

New Hampshire Military Leadership Team

*A Meeting to Build Partnerships & Improve Services for
New Hampshire Veterans, Service Members and their Families*

August 16, 2021

10:00am – 11:30am

NH Veterans Home, Tilton, NH

New Hampshire Military Leadership Team Attendance

X	Major General David Mikolaities, Adjutant General, NH National Guard
X	Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General, NH National Guard; MLT Co-Chair
X	Kevin Forrest, Director, Manchester VA Medical Center; MLT Co-Chair
X	Amy Cook, Administrator, Community Based Military Programs, NH DMAVS; MLT Facilitator
X	Jim Adams, Chair, NH State Veterans Council
A	Steve Ahnen, President, NH Hospital Association
X	Matt Albuquerque, Next Step Bionics and Prosthetics
A	Pete Burdett, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army
X	Madeline Dreusicke, NH State Veterans Council
X	Brendan Finn, NH State Veterans Council
X	William Gaudreau, Director, Division of Veteran Services, NH DMAVS
X	Jason Grower, Regional Director of Operations, Dead River Company
X	Margaret (Peggy) LaBrecque, Commandant, NH Veterans Home
X	Paul Lloyd, Chair, State Veterans Advisory Committee
X	Bradley Mayes, Director, VA Regional Benefits Offices in MA, NH & VT
X	Sarah Morrissey, Employment Service Bureau Director, NH Employment Security
X	Ginger Munson, Family Representative
A	Jeffrey Newman, Administrator, Division of Higher Education, NH Department of Education
A	Dr. Brett Rusch, Director, WRJ VA Medical Center
A	Roger Sevigny, NH Veterans Council
GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:	
X	Ena Lima, VA Regional Benefits Offices
X	Phil Taub, Swim With A Mission and representing private sector

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome & Introductions

Peggy LaBrecque welcomed MLT members & guests to the NH Veterans Home Pavilion where the meeting took place. She gave a brief overview of NHVH and the history of the Pavilion. NHVH currently has 110 residents and as of 7/27, no COVID + cases.

Introductions were done around the room due to a guest in attendance. Unfortunately, technical difficulties prevented access to the conference line where several members were waiting to participate.

General Mikolaities welcomed all to the meeting and gave a brief history of the MLT and status of the NH National Guard.

Review of June Minutes—No corrections made to the June minutes. Peggy L. moved to accept the minutes as written. Jason G. 2nd, all members approved. The June minutes can be found on the DMAVS—MLT website page: <https://www.dmavs.nh.gov/about-us/councils-and-committees/nh-military-leadership-team>

II. Initiative Status Updates

Veteran-Friendly Business Recognition Program Update—Amy Cook

There's been a great amount of work going on behind the scenes to build some infrastructure to support the sustainability of the program and also to promote the program and enroll new applicants. Despite many hours of work to promote the program, there still has been very little media coverage. To date, the program has received 9 applicants. When businesses hear about it, they are excited and apply, but most have not yet heard about it. Discussion took place to brainstorm some promotion strategies.

Amy recommended the MLT consider extending the application "season" to year-round as it may help to increase enrollment and also alleviate the extensive amount of time it takes for only 1-2 people to manage the short "application season". Ginger M. made a motion to extend to year-round applications. Peggy L. 2nd the motion. All approved. Revisions will be made to the program brochure, application and website.

Supports for Military Spouses/Families—Ginger Munson

Close to executing on podcast and social media. Manchester Radio Group will donate space & time to support a podcast for military & Veteran families. In coming month, will be identifying a budget that can be shared with potential sponsors and will be developing a calendar for the podcast. Discussion took place on opportunities and potential partners to explore.

III. Old Business

Demographics—Warren P.

Warren had recommended in June that the MLT update and promote demographics related to military & Veteran community in state. The [2021 New Hampshire's Veterans Snapshot](#) was shared with the group. Discussion took place surrounding where this might be useful, who to share it with and the importance of all MLT members referencing the same data points to keep messaging consistent. It will be updated annually. Warren shared information about a website where one can compare a variety of data points from different states related to Veterans issues: www.veteransdata.info.

The MLT tri-fold brochure has also been updated and is available on the DMAVS website.

The Snapshot, tri-fold brochure, By-Laws and MLT meeting minutes can all be found on the [DMAVS-MLT webpage](#).

