

DRAFT

Virginia Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees
Virginia War Memorial
621 S Belvidere St
Richmond, VA 23219
Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2025
10:00AM – 12:00PM

A meeting of the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, March 13, 2025 at the Virginia War Memorial, 621 S Belvidere St, Richmond, Virginia. The meeting was called to order at 10:01a.m.

Trustees Present

- Brad Williamson (*Veterans Services Foundation Chairman*)
- Allan C. Burke
- Tim Pillion
- Jarris L. Taylor, Jr.
- Craig Colucci (*Virtual*)
- Shannon Spencer-Watson
- James R. Poplar
- Joel Griffin
- Brandy Jones
- Heather Hopkins
- Danny Vargas

Trustees Absent

- Mike Coleman
- Marc Anderson
- Omari Faulkner
- Kathleen Murphy

VSF Advisors Present

- Craig Crenshaw (*Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs*)
- Chuck Zingler (*Commissioner of Department of Veterans Services*)
- Jordan Stewart (*Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs*)

VSF Staff Present

- Kayla Arestivo (*Executive Director*)
- Darius McKenney (*Business Manager*)

Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Attorney General

- Elizabeth Myers (*OAG, Assistant Attorney General – stand-in for Jim Flaherty*)

Board of Veterans Services Members Present

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Services Organization Members Present

- Bill Aramony (*Chairman*)

DVS Representatives Present

- Kim Barton
- Tammy Davidson
- Monique Brabham

- Tramaine Carroll-Payne
- Brandi Jancaitis
- Guy Dinkins
- Eric Johnson
- Kendra Ellison
- Dara Hector

Materials Distributed and Attached

- VSF Agenda (*Attachment 1*)
- VSF Dec 5, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes (*Attachment 2*)
- DVS Commissioner Report (*Attachment 3*)
- VSF Chairman Report (*Attachment 4*)
- Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Chairman Report (*Attachment 5*)
- Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Chairman Report (*Attachment 6*)
- VSF Statement of Assets For Month Ended December 31, 2024 (FM06) (*Attachment 7*)
- VSF Finance Committee Report (*Attachment 8*)
- VSF Budget Status as of January 31, 2025 (*Attachment 9*)
- Statement of Assets For Month Ended July 31, 2024 (FM01) (*Attachment 10*)
- VSF Development Committee Report (*Attachment 11*)
- VSF Procedures and Policies Committee Report (*Attachment 12*)
- VSF 2025 Event Calendar (*Attachment 13*)
- Virginia Veterans Network (VVN) Informational Flyer (*Attachment 14*)
- GStek 29th Annual Golf Fundraiser Flyer (*Attachment 15*)
- VVN Registration QR Code (*Attachment 16*)
- Code of Virginia - Title 2.2, Chapter 27, Article 6. Veterans Services Foundation (*Attachment 17*)
- VSF Board of Trustees Bylaws (*Attachment 18*)
- Inter-Agency Relations between VSF, DVS, BVS and JLC (*Attachment 19*)
- Inter-Agency Relations between VSF, DVS, BVS and JLC – Appendix A (*Attachment 20*)
- Inter-Agency Relations between VSF, DVS, BVS and JLC – Appendix B (*Attachment 21*)
- VSF Foundation Administration and Operation Policy (*Attachment 22*)
- VSF Association of Funding Professionals (AFP) Code of Ethical Standards (*Attachment 23*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Planned Giving Policy and Procedures (*Attachment 24*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Planned Giving Policy and Procedures – Appendix A (*Attachment 25*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Planned Giving Policy and Procedures – Appendix B (*Attachment 26*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Planned Giving Policy and Procedures – Appendix C (*Attachment 27*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Planned Giving Policy and Procedures – Appendix D (*Attachment 28*)
- VSF Biennial Fiscal Year Schedule (*Attachment 29*)
- VSF Policy for Electronic Meetings (*Attachment 30*)
- VSF/DVS Veterans Service Fund – Planned Giving Policy and Procedure (*Attachment 31*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Fundraising Request Form – Appendix A (*Attachment 32*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Request to Conduct Fundraising Activities – Appendix B (*Attachment 33*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Example of Standard Letter of Agreement (LOA) – Appendix C (*Attachment 34*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Fundraising Activities Conducted by Organizations on Behalf of the Veterans Services Fund – Appendix D (*Attachment 35*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Acceptance of Financial Donations – Appendix E (*Attachment 36*)
- VSF Veterans Service Fund – Financial Donation Receipt – Appendix F (*Attachment 37*)
- VSF Veterans Services – Control of In-Kind Donations Policy and Procedures (*Attachment 38*)
- VSF Acknowledgment of In-Kind Donations Receipt – Appendix A (*Attachment 39*)
- VSF Veterans Services Fund – Management of Policy and Procedures (*Attachment 40*)
- VSF Veterans Services Fund – Management – Appendix A (*Attachment 41*)

