

**Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

Present        Ms. Patricia Ross, Chairman  
By Phone:     Mr. Thom Mash, Vice Chair  
                 Ms. Takosha Swan, Secretary  
                 Mr. John Kubinec, Member  
                 Mr. Dan Cravey, Member  
                 Mr. Shawn Hanley, Member  
                 Mr. Eddie Whitted, Member  
                 Mr. Mike Roby, Commissioner

Visitors:      Mr. George Canavaggio, Assistant Commissioner, Field Operations & Appeals, GDVS  
Present by     Mr. Mark Bannister, Assistant Commissioner, Administration, Health & Memorials  
Phone:        Mr. Kerry Dyer, Director, Operations Division, GDVS  
                 Ms. Catherine Graeber, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office  
                 Mr. Vince Pritchett, Director, Veterans Benefits South Region, GDVS  
                 Mr. Dale Bell, Director, Veterans Benefits North Region, GDVS  
                 Ms. Ramona Roper, Director, Training and Professional Development, GDVS  
                 Ms. Shelly Ann Simpson, Director, Appeals Division, GDVS  
                 Mr. Eddie Asberry, Commander, American Legion, Department of Georgia  
                 Ms. Carolyn Small, State Commander, DAV, Department of Georgia  
                 Ms. Belinda Beldoe, VFW Service Officer, Appeals Division, GDVS  
                 Mr. Carlton Deese, Executive Director Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home  
                 Ms. Tonya Jarrett, Clinical Director, GWVH, Milledgeville, GA  
                 Mr. Russell Feagin, Director, Health & Memorials Division, GDVS  
                 Mr. Doug Middleton, MOPH, Chairman, Veterans Service Foundation, Inc.  
                 Mr. Leonard Sobieski, III, President, Reserve Officers Association  
                 Mr. Marvin Thomas, Member Veterans Service Foundation, Inc.  
                 Mr. Phil Youngblood, American Legion  
                 Mr. Dan Holtz, Secretary, GMOAA  
                 Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information Division, GDVS  
                 Ms. Veda Brooks, Director of Women Veterans Office, GDVS  
                 Mr. Bobby Davis, Director, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS  
                 Ms. Shareka Monday-Robinson, HR Generalist, GDVS  
                 Ms. April Dodgen, Budget Analyst, GDVS  
                 Ms. Mary Aukerman, Confidential Secretary to Commissioner Mike Roby, GDVS

On Tuesday, February 23, 2021, the Veterans Service Board meeting was held by video/tele-conference.

Ms. Ross called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Mr. Kubinec gave the invocation. Ms. Ross led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Ms. Ross welcomed the guests and performed a "roll call" of people listed above.

Mr. Cravey made a motion to approve the February Agenda. Mr. Whitted seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call vote.

Mr. Cravey made a motion to approve the January minutes, which were previously distributed for members to review. Mr. Mash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**The following reports were submitted from the Veteran Service Organizations:**

**Mr. Drew Craig, Veterans Experience:**

Secretary McDonough has provided the below as his highest priorities:

- Providing all our Veterans timely, world-class health care.
- Ensuring that they and their families have access to the benefits they have earned.
- Honoring our Veterans with a final resting place that is a lasting tribute to their service.
- The Secretary has not provided further detailed guidance on any changes he will implement to ensure we will meet those priorities.
- The Secretary has also intimated we will focus more effort on providing services and benefits to historically underserved Veteran populations.
- A new Chief Veterans Experience Officer has been appointed and is in place.
  - VA's commitment to continuing to improve the Veteran Experience under the new SECVA will clearly be a priority.

**Mr. Doug Middleton, Veterans Service Foundation, Inc.**

The Georgia Veterans Service Foundation Board of Directors met via zoom teleconference on February 16th. The following items were discussed: Continue the process to get an IRS filing establishing the foundation as an IRS 501(c)3 charitable entity. We had hoped that we would be able to accomplish this via a Form 1023EZ, but upon further research, it looks like that will not be possible, and we will have to use the standard (long) version of the form. We also discussed the opening of a bank account in the Foundations' name to pay the filing fees using a check drawn on the Foundations account. Our Treasurer and two other board members will be accomplishing this. Finally, we discussed the annual renewal of incorporation fees with the



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office of the Secretary of State. Assistant Commissioner Bannister is going to check on that for us.

