

# NH STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date: 9 November 2021**

**Location: Virtual ZOOM and ECOC**

**OFFICERS and VOTING MEMBERS in attendance (P):**

Paul Lloyd - Chair **(P)**  
Andy Patterson - Vice Chair **(P)**  
Tony Fowler - Secretary  
Armand Soucy - Chaplain **(P)**  
Kelly Dobens – Treasurer  
David Kenney - Chair Emeritus **(P)**

### **Air Force Association**

Kevin Grady (prim) **(P)** Gavin MacAloon

### **Air Force Sergeants Association**

Bob Hechinger (prim) Ray Hayes (alt)

### **American Legion**

Mike Lopez (prim) **(P)** Robert Blais (alt) Bill Row (alt)

### **AUSA Col. Cross Chapter**

Greg d'Arbonne (prim) **(P)** Ed Harrington (alt) **(P)**

### **Camp Resilience**

Kurt Webber (prim) (P) Ed Harrington (alt)

### **Catholic War Veterans**

Denise Deblois (prim) Robert Guldner (alt) Armand Soucy (alt)

### **Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association**

Nate Smith (prim) Larry Ward (alt)

### **Disabled American Veterans**

Andrew Patterson (prim) Rick Borrazas **{P}**

### **Korean War Veterans**

Mike Lopez (prim) **(P)** Conrad Perreault (alt)

### **Marine Corps League**

Shawn Carboni (prim) Mark Lindsley (alt) Chris Peirce (alt)

### **Military Officers Association (MOAA)**

Peter Burdett (prim) **(P)** Joseph DiChiaro (alt) Warren Coulter (alt)

### **Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)**

Tony Fowler (Excused)

### **National Guard Association of NH**

Peter Duffy (prim) **(P)** Roy Hunter {alt} Mike Horne (alt)

### **NH Army Retiree Council**

Frank Musmanno (prim) Mike Rice (alt)

### **NH National Guard Enlisted Association**

Mike Lestage (prim) Mike Rice {alt} **(P)** Jack Howley (alt)

### **NH Veterans Association**

Kelly Dobens (prim) Mike Young (alt) Doug Crooker(alt)

### **Patriot Resilient Leader Institute (Camp Resilience)**

Kurt Webber Ed Harrington (P)

### **Reserve Officers Association of NH**

David Kenney (prim) **(P)** Mike Horne (alt) BG John Pappas (alt)

### **Rolling Thunder.**

Bruce Garry (prim) **(P)** Keith Hurrell (alt) Diane Domenicus (alt)

### **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)**

Russ Norris (prim) Leon Rideout (alt) Paul Lloyd (alt)

### **Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA-41}**

Ray Goulet (prim) **(P)** Alan Grant (alt) **(P)**

**Legislative Members (Voting):**

Al Baldasaro **(P)**  
Regina Birdsell  
Bob Guida  
Patricia Klee

**LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS: (non-voting):**

**Governor's Office** - Jane Graham  
**Senator Jeanne Shaheen** - Chris Scott  
**Senator Maggie Hassan** - Justin Troiano  
**Congresswoman Annie Kuster** - Tom Giancola  
**Congressman Chris Pappas** - Patrick Carroll

**COMMITTEE ADVISORS/AGENCIES:**

Kevin Forrest, Director, VAMC Manchester, NH  
Dr. Brett Rusch, Director, VAMC White River Junction, VT  
BG David J. Mikolaities - Adjutant General NHNG  
Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General- NHNG  
Shawn Buck, NH State Veterans Cemetery  
Margaret LaBrecque, NH Veterans Home  
William Gaudreau, Director, Office of Veteran Services  
Michael Hartt, American Legion Veterans Service Officer  
Amy Cook, DHHS  
John Reed, Martin's Point  
Dan Marcek, VETFLIX  
Barry Conway, Sage Emeritus  
Jorg Dreusicke, VFW  
JP Marzullo, Liberty House

**GUESTS:**

Terry Mitchell (Aspire 365 Group)

**OPEN MEETING/CALL TO ORDER:** Paul Lloyd, Chairman, convened meeting

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Chairman

**Invocation:** Armand Soucy

**Welcome - Remarks of the Chair:** Paul welcomed our guest speaker.

**Secretary's Report:** Meeting has a quorum. With no edits the minutes were placed in the record.

**Message from the Secretary:** If you are attending the meeting by mobile phone or iPad, please let me know who you are in the chat so I can record your attendance. You can also send me an email: [tefowler173@gmail.com](mailto:tefowler173@gmail.com)

**Treasurer's Report:** Chairman **Paul** Lloyd reported a balance of \$1002.67.

**Comments from Director Emeritus - Dave Kenney**

**Guest Speaker: Mr. Terry Mitchell**

Mr. Mitchell represents Aspire 365 Group, an organization operational in 2021 for the purpose of long-term drug rehabilitation programs. Mr. Mitchell spoke of a long-term home-based program involving counseling, therapy, nursing and peer counseling assistance. They are currently working with BC/BS Anthem network. This should be a one-year program, with five years for the patient to be clean of drugs. The company is looking for paid peer counselors and would welcome veteran's support.