- VSF Veterans Services Fund – Management – Appendix B (*Attachment 42*)
- VSF Veterans Services Fund – Allocation and Expenditure Policy and Procedures (*Attachment 43*)
- VSF Donor Bill of Rights – Appendix A (*Attachment 44*)
- VSF Performance Budgeting Appendix B (*Attachment 45*)
- VSF Board of Trustees Roster (*Attachment 46*)

1. **Call to Order**

a. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

VSF Chair Williamson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:01a.m. Chair Williamson led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

b. Roll Call of Trustees and Quorum Determination

With 10 of 15- trustees present, VSF Chair Williamson advised a quorum was determined.

c. Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was previously sent to the Trustees electronically, and a printed copy was included in the Board Agenda Packets.

Chair Williamson asked if everyone had the opportunity to review the meeting agenda, to which there were no objections. Trustee Poplar **moved** to approve the meeting agenda and Trustee Pillion **seconded** the motion.

2. **Review and Approval of Dec 5th, 2024 VSF Meeting Minutes**

VSF Chair Williamson asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Trustee Vargas **moved** the approve the minutes as presented and Trustee Jones **seconded** the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **REPORTS**

A. Secretary's Report: Craig Crenshaw, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs

Secretary Crenshaw expressed gratitude for Chairman Williamson's leadership and the Foundation's ongoing efforts. He noted that the Chairman Williamson and Executive Director Arestivo have kept him informed about the Foundation's initiatives and progress. He commended the Foundation's leadership for its continued momentum and alignment with the Governor's priorities.

As the administration enters its final phase, Secretary Crenshaw emphasized that there will be no slowdown in advancing key initiatives, particularly those impacting the veteran community. He highlighted the Governor's commitment to maintaining a strong pace, citing late Friday meetings as an example of the administration's dedication. He acknowledged the Foundation's contributions in aligning its efforts with state priorities and expressed appreciation for its continued work.

B. Department of Veterans Services

Commissioner Zingler thanked the Foundation for its support and reflected on his recent discussions with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He highlighted the need for additional funding, estimating a \$3 million gap for critical veteran programs.

He emphasized the importance of veteran retention and employment support, including the expansion of the Virginia Veterans Network to increase outreach and suicide prevention efforts. Additional resources are needed to enhance crisis support programs such as homelessness prevention, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, and education for incarcerated veterans.

Expanding employment and transition services remains a priority, with a focus on addressing childcare challenges that impact veterans seeking stable employment. Increasing the number of licensed peer counselors is also a key objective to strengthen emotional wellness support.

The discussion also covered efforts to improve the already excellent benefits processing, ensuring veterans receive timely access to the resources they need. Commissioner Zingler stressed the importance of continued investment in Virginia's care centers, cemeteries, and the War Memorial, with further discussions planned to explore funding strategies.

C. Chairman's Report

Chairman Williamson reported that the board currently has 15 of 16 positions filled, with one remaining vacancy pending an appointment from Governor Youngkin. No new trustees joined the board this quarter, and all current trustees have been assigned to committees. Mr. Jarris Taylor, Jr. now leads the Procedures and Policies Committee and has already made significant contributions, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

The Foundation recently received a long-awaited estate donation of \$237,867. These funds are restricted for use at the Albert G. Horton Memorial Cemetery, ensuring its financial stability for the foreseeable future. Plans are underway to schedule a public event to formally acknowledge and receive the donation.

