

# Statewide Veterans' Council Meeting

## Record of Meeting

April 12, 2023

### Call to Order

Executive Director of the Homes and Housing and Chairman of the Statewide Veterans' Council Robert Engell called the meeting to order on April 12, 2022, at 3:00pm and conducted a roll-call attendance. This meeting was broadcast over Microsoft Teams.

### Attendees Council:

Mark Bigda	Not Present
Louis Chow	Present
Sean Collins	Present
Ziven Drake	Present
Michael Dunford	Present
Robert Engell	Present
Tony Francis	Not Present
Andrea Gale-Bennett	Not Present
Janet Hale	Not Present
Michael Jefferson	Present
Kevin Jourdain	Absent
Gary Keefe	Present
Jill Landis	Present
Tom Lyons	Not Present
Isaac Mass	Not Present
Ira Novoselsky	Present
Carmen Ostrander	Present
Kurt Power	Present
Dawn Slaven	Present

### Other Attendees:

**Matt Deacon**, EOVS General Counsel

**Nick Bornstein**, EOVS Policy Advisor

**Ernestina Sirignano**, EOVS Assistant to Secretary Santiago

Chairman Engell welcomed everyone and announced that this meeting is an open law meeting and that we are taking notes but not recording the meeting. This is a single agenda meeting concerning the vacancy of the Superintendent position at the State Operated Veterans' Home in Chelsea. Secretary Santiago wanted to provide the council the opportunity review and make

comment on the job description being posted for Superintendent and for questions that council members may have related to the hiring process.

Chairman Engell asked Mr. Deacon to present information to the Council. Mr. Deacon shared that Secretary Santiago wanted to work collaboratively. It is important that the Council is aware of the proposed recruitment process. In accordance with to open meeting law requirements solicitation of council input and deliberation must occur in conjunction with a meeting.

Mr. Deacon referenced the Superintendent job description as a state form which lists the management responsibility of the position. This document gets posted onto Mass Careers which is the State hiring portal. Mr. Deacon mentioned that he would talk through any specific questions that the Council may have.

A question was asked about how this description was created and Mr. Deacon mentioned that this was modeled after the MQ for the Holyoke Superintendent. The new statute requires candidates have veterans experience or be a veteran themselves and also have a licensed nursing home administrator certification.

Mr. Novoselsky asked if this posting was going out nationwide. Mr. Deacon explained that this can be a nationwide process; once the job description is posted online it can be shared.

Chairman Engell stated that his understanding from working with talent acquisition is that those portals are shared widely. Talent acquisition has search optimization efforts that they use.

Ms. Slaven asked about the percentages referenced in the MQ. She wanted to know why this had to be laid out in such a rigid structure. Mr. Deacon explained that it is a state form, and that the expectation is that the day-to-day allocated time could change. This is the structure that the Commonwealth has for the job description.

Mr. Dunford mentioned that he has an HR background and referenced a section in the form which did not contain a description of the interaction between the General Counsel and the Communications Director. Mr. Deacon affirmed that there was nothing in the form and we would work on it. Mr. Dunford also stated that there was no mention of the Council or local Board of Trustees in sections 6 or 7 of the form. Mr. Deacon replied that it would be appropriate to add them to the working relationships section.

Mr. Dunford had a question about the requirement of seven years minimal experience and then four years minimum management experience. He felt this would get a variety of candidates that may pass the 7-year threshold but likely will not get the management experience background to lead in this position. He also shared the opinion that the direct reports and the level of experience that these jobs have would typically have a minimum of 10 years of experience with at least half of that in managerial experience.

Chairman Engell acknowledged and appreciated the input sharing that it will be helpful during the search and selection process; but that there had been comments made that that would be

too high a threshold requirement. Mr. Dunford responded that it is always listed as minimum. Mr. Dunford mentioned that he was looking at this from a talent acquisition perspective of filtering what comes in so that they can really focus on the most qualified to meet the requirements. Mr. Dunford also recommended adding ADA accommodations language.

Mr. Deacon asked Mr. Keefe if the 7 years came up as a concern during the recent recruitment process for superintendent at the Veterans' Home in Holyoke. Mr. Keefe mentioned that he thought this was a statement that was traditionally carried over from management positions. For most of the people that did apply they either had seven years' experience or they had the educational background to meet their requirement. They interviewed who they thought would be the top candidates.

Mr. Keefe asked what the statement meant about the State Veteran Operated homes are independent state agencies. Mr. Deacon explained that the Superintendent is going to be an agency head. There is a chain of command, and they report to the Secretary of EOVS however each of the Homes is also considered as a state agency with the Executive Office of Veterans' Services.

Mr. Keefe asked about section in the job description about relations/partnerships, inquiring if it would be helpful to add language about the superintendents' role in developing partnership relationships with these types of agencies along with the interactions with veteran advocate.

Mr. Deacon responded that the veteran advocate was a good point and should be in the working relationship. Mr. Deacon suggested that Chairman Engell and the Secretary would discuss these recommendations.

Ms. Landis referenced page 10 of the job description and had a question about the Superintendent requirements and wanted clarity on the minimum entrance requirement related to veteran status of potential candidates. Chairman Engell replied that the intent of the language was to support a broader pool of candidates and that the selected individual would be the best possible with experience in caring for veterans.

Ms. Landis asked about the expectations of the superintendent for communications directly with Veterans and families a part of their responsibility. Mr. Deacon affirmed that is the expectation.

Dr. Collins inquired if this finalized job description would be used to update and align with that in place at the Veterans' Home in Holyoke. Chairman Engell replied the intent is to standardize the job descriptions between the two homes, starting with the senior leadership positions.

Council members were thanked for their flexibility and participation in this meeting. Comments will be incorporated into the job description which will be reviewed within the state system and then shared with council members.

With unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 3:23 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Ernestina Sirignano

Executive Assistant Secretary to Jon Santiago