



Present:

- Mr. Joe Higgins, Chair
- Ms. Samantha Brown-Parks, Secretary
- Mr. Chuck Roberts, Treasurer
- Mr. Alan Danzig, Member
- Mr. Andy Hilmes, Member
- Mr. Kevin Loncher, Member
- Mr. Bob McMahon, Member
- Mr. John Phillips, Member
- Mr. Destry Rogers, Member
- Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner
- Ms. Shelley Sainberg, Attorney General's Office
- Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Foundation CEO, Homeless Coordinator, GDVS
- Ms. Raven Holstick, Foundation COO, Transition and Employment Coordinator, GDVS
- Ms. Julie Hammond, Foundation CFO, Commissioner's Executive Assistant, GDVS
- Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner and COO, GDVS
- Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS
- Unspecified Donor, Visitor
- Markisha Steele, Visitor

On Thursday, August 7, 2025, the Veterans Service Foundation Board meeting was held by video/tele-conference. The members listed above were present.

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Mr. Higgins called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Mr. Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes from the May and June meetings, which were previously distributed to members to review. Mr. Loncher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OFFICER REPORTS

Ms. Thompson did not have any updates to share.

Ms. Holstick did not have any updates to share.

Ms. Hammond stated that she had sent out the report below for members to review before the meeting.

The funds in the account are allocated as follows:

General Funds	\$40,437.05
Annual Training	\$ 171.42
Homelessness	\$ 106.21
New Homes	\$ 1,025.00
State Benefit Book Ads	\$ 59.23
Suicide Prevention Hardware	\$ 1,700.00
Suicide Prevention Summit	\$ 4,662.07
<u>Women & Diversity</u>	<u>\$ 314.53</u>
TOTAL	\$48,475.51

DIRECTOR ACTIVITY REPORTS

Mr. Loncher stated that the Gifting Committee had not met for some time to discuss potential fundraisers. Mr. McMahon responded that he would put a meeting on the calendar. Mr. Loncher also spoke about his weekly Rotary Club meeting that took place at the Plummer Home. They donated 42 tactical backpacks to the Plummer House filled with items for the homeless, including hygiene items, stable food products, notebooks and pens. Their chapter has a chance of being named the Rotary Club of the year, which would bring more focus on their mission for homeless veterans.

Mr. Hilmes suggested a fundraiser to "round up" to the next dollar when making purchases at stores. Mr. McMahon agreed to contact Chick-fil-a to see if they would partner with us with this fundraiser. Mr. Hilmes also discussed the We Care Veterans Fair coming to the Columbus Civic Center on September 12. They are hoping to serve 5,000 veterans.

Mr. McMahon mentioned that there is an issue with the Genesis Joy House Homeless Shelter for female homeless veterans. They are having some challenges and there may be an opportunity for us to support them some time in the future.

Mr. Phillips discussed the upcoming We Care Veterans Fair in Rome on August 19. He also mentioned that VFW State Commander Bill Miles is working on setting up a meeting with key veteran service organizations with the intent of getting everyone aligned and prepared for the upcoming legislative session. HB 108 was tabled last year, but it will be coming up again this year and we need to make sure

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we are prepared. He also mentioned the Q3 Vetlanta Summit on August 20 at the Georgia Football Hall of Fame at 5pm.

Mr. Rogers asked if we had found out whether it is legal to purchase an already existing nursing home to transition over to a veteran's home. Commissioner Ross stated that she had spoken with State Properties, and it would not be legal to do that. Something like this must go through the RFP competitive procurement process instead of an outright purchase. Ms. Seinberg reiterated that we need to go through the State Properties Commissioner and listen to their advice.

Mr. Danzig brought up the possibility of moving forward with the raffle license for the cruise tickets. The cost is \$100. The issue was tabled until a little more research can be done regarding the application process.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Loncher made a motion for the official motto on the license plate to be "Selfless Service." Mr. Danzig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Loncher made a motion to make veteran homelessness the Board's top priority for the upcoming year (August 2025 through July 2026) and set a goal of raising \$200,000 to use in temporary housing for veterans. Mr. Roberts seconded the motion. A discussion ensued. Commissioner Ross explained that GDVS has an agreement with an extended stay hotel that has properties throughout Georgia whereby we can get 30 days of temporary lodging for a homeless veteran for \$1,000 per month. Mr. Rogers mentioned working with homeless networks that are already established. We can attack the homelessness issue in multiple ways, and we can raise the funds, but there is money available out there for homelessness. He is fully on board and supportive of this initiative. Mr. Loncher mentioned that they have room for homeless veterans at the Plummer Home and they never turn a veteran away, whether they have funds or not. Commissioner Ross stated that our one-pager can be updated so that the Board can use it in fundraising. Mr. Higgins acknowledged that homelessness is a complex issue, but the motion made here will give the Board some direction and a monetary goal to work with in the upcoming year and put the motion forward for a vote. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Phillips added that we need to come up with some guidelines on how to use the money once it's raised and who qualifies. He added that there are multiple organizations who deal with homelessness, and they may have suggestions on this.

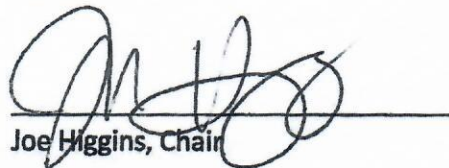
Mr. Dyer spoke about the recent shooting incident at Fort Stewart and asked everyone to keep the family members and soldiers in their thoughts and prayers. We have a VSO on base, and he was pretty shaken up but is doing well.

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Mr. Higgins announced that the next meeting will be on September 4th at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Higgins adjourned the meeting at 10:53 a.m.

SIGNED:



Joe Higgins, Chair

ATTEST:



Samantha Brown-Parks, Secretary