Chairman Williamson expressed appreciation for trustees who have taken the initiative to organize fundraising events. He acknowledged the challenges involved in securing venues, selecting dates, and attracting attendees but emphasized the critical role fundraising plays in supporting the Foundation's mission. Given the commissioner's ongoing needs for additional funding, the board is focused on maximizing fundraising efforts.

The next Virginia Veterans Service board meeting is scheduled for June 12th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Virginia War Memorial.

D. Board of Veterans Services

DVS Policy Analyst, Dara Hectar delivered the report on behalf of Chairman Carl Bedell. The Board of Veterans Services currently has one vacant seat. They last convened on Friday, December 6, 2024, at the Virginia War Memorial, coinciding with the Commonwealth's Pearl Harbor Ceremony. Board members had the opportunity to attend the ceremony and hear from DVS Commissioner Chuck Zingler, who provided briefings on various DVS service lines, including the Veterans Care Centers and the Virginia War Memorial.

Looking ahead, the board's primary focus will be on strengthening its collaboration with DVS. This includes visiting different facilities, engaging with various service lines and leaders, and contributing to the growth of veterans' programs and services throughout the state.

Ms. Hector, on behalf of BVS expressed gratitude to the Foundation for its continued support and looks forward to an ongoing partnership.

E. Joint Leadership Council

Chairman Bill Aramony provided an update on the Joint Leadership Council's activities, including their recent advocacy efforts. The group had initially planned to meet with the state assembly and delegates, but the event was rescheduled. Despite this, advocacy efforts continued, particularly around five key legislative measures, including the Veterans Military Dependency Speech (VEMDEPs) program.

Chairman Aramony noted that these measures are part of the Governor's budget and have been passed through the General Assembly's own chambers. The final review is expected on April 2nd, with most of the proposed measures anticipated to survive the legislative process.

The report, detailing the measures, is included in the meeting package. The next Joint Leadership Council meeting is scheduled for June 18th at 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Aramony thanked, the Secretary Crenshaw, Commissioner Zingler, Deputy Secretary Jordan Stewart and Ms. Hector for their continued support in advancing the JLC's work.

F. Foundation Report

Executive Director Kayla Arestivo provided an update on the foundation's activities and progress over the

past quarter. She emphasized that the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation is an independent state agency designed to exclusively support the Department of Veterans Services. Her primary role is to raise funds to support DVS Commissioner Zingler's initiatives, particularly where general funds fall short.

Executive Director Arestivo noted that there have been no new trustee onboardings this quarter, so the trustee roster remains unchanged since December. She also pointed out that in the meeting packets, trustees would find printed copies of important documents such as bylaws, policies, and nearly all relevant foundation materials, including contact information for everyone.

Executive Director Arestivo shared several updates on the foundation's impact. She explained that funding supports various service lines, including behavioral healthcare, medical health, rehabilitative care, and veterans' suicide prevention efforts through the VVFS program. It also funds long-term care in veterans' care centers and services related to the transition from military to civilian life. Additionally, there has been significant support for improving veterans' cemeteries.

She then highlighted a few testimonials to demonstrate how VSF's funding directly supports veterans. One testimonial came from the VVFS team, describing how VSF funds were used to provide neuropsychological exams for veterans who had not been diagnosed with brain injuries, despite exposure to blasts or similar trauma. These evaluations are crucial for establishing treatment plans and supporting VA claims. Another testimonial shared how VSF funds helped a Desert Storm veteran facing severe health challenges and limited income to cover an electric bill and avoid disconnection, ensuring stable housing. A third testimonial came from the VETE laptop initiative, where VSF supported veterans in transition by providing laptops. One veteran expressed how the laptop was instrumental in their journey toward a career in networking engineering.

Executive Director Arestivo also shared a video testimonial from a veteran at the Davis McDaniel Veterans Care Center who praised the new beds funded by VSF. The veteran explained that the new beds were more comfortable and did not sag like the old ones, improving sleep quality and overall well-being.