Our next meeting will be scheduled at the Chairman's call when sufficient progress has been made on establishing the IRS designation.

**Mr. Dan Holtz, GMOAA:**

The Old Capitol Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), an affiliate of the GMOAA, has been working closely with Russell Feagin of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service (GDVS) and Dennis Mize, of the Georgia War Veterans Home (GWVH) in Milledgeville, to provide support for families of the veteran patients of the new Subacute Rehabilitation Therapy Unit (SATU), currently under development by the GDVS. The chapter's efforts will be modeling the *Intrepid Spirit* program the Fisher House has been setting up at various U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical center locations around the country to address the same needs of combat veterans wounded in body, mind and spirit. The chapter's program will be addressing the needs of Georgia veterans who will be treated at the GWVH. The chapter is currently in the final states of putting together a MOAA Foundation Community Outreach Grant application to acquire the MOAA brand and start-up money to launch this program. The MOAA Foundation's application deadline is February 28, 2021 and the chapter has every intention of meeting that suspense. The chapter members are looking forward to playing an important part in supporting the families involved with the SATU whose loved ones will be in therapy at the unit.

The GMOAA is planning to hopefully return to face-to-face meetings beginning with our Mid-Year meeting in Warner Robins in May 2021. We are then planning to hold our annual Conference/Convention in Columbus, Georgia, sponsored by the Ft. Benning Area Chapter, in October 2021.

**Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and VetLanta:**

Georgia Military Women has continued to be very active in February. We provided over 500 Valentine Cards to the Charlie Norwood VA Nursing Home residents. We supported the monthly Soldiers Angel food distribution at Acadian VA clinic in Decatur. Many of us also volunteered at the Atlanta VA COVID Vaccine Drive In event on Feb 13 where about 2800 veterans were served. That event went very well except for traffic on nearby city streets. Numerous small social events were held on-line and in person. We were particularly pleased to have an event at The Peach Pit in Ft Valley, GA which offers a free 8 week equine assisted therapy program for women veterans. It was very impressive and I would like to recommend it to other veteran organizations. For more information go to [www.thepeachpit.org](http://www.thepeachpit.org)

Upcoming Event: Vetlanta Q1 Virtual Summit will be Feb 24<sup>th</sup> featuring Medal of Honor recipient Flo Groberg. Go to [www.vetlanta.org](http://www.vetlanta.org) to register.

**State Commander Eddie Asberry, American Legion:**

It is with heavy heart that I wish to report the passing of Past Department Commander Charles Thomas Tucker who was memorialized Feb 20, 2021. He was a member of Cherokee County Post 316 and served as Department Boys State Director and on the Boys Nation Staff.

There has been a slight increase in COVID related cases but Posts have been doing their best to either meeting virtually or, if in person using all safety protocols. There are Posts that are continuing with Bingo operations and are observing all COVID 19 safety guidelines from State of Georgia, GBI and Department. Throughout the state, a number of members have received the COVID 19 vaccine, so Posts are looking forward to reopening and holding events again.

Blood Drive: The 12th District – S. Georgia, reported 34 units collected.

Honor Guard Activities: There were 12 final salute reports from one District. Other Honor Guard units are continuing funeral services.

Buddy Checks to members are conducted to check on their health and welfare.

The Legion Riders also have limited activities.

Oratorical Contest:

Although the National Organization has cancelled the national oratorical portion of the contest. We have decided to continue with the State Oratorical contest at Classic Center, Athens, Ga. It will stream on the Department Oratorical web page, March 7th. The winner of the contest will be award \$2,000.00 and National will award the Georgia Department winner an additional \$5,000.00

**Mr. Mark Demers, Department Service Officer, American Legion:**

- The Department Service Officer attended the Atlanta VARO Change Management Meeting on January 28, 2021 at 1430.
- The Department Service Officer gave a presentation on Claims and Appeals at American Legion Post Service Officer training on January 29, 2021 from 1800 via Zoom.
- The Department Service Officer attended the Coalition of One Town Hall Meeting on January 30, 2021 at 1400 and answered veteran's benefits questions.
- The Department Service Officer attended the COVID-19 Response Town Hall w/ Dr. Biden, Dr. Fauci, Red Cross, Blue Star Families and DOD leadership on February 4, 2021 at 1500.