Council on Housing Stability Report—Warren Perry

NH Governor's Council on Housing Stability produced a 42-page report with 6 objectives. Warren briefly summarized objectives outlined by report and what each might look like. Information on the Council on Housing Stability and its 2021-2024 Strategic Plan can be found at this site: <https://nhchs.org/>.

IV. New Business

2021 Meeting Schedule—

An online poll will be sent out to all MLT members to survey members' availability to choose a new meeting date/time for the remainder of 2021 and for the duration of 2022. This new schedule will begin with the October's meeting.

Link to online poll: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FT6MTPZ>

New member recommendations—

The Community Behavioral Health Association put forth a nominee for MLT membership. MLT members had a variety of questions that Amy did not have answers to. Discussion took place regarding the process for future nominations—nomination should be accompanied by a resume or professional bio of the nominee and a general description of the role of person in the organization he/she is representing. Amy will go back to CBHA and ask for more information that can be presented and reviewed at October meeting and then a formal vote can be taken.

Warren reached out to Chris Santaniello at DHHS to see if DHHS can nominate someone for MLT.

Veteran Initiatives Around the State of New Hampshire

Phil Taub from Swim With A Mission (all volunteer organization) attended today's meeting to share initiatives that his organization and network are working on in New Hampshire. They have been very successful in fundraising. Now they are trying to determine where best to invest funds. Federal funds will be coming into the state very soon—it's a good opportunity to address some acute needs in NH for Veterans. For example, affordable housing is a great need where these funds can make a lasting impact. The more structured groups & networks coordinate on these initiatives, the more timely and successful these initiatives will be. Coordinating the services for Veterans in NH is also a big need. Phil recently coordinated a meeting for many of the veteran-serving non-profits in NH. Will be bringing them together on a quarterly basis. Phil offered invitation for any MLT members to attend next meeting.

Would like to see one social media account that would promote veteran events throughout the state—good way to communicate. (DMAVS will soon have social media accounts that can be used for this purpose.) Would like to see private sector and state work together to make NH a “destination” for Veterans. Publishing book this year that will showcase Veterans across New Hampshire—their service and their current lives. Will help with more awareness.

V. Information Briefs

Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services & NHNG—Warren Perry

Cemetery—average of 5 interments/day. Tomorrow starts 5-year Cemetery assessment. Garden Caretaker Volunteer Program—volunteers are putting 40-hour weeks to care for gardens and they are beautiful. DVS—down 2 VSOs. Two offers for employment have been initiated.

VA Medical Center, Manchester—Kevin Forrest

Shuttle services have resumed. DAV is looking for drivers—it's been very challenging to find drivers. New ride share program for Veterans, but many Veterans are still struggling to find and access transportation. VA Secretary made it mandatory for all VAMC staff to have vaccines. Just started 3rd booster dose—a VAMC team is looking at which Veterans will be eligible. Both VAMCs are focusing on getting specialty care out to the satellite clinics. New employee orientation this morning for some top notch professionals/physicians. Construction update—Women's Health Clinic 2023 projection completion date; will be moved to where Urgent Care is now currently.

Veterans Benefits Administration—Brad Mayes

Started processing claims for the new diagnoses that are eligible for benefits. New press release Brad will provide to be included in the minutes. Two renovations occurring currently—Boston and Manchester. Boston will begin in October. Manchester will occur afterwards. First in-person Travel Board occurred in Manchester last week. This is Brad's last meeting—he is retiring at the end of the month. He shared personal observations about how the MLT and the infrastructure for Veterans within the state has grown and developed over the past few years. General Mikolaities and Warren Perry presented Brad Mayes with the New Hampshire National Guard Distinguished Service Medal for his tireless service to the VBA and the NH Veteran community over the course of many years. All members expressed congratulations and the fact that he'll be greatly missed at MLT.



Member Updates & Announcements—

Due to time, members were asked to provide only important and brief announcements. There was nothing shared during this time.

VI. Next Steps

Next meeting date—TBD after all members complete the online poll

Location: TBD (tentatively NH State Veterans Cemetery, Boscawen, NH)

Please complete the online poll regarding your availability for meetings ASAP! Use the following link to access the poll:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FT6MTPZ>