Moving on, Executive Director Arestivo then gave an update on the foundation's key results for Fiscal Year 2025. As of the report, the foundation has raised \$903,831, which includes a \$288,000 donation of medical vans from the DAV. Regarding Foundation engagement, Arestivo noted that the foundation has exceeded its goal of 20 engagements per quarter. She expressed gratitude for the support from trustees and staff in facilitating these events and raising awareness. For donor growth, the foundation currently has 199 individual donors for FY25, and efforts are underway to expand this base by encouraging smaller, consistent contributions.

Executive Director Arestivo outlined several ongoing strategic initiatives, including continuing to tell the Foundation's story and engaging with corporate sponsors, while also focusing on increasing statewide engagement through networking, hosting events, and collaboration with DVS. She emphasized the need to fill funding gaps based on DVS priorities.

She also mentioned upcoming events where the VSF would have a presence and encouraged trustees to attend and support these events. These gatherings are critical for raising awareness and generating funds for the foundation.

Following her report, Chairman Williamson acknowledged the importance of understanding where funding is coming from and optimizing fundraising efforts. He recognized that larger donations are the Foundation's primary source of support but noted a focus on growing individual donors as well. Executive Director Arestivo responded to a suggestion from VSF Advisor Jack Lanier about engaging the faith community as a potential source of support, which she will explore further with her team.

G. Treasurer's Report

VSF Treasurer, Kim Barton presented the Treasurer's report. As of December 31, 2024, the total income

for the FY 25 2nd Quarter reached \$352,417.53. Total expenditures during the same period amounted to \$648,491.77, resulting in an excess of income over expenditures of (\$296,074.24).

The beginning fund balance was \$2,944,460.68, leading to a total FY2024 2nd Quarter ending fund balance of \$2,648,386.44.

H. VSF Finance Committee Report

Trustee Craig Colucci gave the VSF Finance Committee report on behalf of Committee Chairman, Mike Coleman, covering several key points and updates regarding the Foundation's financial activities. Mr. Colucci began by acknowledging recent grants received by the Foundation, including a \$100,000 grant from Altria and a \$10,000 grant from Newport News Shipbuilding. He noted that these are positive developments.

As of mid-February, the Finance Committee is recommending the withdrawal of \$57,750 from the FY 25 funds. This includes \$50,750 from Benefits and \$7,000 from the Puller Veterans Care Center. The Finance Committee emphasized that ensuring there are sufficient funds to support programs in FY 2026 should be a top priority.

Mr. Colucci then discussed an upcoming meeting in April, though the exact date has yet to be confirmed, where the Foundation will meet with Commissioner Zingler and DVS directors to discuss FY 25 expenditures and the funding needs for FY 26.

Moving on to the detailed financial documents, Mr. Colucci asked the group to review the first attachment, labeled "Status as of January 31st, 2025." He explained that the green sections of the report represent the unrestricted funds within the budget, which are currently limited but are critical in supporting the Foundation. He walked the board through the document, starting with the first column, which shows the ending balance of \$2.94 million at the end of FY 24. However, he emphasized that only \$810,000 of this total is unrestricted.

The report also compared budgeted amounts, unrestricted funds applied, and expended amounts as of January, with a final column showing the balance. Mr. Colucci noted that reporting expenditures needs improvement to better track spending and adjust as needed. The last two columns presented show restricted and unrestricted donations as of January.

Mr. Colucci then addressed the proposed withdrawal of \$7,000 from the Puller Veterans Care Center, stating that this is a straightforward request since the center has not yet opened. Regarding the \$50,750 allocated for benefits, Mr. Colucci explained that this funding was initially intended for an updated training syllabus incorporating new technologies and customer service. However, no contracts or discussions have taken place with Ms. Davidson regarding this initiative, making it unlikely that the funds will be used before the end of FY 25. Given the limited unrestricted funds, the Finance Committee recommended withdrawing these funds for use in FY 26.

Mr. Colucci concluded by reviewing the final attachment, a chart showing revenue trends from 2018 to present. He highlighted that FY 24 marked a transition to the new executive director, which led to an uptick in revenues, particularly evident in the FY 25 forecast. He also pointed out that the jump from February to March was largely attributed to a \$237,867 contribution for the Albert G. Horton Cemetery. The report also showed that grants and in-kind donations are ahead of schedule, and most donations are over \$10,000, indicating the success of the development strategy led by Chairman Williamson.

