

Meeting Minutes: Commission on Veterans Quality of Life

Date: 23 June 2025

Time: 1:00pm

Location: Virtual

1. Call to Order/Attendance:

- a. Cory Ahonen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm
- b. Members were reminded that the meeting was being recorded

2. Roll Call:

1. Cory Ahonen, Chair
2. Scott Pitta, OVA Designee
3. Sarah Bateman, Senate President Appointee, working with Veterans
4. Bill Lebeau, Speaker Appointee, working with Veterans
5. Sergeant Ryan Puzzo, Senate President Appointee, working with Veterans
6. Ashley Booker, Governor Appointee, Veterans Advocacy

3. Guests:

1. Nicolette Slezak, EOVS admin
2. Nicholas Charrette, EOVS Deputy Chief Engagement Officer
3. Phoebe Flynn, on behalf of Senator Fernandes
4. Raymond Carville, Veterans Inc.

4. Members Absent:

1. Al Tenorio, Governor Appointee, Veterans Advocacy
2. Senator Dylan Fernandes, Senate President Appointee, working with Veterans
3. Leroy Ashwood, BRAVE for Veterans
4. Robert Breaker, Senate Minority Leader Appointee, Veteran/Family Member
5. Melissa Alden, House Minority Leader Appointee, Attorney

6 members present. We do have a quorum.

A. Administrative Matters:

a. Cory Ahonen, Chair addressed Motion to approve the May 27th, 2025, minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Open Discussion/New Business:

a. Cory Ahonen, Chair discussed priority topics, emphasizing discussion on Caregivers, Family Life and Elderly Veterans. Chair suggested developing sub-committees addressing each committee member select a priority topic to breakdown further areas of gaps, importance, risks, current outlook, recommendations, recourses available and steps needed to make changes to summarize a report. Members suggested looking into areas of improvements and gathering data within each priority topic. Chair opened up discussion on first priority topic Caregivers, focusing on elderly veterans and dependents looking for assistance. Committee members discussed Elder Services, developing a starting point for veterans, end of life services, benefits available, and

lack of essential located resources. Members suggested developing flow charts, common applications and creating a centralized database with updated data to have available for veterans. Chair and committee members identified different agencies to explore; VA Foster Home for Veterans, DPPC, Mass Ability, and Executive office of Elder Affairs. Chair discussed priority topic, Family life. Committee members suggested youth services programs, parks and recreation to help assist with family life and food insecurity. Chair discussed HERO ACT, youth council, military spouse liaison and changes implementing within schools and towns. Committee members suggested providing education and training for courts involving veterans with child custody cases and educating VSOs on child support enforcement. Chair discussed EOVS SERVE Team, working within veteran treatment courts and developing creative ways to identify veterans involved in family courts.

C. Next Steps/Action Items:

- a. Discussing information gathering on each priority topic assigned
- b. Committee members are encouraged to add notes to SharePoint working Excel document to expand on topics, priorities and next steps.
- c. Next meeting is July 28, 1:00pm

D. Public Comments/Questions:

- a. None

E. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 1:59pm