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- The Department Service Officer participated in the McDonough Beautiful Clean-Up campaign sponsored by city Councilwoman Sandra Vincent on February 6, 2021 at 1000
- The Department Service Officer attended the American Legion Adjutants Meeting on February 9, 2021 at 2000.
- The Department Service Officer gave a presentation on Claims and Appeals at the VFW Post Service Officer training (make-up session) on February 10, 2021 at 1800.
- The Assistant Department Service Officer (Ed Kent) assisted 22 veterans with VA benefits related inquires this month.

**Ms. Belinda Beldoe, VFW:**

- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Veteran of Foreign Wars Department via Zoom meeting held on January 12, 2021 at 7PM.
- The Department Service Officer hosted a VFW GA Post Service Officer training course via Zoom training held on January 13, 2021 from 6PM-8PM.
- The Department Service Officer attended the Veteran's Resource Collaborative webinar held on January 14, 2021 at 12PM
- The Department Service Officer attended the VA Managing VBA Performance and Result 1st Quarter hosted by Dr. Paul Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits held on January 14, 2021 at 2PM.
- The Department Service Officer hosted a VFW GA Post Service Officer training course via Zoom training held on January 15, 2021 from 6PM-8PM.
- The Department Service Officer hosted a VFW GA Post Service Officer training course Zoom training held on January 19, 2021 from 6PM-8PM.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Veteran of Foreign Wars Department Commander's COA meeting via Zoom on January 23, 2021 at 10AM.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Veteran of Foreign Wars Department via Zoom meeting held on January 26, 2021 at 7PM.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Coalition of One Zoom meeting held on January 27, 2021 at 10AM.

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- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Coalition of One Town Hall Virtual Zoom meeting held on January 30, 2021 at 2PM.
- The Department Service Officer attended a Georgia Department of Veteran Service Annual Regional Training Course exam from February 03, 2021.
- The Department Service Officer attended an Office of the Under Secretary for Health COVID-19 Response Town Hall hosted by Dr. Richard Stone held on February 04, 2021 at 3PM.
- The Department Service Officer hosted a VFW GA Post Service Officer training course via Zoom training held on February 04, 2021 from 630PM-730PM.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Veteran of Foreign Wars Department Commander's meeting held at the GA VFW Post 658 at 4864 Harrison Road Macon, GA 31206 on February 13, 2021.

**Commissioner Mike Roby, Georgia Department of Veterans Service:**

On Friday, January 29, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended a Zoom meeting with Interim Director of the Atlanta VA Regional Office.

On Friday, January 29, 2021, Briefed Senator Chairman Watson and his committee on the AFY 2021 budget.

On Tuesday, February 2, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended a bill signing by Governor Kemp at the capitol at 1:00 p.m. The Governor's Bill 2021 is a Teacher Pipeline Package (Part 1).

On Wednesday, February 3, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended a site visit for Phase III for the Sub Acute Project in Milledgeville.

On Friday, February 12, 2021, Commissioner Roby held Director's Zoom meeting.

On Monday, February 15, 2021, Commissioner Roby held Town Hall meeting.

On Monday, February 15, 2021, Commissioner Roby held a Zoom briefing with Chairwoman Dempsey and her committee on the FY 2022 budget.

On Tuesday, February 16, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended a Zoom meeting with Chairman Middleton and the Veterans Foundation Board.

On Wednesday, February 17, 2021, Commissioner Roby held a Town Hall meeting. Chairwoman Ross attended.



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On Wednesday, February 17, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended a NASDVA Zoom Meeting.

On Thursday, February 18, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended Zoom Meeting (Workforce Development Team).

On Thursday, February 18, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended Zoom Meeting with Chief Operating Officer.

On Friday, February 19, 2021, Commissioner held a Town Hall meeting.

On Friday, February 19, 2021, attended Virtual meeting with NASDVA.

