
| 7 | Bill LeBeau – Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) | X | X |
| 8 | Tom Lyons – Board of Trustees of the Chelsea Soldiers' Home | A | X |
| 9 | Bridget Plouffe – Office of Representative Cassidy (<i>designee of the Representative</i>) | X | X |
| 10 | Jon Santiago – Executive Office of Veterans' Services (EOVS) | A | X |
| 11 | Katie Verra / Gabe Adams-Keane – Office of Senator John Velis (<i>designees of the Senator</i>) | X | X |

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

Proceedings

Assistant Secretary Shark called the meeting of the Veteran Advocate Nominating Committee to order at 1:30 pm. He welcomed members and introduced the Committee's newest members, Brigadier General Sean Collins and EOVS Secretary Jon Santiago, who introduced themselves. Assistant Secretary Shark noted that all votes taken during the meeting would be conducted via roll call.

Committee staff provided a brief summary of the Open Meeting Law provisions related to serial communications, noting that members are encouraged to share any documents or resources directly with Committee staff and should refrain from sending emails to the entire Committee.

Vote 1 to approve the 2/28/2023 minutes: Assistant Secretary Shark requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Committee's previous meeting on February 28, 2023. Mr. Farnsworth introduced the motion, which was seconded by Adjutant LeBeau and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

Assistant Secretary Shark summarized the previous meeting, explaining that members had reviewed an initial draft of the Veteran Advocate job description developed by EOHHS and Human Resources. He noted that members' suggestions such as including additional information clarifying the Veteran Advocate's responsibilities in hiring staff and including language expressing a strong preference for candidates with military experience had been addressed in an updated draft, which was shared with Committee members prior to the meeting. Assistant Secretary Shark also noted that there appeared to be alignment on posting the job description for 30 days, or until a suitable candidate is found. For additional details on the job description, refer to the meeting materials on the [Committee's webpage](#).

At 1:50 pm, Commissioner Doyle joined the meeting.

Katie Verra, Chief of Staff for Senator Velis, provided background information on the development of the legislation creating the Office of the Veteran Advocate. She noted that the Office of the Veteran Advocate was modeled after the Office of the Child Advocate and was not housed under the Governor's office to ensure it functions as an independent entity.

Assistant Secretary Shark facilitated a discussion of the updated draft of the Veteran Advocate job description. Members suggested specific revisions to the language in the job description, clarifying the role of the Veteran Advocate.

At 2:10 pm, Katie Verra left the meeting and Gabe Adams-Keane joined as the designee for Senator Velis.

In closing, Assistant Secretary Shark noted that members' comments would be incorporated into the job description, which would be posted on MassCareers by Human Resources for a 30-day period. He explained that the process for reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates would be discussed at the Committee's next meeting, which would be scheduled in the coming weeks.

Vote 2 to adjourn:

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

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Meeting Materials

1. Draft 2/28/2023 Meeting Minutes
2. Draft Veteran Advocate Job Description
3. Draft Veteran Advocate Management Questionnaire