Trustee James Polar asked if donations exceeding \$10,000 are typically made through corporate donors, to which Executive Director Arestivo noted that in some cases yes, but the Foundation also receives sizable donations from estates and fundraising events.

Chairman Williamson addressed Commissioner Zingler on his thoughts towards the Foundation

reallocating some FY 25 funds to FY 26. Ms. Davidson intervened and clarified that the money in question was already allocated for a specific purpose and will not be expended before the conclusion of FY 25, to which everyone understood and agreed with.

Secretary Crenshaw raised a question regarding donations, sponsorships, and grants, specifically asking if the Foundation provides a breakdown of how funds are utilized each year. He asked whether the Foundation shows which services and activities the donations are being used for, and how that information is shared with funders.

Chairman Williamson responded, acknowledging that the approach to handling grants and donations depends on the specific requirements of each grantor. He emphasized that the key is telling a compelling story about how the funds align with the grantor's needs. Chairman Williamson pointed out the improvement in the Foundation's ability to communicate this story, particularly under Kayla's leadership. He credited her for gathering more detailed information about how funds are used, which has helped the Foundation make stronger cases for securing additional funding.

Executive Director Arestivo further clarified that the biggest area for improvement when she joined the Foundation was in reporting numbers and metrics. She explained that working closely with the grant writer and the DVS team has helped to collect the necessary statistics to meet the reporting requirements. Arestivo stressed that all funders, especially in the grants sector, require annual reports on how their funds are being used. She also mentioned her direct communication with partners, like CCWA, to improve the collection of metrics, as it can be challenging to track the usage of funds once they are allocated to DVS.

Executive Director Arestivo elaborated that while she secures the funding, it is the responsibility of the DVS teams to ensure the funds are used as intended. She described an ongoing process of communication between herself and the DVS teams to ensure that the money is being spent properly and tracked. She emphasized that part of her role also involves staying in touch with donors, following up on their specific projects, and keeping them updated on how their contributions are being used.

She mentioned her recent conversation with Albert G. Horton about a project related to the cemetery, illustrating how the Foundation works with donors to ensure that their contributions are being used to honor the original families who donated for these projects.

Trustee Danny Vargas inquired about the significance of the Foundation's status as a charitable tax-exempt organization when approaching corporations and foundations for donations. He asked how important this status is to potential donors and where it ranks in terms of priority.

Executive Director Kayla Arestivo explained that the importance of the Foundation's charitable tax-exempt status varies depending on the corporation or foundation. Some corporations are less concerned with the specific tax status as long as they can support veterans and promote their brand. For these organizations, the main priority is visibility and corporate social responsibility.

Arestivo further clarified that the Foundation is a 170(c) organization, rather than a 501(c)3, which some foundations or corporations prefer for tax exemption purposes. She noted that some foundations are flexible and willing to make exceptions for the Foundation's status, even if they typically only fund 501(c)3 organizations. Arestivo shared that she has personally reached out to foundations and explained the Foundation's tax status, successfully convincing some to overlook the difference, emphasizing the Foundation's transparency and rigorous audits.

Chairman Williamson spoke one last time before moving on to the next portion of the meeting. He asked everyone to focus on the four-point column in the sheet, emphasizing the available funds for allocation as they enter discussions with Commissioner Zingler's team. He clarified that the numbers at the top of the sheet are restricted and can only be used for the specific line items listed on the left side, while the number at the bottom represents unrestricted funds, which the Foundation has more flexibility to use.

Chairman Williamson highlighted the importance of unrestricted donations for the Foundation, noting that these funds provide the most flexibility for the organization's needs. He pointed out that while donations like the one for the Albert G. Horton Cemetery are valuable, they remain restricted until they can be specifically allocated. He concluded by encouraging the team to always aim for unrestricted donations when asking for support, as they provide much greater utility for the Foundation's ongoing efforts.