20 February 2021, Spoke with veterans group in Jasper, GA.

**Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Field Operations and Appeals:**

**GENERAL**

- On January 28, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Commissioner Mike Roby, Assistant Commissioner Mark Bannister, and Director of Operations Kerry Dyer attended the Senate Veterans, Military, and Homeland Security Committee Meeting on SB11. This bill allows Georgia residents to deduct one dollar from their state taxes for disabled veterans.
- On January 29, 2021 Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Commissioner Mike Roby, and Director of operations Kerry Dyer, attended a Team's Meeting with Patrick Zondervan and Angela Seelhammer of the Atlanta Regional Office. They asked us to get the word out about the Virtual Veterans Claims Clinic. The VA will be holding a Virtual Veteran Claims Clinic every month. Veterans will have the opportunity to speak to a VA Claims Counselor about their claims. Veterans must call to make an appointment.
- On January 29, 2021 Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio Commissioner Mike Roby, Assistant Commissioner Mark Bannister, Director of Operations Kerry Dyer and April Dodgen attended the Health and Human Services Committee Meeting on our FY 2021 budget.
- On February 10, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Assistant Commissioner Mark Bannister, and Director of Operations Kerry Dyer attended the Senate Veterans, Military, and Homeland Security Meeting on Professional Licenses, extending the time a member of the military must qualify for the issuance of a license.

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- On February 15, 2021 Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Commissioner Mike Roby, Assistant Commissioner Mark Bannister, Director of Operations Kerry Dyer and April Dodgen attended the Health and Human Services Committee Meeting on our FY 2022 budget.
- 8 Welcome Home letters sent out for the month of January 2021.
- Department Electronic Claim's Assistance Processing System (Vetra Spec) currently 303,368 entries, this is an increase of 927 from January 27, 2021.

**PROJECTED POSITIONS**

- Current openings in Appeals, Waycross, Decatur CBOC, Athens, Columbus.
- The Athens position has been posted.

**Ms. Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)**

- January 28, 2021 Ms. Brooks spoke with 16 veterans. Ms. Brooks participated in the Governor's Task Force meeting.
- January 29, 2021 Ms. Brooks spoke with 16 veterans.
- February 1, 2021 Ms. Brooks spoke with 10 veterans.
- February 2, 2021 Ms. Brooks spoke with 15 veterans.
- February 3, 2021 Ms. Brooks spoke with 8 veterans.
- February 4, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in an online Women Vet. Summit Planning Meeting, Veteran's Court, Women, MST, and Moral Injury, and spoke with 12 veterans.
- February 5, 2021 Ms. Brooks spoke with 7 veterans.
- February 8, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in an online Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Shared Geography Meeting, and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Shared Geography Meeting and spoke with 5 Veterans.
- February 9, 2021 Ms. Brooks spoke with 12 veterans.
- February 10, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in online Coweta County Family Collaborative, SAMAFAT Call: *Navigating the SMVF Service System with Peers—A Look at State Promising Practices* and spoke with 11 veterans.
- February 11, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in online Coweta Giving to Heroes Update Meeting, Coweta Veterans Resource Collaborate
- February 12, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in a tour of the Veteran Women and Family Shelter
- February 15, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in *Governor's Challenge Implementation Workbook* Tour of the Veteran Women and Family Shelter and Minister & Leaders Lunch for Coweta County.
- February 17, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in a Virtual Coffee with Mentors and Coweta County Family Collaborative.



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- February 18, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in Teams Meeting AARP, Sky Blossom TN.
- February 19, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in the Monthly UA Women Who Served Needs Assessment Updates.
- February 22, 2021 Ms. Brooks participated in the Governor's Challenge Team Lead Calls.

**Current committees**

- Women's Veterans Health Committee (monthly meetings and joint outreach events)
- Georgia State VFW Homeless Committee
- VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Georgia Team

**Ramona Roper, Training and Professional Development Division:**

- February 3, 2021, Regional/Annual Training Test administered via the Absorb Training Portal. (98 passed, 3 failed)
- February 10, 2021, Regional/Annual Training Make Up Test administered for those that were excused for the initial test date. (2 passed)
- February 11, 2021, the Training and Professional Development Division participated in the VA Senior Leadership Monthly Briefing.
- February 15, 2021, the Training and Professional Development Division has implemented the VSO Mentoring Program. This program will assist new employees, as well as established VSO's, with additional one on one training and monitoring, to help improve their skills to better serve Veterans and Claimants.