Question: Al Baldasaro How would this help the veteran program with Optum already? Are you looking for veterans? Yes, is the answer by Mr. Mitchell.

#### **SUPPORTING AGENCY REPORTS:**

Manchester **VA** Update: Kevin Forrest

The Director met the Secretary of Veterans Affairs at the dedication of the new Worcester, MA facility. A very successful survey of the VAMC joint commission survey was received with 20 findings that were minor low risk and low frequency. Manchester was recognized for simulation lab training, a new function at the Level Three facility.

There is a COVID booster clinic ongoing with the Moderna vaccine. Two Saturday clinics are scheduled, call Ext. 3199 for an appointment.

The ongoing search for a new Chief of Staff progresses, with two final candidates. There are three new Nurse Practitioners hired, two in Somersworth, NH and one on Manchester, NH

WRJ VA Update: Dr. Brett Rusch, Acting Director

A request was received from the Governor of VT for assistance with non-veteran's emergency situations. The VA always treats veterans as a priority, but the COVID situation required additional assistance from all facilities. Current training healthcare providers in the WRJ facility. Importance of flu shots this year highlighted. There are numerous COVID vaccination facilities available. This year there will be a Veterans Day ceremony at the VAWRJ location.

Question (Andy Garcia) - Are COVID booster shots available for veterans'

dependents?

Answer - Yes, not advertised but dependents would not be turned away.

Question {Barry) - How is long-term care availability? Answer - There is no long-term care in WRJ

Question {Frank) - Are booster shots recorded on vaccinations cards?

Answer • Yes. also, the third shots for immuno-suppressed patients are also recorded on cards

Question (Mike) - Is there a time limit to wait for a booster shot after testing positive for COVID?

Answer - No, not necessary

### **DMAVES Update: Warren Perry**

Cemetery receiving applications for "NH Friendly to Veterans" program. The NG Guard memorial is damaged with one of the brackets broken, to be repaired. Flags will be put out on November 10.

**William Gaudreau:** Four VSOs have left, two to be rehired and two new hires in process.

### **NHVH Update: Margaret LaBrecque, NH Veterans Home Director**

There are currently 115 residents, Six female and 109 Male residents, ranging in age from 62 to 99 years old. There are 72 applications for residence pending. COVID shots and booster shots were administered, with 12 residents not choosing to participate, 5 refusals and 7 residents without permission slips for the shots.

Outside excursions are encouraged for residents. Internal training has begun for staff looking to become LNAs. Enhanced telemedicine program for residents has commenced. Visits are resuming, with a 3-day notice for a visit required. There will be a ceremony at the Home on November 10 for Veterans Day. For Christmas each resident will receive three gifts.

**Note:** Constance Morrison introduced herself as an attorney who helps in veterans disability claims, offered her assistance to help SVAC.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Peter, Bill and Paul attended a conference with the Secretary of Education. Veterans involved in public service are entitled to loan forgiveness. Student loans can be forgiven after 120 months of payments. Bill reported 98% of loan forgiveness applications are rejected.

Employees of 275 Chestnut Street in Manchester must be vaccinated.

**LEGISLATIVE BRIEFINGS:** Kevin Grady - Legislative Chair

Four bills were mentioned as in process; Bill 1056, Bill 1050, Bill 2794 (Bill pulled), and Bill 2861.

**LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS:**

**Jane Graham (Governor's Office):** None

**Chris Scott (Senator Shaheen):** Briefing attached.

Senator co-sponsored legislation regarding jobs and healthcare with the purpose of hiring a higher number of military spouses.

Senator involved with "SOS" Save Our Service Members legislation with the emphasis increasing efforts to prevent veteran suicides.

The Senator is staying engaged with assistance for Americans in Afghanistan.

**Justin Troiano (Senator Hassan):** Oral briefing.

Senator Hassan co-signer on "Buddy Check" bill. Also a signor on Veterans disability COLA bill. Wrote letter to Veterans Administration regarding veterans' cemetery reform, allowing National Guard and Reserve veterans to be buried in State Veterans Cemetery. Created Congressional Fellowship for Gold Star families.

**Tom Giancola (Rep. Annie Kuster):**

Representative met with VFW. Included grant for home modifications with DAV. Will be planting flags on Nov. 10 at State Veterans Cemetery.

**Brett Levasseur (Rep. Chris Pappas):**

Bills worked on by Rep. Pappas: 3944 - Burial Equity Act, 4845 - LBTQ Veterans Benefits Advisory Committee Act, 5170 - expand Homeless veterans activities to assist in job opportunities, training, etc. 549 - standardization in DD 214 for National Guard members, Reserve members.

**General Matters:**

**Andy Patterson:** office moved from Portsmouth to Manchester, only seeing two to three veterans a week.

**Bill Gaudreau:** Vet centers need updating and funds, incentives for businesses to provide space for centers.

**Good of the Order:**

Mike Lopez: Parking for parade at Sweeney Post, shuttle service back and forth.

**Calendar of Events:**

**Next meeting date:** Tuesday, December 7, 2021.

**Adjourn Meeting:** A motion was made by Ray Goulet to adjourn, seconded. Unanimous. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tony E. Fowler

Secretary