I. Development Committee Report

Chairman Williamson submitted the report on behalf of the Development Committee. He explained that the report serves as a restatement of the events that have been planned, with additional details included. The committee's current focus is on organizing and executing these events to generate funds for the Foundation. Additionally, the committee is working on developing a communications plan to effectively promote and support these events.

Chairman Williamson turned it over to the Development Committee Chair, Shannon Spencer-Watson who began by expressing that there is a strong interest in supporting veterans now. She encouraged committee members to take initiative when out in the community, suggesting that if someone is at a car dealership or similar locations, they could approach the business about using their lobby for an event to spread awareness. She emphasized that asking for donations is often successful, and many businesses are willing to contribute if simply asked.

Ms. Spencer-Watson also acknowledged that some may feel uncomfortable with the direct ask, offering her assistance in guiding them through the process. She encouraged everyone to share their ideas, with the goal of putting those ideas into action.

J. Procedures and Policies Committee Report

Chair Jarris Taylor, Jr. provided an update on the ongoing work of the Procedures and Policies Committee. He acknowledged Executive Director Arestivo for her efforts in compiling the notes for the committee's review and emphasized that no vote was required at this stage, as the process is still in the early phases. He explained that the focus is on evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of how the executive director and the staff are working, and through the early review, some policies were identified as outdated.

The committee is working to ensure that both internal and joint policies are thoroughly examined. Mr. Taylor mentioned the importance of coordination, particularly highlighting his experience in the Air Force, where policy review was a critical component of his responsibilities. He underscored that the committee's approach is methodical and intended to ensure correctness and sustainability, emphasizing the goal of getting the new board, executive director, and all teams aligned and on the same page.

He noted that the committee is not rushing through the process but instead taking careful steps to develop policies that are practical and long-lasting. He encouraged trustees to submit any input they might have and addressing various findings. Once the committee has made significant progress, they plan to send the policies to counsel for review, ensuring that all recommendations are legally sound and do not interfere with essential deletions.

Mr. Taylor concluded by expressing optimism for the process and the results that will come.

Chairman Williamson addressed Elizabeth Myers, representative from the Office of the Attorney General, emphasizing the goal of avoiding multiple rounds of reviews to finalize the policies. He acknowledged the importance of efficiency in the review process.

He also introduced the topic of the code that establishes the Virginia Veterans Service Foundation. Chairman Williamson expressed that it was important for all involved, especially in the review of

policies, to understand the foundational code under which the foundation operates. This understanding would provide crucial context as they move forward with policy discussions.

Trustee Joel Griffin inquired about the policy packet, specifically the section stating that DVS shall provide public relations, marketing, and fundraising programs, and whether the Foundation would receive marketing funds from DVS or need to fundraise for marketing. He wanted clarification if the Foundation currently has a marketing budget.

Chairman Williamson clarified that an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) exists between DVS and the Foundation, which defines what DVS is responsible for in supporting the Foundation. He further explained that the Foundation receives funding to cover these services, and currently, that amount is \$10,000. Ms. Davidson clarified that the \$10,000 is not for marketing dollars but instead for utilizing DVS's communications and marketing staff. This means that while the Foundation does not receive direct funds to place ads or host events, it shares the cost of DVS's marketing resources.

Commissioner Zingler provided additional context, noting that DVS had withheld money over the past two years to support the launch of the Virginia Veteran Network (VVN), which incurred significant costs. He emphasized that the DVS marketing budget is currently limited, and while there may be potential to revisit funding through a partnership with the Foundation in the future, it would be unrealistic to assume there is a substantial marketing budget available at this time. He suggested that talent and resources could be shared between DVS and the Foundation, but the expectation should be managed accordingly.

Mr. Griffin, who resides in Fredericksburg, raised a concern regarding the high veteran population in Fredericksburg and Stafford and the need for support with smaller-scale projects, such as the construction of ramps for veterans or improving ADA-compliant access to services. He asked if there could be a process created to provide grants for such projects using unrestricted funds. Chairman Williamson responded by emphasizing that the Foundation's purpose is to provide funding to DVS and the programs they operate. He explained that the primary question would be whether DVS already has a program within its structure to support those specific needs, such as the building of ramps. If not, he suggested exploring whether other foundations or organizations might be able to assist with these types of projects. He encouraged the Foundation's team to reach out to other organizations if they encountered a need they were unable to directly support.