**Upcoming Events:**

- Ongoing support to the Regional Directors and Veteran Field Service Offices.

**Ms. Shelly-Ann Simpson, Director Appeals Division:**

- The total number of actual hearings conducted by the Appeals Division for January 2021 was 81.
- The total number of pre-hearing actions for January 2021 was 267, while post-hearing actions were 95.
- The total number of correspondence conducted by the Appeals Division was 1950 (with veterans, BVA/VA employees, and VSO field offices) during the month of January.
- As of January 1, 2021, the Atlanta VA Regional Office completed the following claims for the Service Organizations represented by GDVS:

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Types of Claims	Number of Awards	Benefits paid out
Compensation	98,963	\$164,949,479
DIC	2,667	\$3,825.956
Survivor Pension	947	\$699.071
Veteran Pension	1,966	\$2,062,594
Grand Total	104,543	\$171,537.099

**NORTH GA, Mr. Dale Bell, North Area Director:**

- January 2021 total retro awards reported by North Georgia Offices: \$1,001,202.00. Included in that total is a single award of \$138,917.00 reported by Rob Johnson of Griffin.
- Director Site Visits / Inspections: None
- North Region Gains/Losses:
  - Trenise Jones hired for the Augusta (GWVNH) Office starting March 1, 2021.
  - Allan Homer resigned from the Athens Office effective February 12, 2021.
- North Georgia Region Veteran Population: 443,313
- Office Visits

\*Total Monthly Office Visits includes Remote Work: phone calls and emails.

Average Visits Per VFSO							
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:		North					
Month:		January-21					
A	B	C	D	E	D / E F	G	G / E H
Office Name	Veterans' Field Service Officer (VFSO) Last Name	#	Total Monthly Office Visits	Work Days In Month	Average Office Visits Per Day	Total Claims Submitted To VA Monthly	Average Claims Submitted By VFSOS To VA Daily
	Number of VFSOs:	58	12,243	818	14.97	1,627	1.99
Number of Offices:	34	Average Visits/Office:		360.09	Average Claims/Office:		47.8529412

**SOUTH GA. Mr. Vincent M. Pritchett, South Area Director:**

- February 8, 2021, Vincent Pritchett met Mrs. Charles Q. Brown, wife of the Chief of Staff, US Air Force when she toured the Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center. Provided her and her team with a very short briefing of our mission.



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- On February 12, 2021, Sandra Bennett (Columbus field office) participated in the Tri-City Veterans and Family Symposium via Zoom. Sandra provided a Benefits Briefing to participants. She said she got some great information from Social Security about their Widows' Benefits. The event was hosted by Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church in Columbus.
- On South Region Gains/Losses: Stephanie Thomas left the Lagrange office effective January 29, 2021.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 244,963
- Office Visits for January: South Georgia Office handled 5,457 phone calls and emails.

Average Visits Per VFSO								
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO								
Region:		South Region						
Month:		January-21						
A	B	C	D / E			G / E		
			D	E	F	G	H	
Office Name	Veterans' Field Service Officer (VFSO) Last Name	#	Total Monthly Office Visits	Work Days In Month	Average Office Visits Per Day	Total Claims Submitted To VA Monthly	Average Claims Submitted By VFSOS To VA Daily	
	Number of VFSOs:	41	1,584	710	2.23	1,113	1.57	
Number of Offices:		29	Average Visits/Office:		54.62	Average Claims/Office:		38.38

**Ms. Charlotte May, Information Division:**

**Public Information Division Contacts (Since January 1, 2020)**

- Replies to VA eBenefits Messages = 1,775
- Replies to General Questions = approximately 835
- Individual Request for the State Certificate of Honor = approximately 140

**GOVERNOR'S (VIETNAM VETERAN) CERTIFICATE of HONOR PROGRAM-**

- The latest and most accurate End of Year (2019) totals (since March 2015) –

State Certificates of Honor issued via GDVS – An estimated 28,650  
(Honors Ceremonies and Central Office Mail Outs)