Ms. Spencer-Watson addressed the situation by reaffirming the Chairman's final remark. She encouraged the other trustees to reach out to her and with each other to collaborate in ways to help veterans that may be outside of the board's current reach.

Trustee Danny Vargas, as the owner of a marketing company, commented on the challenges of achieving the financial goals for the Foundation, particularly with restricted funds. He highlighted that there needs to be a level of marketing communications activity that goes beyond what the Executive Director, can accomplish alone. Mr. Vargas pointed out that while volunteers and companies donating their time and resources are valuable, there are hard costs involved in advertising, posting, and similar efforts. He stressed the need for a small portion of funds to address these hard costs, alongside the work being done through volunteer efforts.

Chairman Williamson acknowledged the comment and noted that while the Foundation is fortunate to have geographically dispersed trustees, they are also focusing on utilizing this network for events. He highlighted how trustees can support the Foundation by posting on social media platforms like LinkedIn to amplify the Foundation's presence. He reassured Vargas that marketing will be a priority for Executive Director Arestivo, and the trustees will help in spreading awareness through their networks.

Executive Director Arestivo responded by clarifying that support funds can indeed be used for marketing purposes. She mentioned that there is \$21,000 available for marketing, which could be used for marketing internally, and it doesn't have to come solely from state funds. While there is a limit on spending, there

are multiple avenues the Foundation could explore, including reaching out to companies in the marketing industry for discounted or loaner services. She emphasized that, given the Foundation's status as a state agency supporting a large veteran population, there is a strong need for a marketing strategy to distribute information across the Commonwealth.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Development Committee Recommendations

No approvals needed at this time.

B. Approval of Finance Committee Recommendations

Approval of pulling back \$57,750 to FY 26. Trustee Griffin **moved** to approve the motion. Trustee Jones **seconded**.

C. Approval of Procedures and Policies Committee Recommendations

No approvals needed at this time.

D. Approval of 2nd Quarter Financial Report

Trustee Pillion **moved** to approve the motion. Trustee Jones **seconded** the motion.

E. Other New Business

Board Chair

Nominating Committee

Chairman Williamson introduced the topic of the annual nominating committee. He explained that each year, the committee makes recommendations at the June board meeting for key positions within the Foundation, including the chairman, first vice chair, and second vice chair. Williamson announced that Trustee Mike Coleman will lead the nominating committee but emphasized the need for at least two additional members to join. He called for volunteers from the board to participate in the committee. Trustees Craig Colucci, Tim Pillion and Brandy Jones volunteered.

Administering of funds for FY26

Chairman Williamson addressed the administration of funds for FY26, stating that the work will continue with Executive Director Arestivo and Commissioner Zingler's team to set up a meeting. All members will be invited to attend the meeting, and from there, the finance committee will make recommendations on how to allocate the funds for the upcoming fiscal year.

Chairman Williamson continued discussing the allocation of funds for FY 26 and the role of the Development Committee. He highlighted the success of last year's goal of raising \$900,000 in total donations, which was exceeded. Moving forward, he requested the trustees to set goals for the Foundation's funding for FY 26, including a specific goal for unrestricted donations. He pointed out that while they had set goals for donations and grants last year, they didn't include an unrestricted donation goal, and he recommended doing so for the upcoming year. Chairman Williamson suggested that the goal should be loftier than the previous year's achievements. The Development Committee would be responsible for validating and refining these goals for the next year.

Code of Virginia Discussion – Title 2.2, Chapter 27, Article 6. Veterans Services Foundation

Chairman Williamson discussed the code that establishes the Veterans Services Foundation and emphasized its importance. He pointed out that trustees should familiarize themselves with the document, which is only a page and a half long, as it outlines their mission and responsibilities. He mentioned a few key sections:

- The Foundation operates independently and supports DVS through the Secretary of Veterans Defense Affairs.
- Trustees are appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate Committee on

Rules, making up a total of 16 trustees. Additionally, three ex-officio voting trustees (the Secretary, the Chairs of JLC and BVS) serve on the board.

- The Foundation administers the funds, and the document clarifies the roles of trustees, including their terms of service. Chairman Williamson tracks these terms carefully to avoid confusion, as there were instances of trustees serving beyond their second term while waiting for replacements.
- Travel claims for trustees were mentioned, and he also highlighted the importance of the MOU with DVS, which outlines the services and funding arrangements for those services.
- Election process for board officers, and trustees are expected to understand and follow it when voting.
- Trustees should be aware of potential conflicts of interest as outlined in the document.

Approval of Reallocation of Funds Through the Veterans Care Centers

Chairman Williamson introduced a request from the Commissioner and his team regarding a funding need at the care centers. He directed everyone to review the financial sheet, specifically the restricted funds allocated to Davis and McDaniel. The request was to allocate \$1 million of those restricted funds for care center operations.

Chairman Williamson clarified that this was an emergent request, and that legal review was required to ensure the funds could be used as requested. The funds were originally donated in 2022, and the legal team would confirm there were no specific earmarks restricting their use. He emphasized that the funds could only be used for this care center regardless of the vote's outcome. If approved, the funds would be allocated, and legal review would follow. Ms. Davidson confirmed that her team had already reviewed the donation terms and found no restrictions beyond the funds being dedicated to Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center.

Chairman Williamson reiterated that legal review was still necessary but that once authorized, the funds would only be used as needed for operations, with any unused portion remaining in the restricted account for future use at the care center.

Mr. Colucci asked if the full \$1 million would be spent by the end of June. Ms. Davidson responded that the board would only be authorizing a request to the Department of Planning and Budget for additional appropriation of the funds. She noted that while some of the funds would likely be used this year, it was uncertain whether the entire amount would be necessary. She emphasized that without board approval, the foundation would be unable to access the funds for this fiscal year.

Mr. Vargas asked for clarification on how the motion should be worded. Williamson confirmed that the approval would be pending legal review and limited to the necessary funds.

Jordan Stewart asked whether the board could vote in April following a budget review with the Commissioner. Chairman Williamson confirmed and motioned for a vote that a final decision on the funds would be made at the April meeting with the Commissioner and his team. Trustee Poplar **moved** the motion. Trustee Griffin **seconded**. There was no further discussion.

Executive Director

Virginia Veterans Network

Executive Director Arestivo presented the next report on the Virginia Veterans Services Network (VVN). She directed the trustees to a large QR code included in their meeting packets, located near the reviewed statute. She emphasized that VVN has been a key priority for the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) for multiple years and will continue to be moving forward.

Arestivo encouraged all trustees to actively support VVN, not only financially but also by engaging with the platform. She requested that each trustee take three actions:

- Create a profile on the VVN platform.

- Explore the VVN to familiarize themselves with its features.
- Share the platform within their networks, including colleagues and community contacts.

She noted that the QR code and additional information would also be shared via email for those not in attendance. Arestivo reiterated the importance of supporting VVN beyond financial contributions by actively engaging with and promoting the platform.

5. Public Comment

VVFS Director Brandi Jancaitis addressed the room, highlighting key mental health, homeless, and community resource services that the foundation helps support. She directed attention to the materials provided at each station, which included a core VVFS description and a flyer on the Kavana Wellness platform.

Ms. Jancaitis explained that the Cabana Wellness platform has been operating as a state-funded pilot program since July, meaning it does not rely on foundation funds. The platform offers confidential and convenient mental health support, including both one-on-one and group sessions.

She emphasized the ease of access, noting that individuals can use the QR code provided or create a personal email to maintain confidentiality. Within seconds, users can access resource articles tailored to their needs and live support.

Jancaitis encouraged attendees to help promote the platform, recognizing the potential benefits for many within their networks. Further information about the Cabana Wellness platform can be found on the DVS website, on the Virginia Veterans and Family Support page.

Chairman Williamson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Poplar **moved** the motion. Trustee Griffin **seconded**.

6. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on June 12th, 2025 at 10:00 am at the Virginia War Memorial. The meeting was adjourned at 11:32am.