DoD Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins presented via GDVS – An estimated 22,935

Honors Ceremonies supported/coordinated by GDVS – 343

Defense Department's Vietnam Veteran Surviving Spouse CoH – 256

**Mr. Bobby Davis, Director, Veterans Education and Training Division (State Approving Agency):**

**VETERANS STATE APPROVING AGENCY**

- The approval and compliance surveys of educational institutions, training establishments and training programs approved for veterans training is continuing with no significant problems in any area being noted.
- Approval of new veteran's On-The-Job training sites (OJT) continues to increase. As of this date the State Approving Agency (SAA) has granted approval to 1,767 educational institutions and training establishments where Georgia veterans may attend school or job training and utilize their GI Bill educational benefits.
- Congress has extended the COVID-19 In-Residence Housing Allowance for veterans normally in a classroom that have been moved to on-line learning until December 21, 2021. Originally this was set to expire on December 23, 2020.

Item *	Number
Approved Educational Institutions	390
Approved Training Establishments	1,377
Veteran Students Enrolled in Educational Institutions	9,012

\* Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, Education Division, January, 2021.

**Mr. Mark Bannister, Administration, Health, and Memorials:**

**FINANCE**

**Accounting**

Routine operations are continuing.

**Budget**

**AFY 2021 Budget Senate Appropriations Hearing**

On Friday, January 29, 2021, Commissioner Roby and requested staff presented the Governor's Recommended Budget for Amended 2021 to the Members of the Senate Appropriations Human Development Subcommittee. House Bill 80 was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor.



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Under the Amended FY2021 Budget the Governor's recommend changes are:

Program	State Funds	Total Funds	Recommended Change
Departmental Administration	\$1,849,228	\$1,849,228	\$0
GA Veterans Memorial Cemetery	\$ 709,857	\$1,037,753	\$0
GA War Veterans Nursing Home	\$12,724,578	\$39,068,493	(\$450,000)

1. Reduce funds in the amount of \$450,000 dollars for the Sub Acute Therapy Unit to reflect a delayed implementation date.

Program	State Funds	Total Funds	Recommended Change
Veterans Benefits	\$7,319,749	\$8,073,675	\$0
FY 2021 Amended Budget	\$22,603,522	\$50,029,259	

1. Under the FY 2021 Amended Budget, the Bill provided a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 dollars to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 dollars. The supplement was added to the following programs:

48.1	Departmental Administration (DVS)	\$ 12,918
48.2	GA Veterans Memorial Cemetery	\$ 13,995
48.4	Veterans Benefits	\$122,721
	Total supplement amount	\$149,634

**FY 2022 Budget House Appropriations Hearing**

Commissioner Roby and requested staff presented the Governor's Recommended FY 2022 Budget on February 15, 2021, to the Members of the House Appropriations Human Resources Subcommittee.

Program	State Funds	Total Funds	Recommended Change
Departmental Administration	\$1,849,228	\$1,849,228	\$0

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Program	State Funds	Total Funds	Recommended Change
GA Veterans Memorial Cemetery	\$709,857	\$1,037,753	\$0
GA Veterans Memorial Cemetery	\$751,988	\$1,079,884	\$42,131

1. Increase funds in the amount of \$42,131 dollars for one grounds maintenance technician at the Georgia War Veterans Cemetery at Milledgeville.

Program	State Funds	Total Funds	Recommended Change
GA War Veterans Nursing Homes	\$13,174,578	\$39,518,493	\$39,869
GA War Veterans Nursing Homes	\$13,174,578	\$39,518,493	(\$1,182,047)
Program Net	(\$1,142,178)	(\$1,142,178)	
	\$12,032,400	\$38,376,315	

1. Increase funds in the amount of \$39,869 dollars to reflect employer share of the Teachers Retirement System from 19.06% to 19.81%.
2. Eliminate one-time funds in the amount of \$1,182,047 dollars for renovations at the Milledgeville Home.

Program	State Funds	Total Funds	Recommended Change
Veterans Benefits	\$7,319,749	\$8,073,675	\$0
FY 2022 Budget	\$21,953,475	\$49,379,212	

HEALTH AND MEMORIALS

State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes Census (Through February 12, 2021)+



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Current Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	88	117	205
Service Connected *	17	39	56
<b>Total Patients</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>261</b>
Last Month			
Regular Patients	89	117	206
Service Connected *	17	38	55
<b>Total Patients</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>261</b>

\* One-hundred percent of the cost of these services is paid by the VA. No state funds are involved.

+ The report to the VSB are the total numbers from January 8, 2021 through February 12, 2021.

Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home – Augusta

Routine operations are continuing.

Georgia War Veterans Home – Milledgeville

Routine operations are continuing.

State Veterans Cemeteries,

**Burial Statistics (Through February 12, 2021)+**

State Veterans Cemetery	Cumulative Last Month	Cumulative Current Month	Increase
Glennville	1,775	1,801	26
Milledgeville	4,230	4,286	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,005</b>	<b>6,087</b>	<b>82</b>

+ The report to the VSB are the total numbers from January 8, 2021 through February 12, 2021.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville

Routine operations are continuing.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Milledgeville

Routine operations are continuing.

OPERATIONS

Human Resources

Routine operations are continuing.

Personnel Actions (Gains / Losses) (January 16, 2021 – February 12, 2021)

Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
Appeals Division	VACO-1	Resignation	<i>Roger Goff</i>	01/29/2021
LaGrange	VFSO-1	Resignation	<i>Stephanie Thomas</i>	01/29/2021
Milledgeville	GM Tech 1	Filled	<i>Forrest Bloodworth</i>	02/01/2021
Athens	VFSO -1	Resignation	<i>Allan Homer</i>	02/12/2021

Properties

Routine operations are continuing.

Information Technology

Routine operations are continuing.

Records Management

Routine operations are continuing.

Vehicle Management

Routine service and maintenance are performed as required.

Veterans Service Foundation Board

The Chairman of the Veterans Service Foundation Board conducted a scheduled (virtual) meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 to discuss the status of the completion of the IRS 1023 and to review current events and other administrative issues.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

There was a discussion about the GDVS Budget. Mr. Chris Hambright gave a POWER POINT explanation because this meeting and one meeting per quarter is devoted strictly to the budget. There are basically



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5 different categories/programs within the budget. (1) Administration; (2) two cemeteries- Milledgeville and Glennville; (3) Field Operations and Appeals; (4) Education and Training; and (5) the two nursing homes – Augusta and Milledgeville Skilled Care. It was stated you cannot cross over with monies from one program to another. You could take money from the Milledgeville Cemetery and give it to Glennville Cemetery if it was needed, because it is in the same program or category. Education and Training is federally funded. (VA dollars carry through to the next fiscal year but State dollars do not.) You could also swap money from Field Operations and Appeals if needed. However, you must get approval from Office of Planning and Budget (OPB).

The Commissioner stated he wanted to propose a 10% across the board raise for GDVS in the 2023 budget. Mr. Whitted stressed that he supported raises for the field only. Both Mr. Kubinec and Ms. Ross stated they believed targeted raises for those making the least amount of money in the field would have a better chance of success with the General Assembly and were not supportive of across the department raises.

Mr. Kubinec asked what the priorities of the Department were. He wanted to know how the department could increase the salaries of the people in the field. Commissioner Roby stated when somebody retires or resigns, they try to take part of the earnings of the people that left and give raises to the people in the field an increase, usually about 4%. The agency has a Merit base list of people in the field. Otherwise, we need an increase in our budget. The Board said they would talk about it at next month's meeting.

There is an election of officers at the March meeting.

There was discussion about the March board meeting. Mr. Whitted made a motion to have the next Board Meeting on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at 12:30 p.m. by video conference call. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cravey. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Whitted made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cravey. The motion passed by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

SIGNED:

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Patricia Ross, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Takosha Swan, Secretary

The next Veterans Service Board meeting will be held via video/telephone conference call on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 12:30 p.m. The WEB X link and password is:

<https://cgtc.webex.com/webappng/sites/cgtc/meeting/download/6cc051625839978b0cb4f6c4004010b4>

Or by calling 1-408-418-9833 Access Code 120 486 3772.




Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.  
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting  
Atlanta, Georgia

SIGNED:

Patricia Ross  
Patricia Ross, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
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