

Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.
Minutes - Veterans Service Foundation Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Present Mr. Joe Higgins, Chair
 Mr. David Goode, Vice Chair
 Ms. Samantha Brown-Parks, Secretary
 Mr. Wyatt Batchelor, Treasurer
 Ms. Meredith Magnus, Member
 Mr. John Phillips, Member
 Mr. Rick White, Member
 Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner
 Mr. Mark Demers, Foundation CEO, Grants Implementation Manager, GDVS
 Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS
 Ms. Julie Hammond, Foundation CFO, Commissioner's Executive Assistant, GDVS

On Thursday, August 8, 2024, the Veterans Service Foundation Board meeting was held in person and by video/tele-conference.

Joe Higgins called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. Everyone was introduced.

Mr. Goode made a motion to approve the June minutes. Ms. Brown-Parks seconded the motion. The motion passed.

REPORT ON STATUS OF FUNDING:

The funds in the account are allocated as follows:

General Funds	\$36,834.79
Homelessness	\$ 9.41
Suicide Prevention Summit	\$50,300.00
Women & Diversity	\$ 1,124.72
 TOTAL	 \$88,268.92

The funds for the Suicide Prevention Summit were donated as a grant by DBHDD. The invoices should be coming in soon for that event.

The Meet and Greet with Gov. and First Lady Kemp raised \$18,050.00. That is the most significant influx of funding in the past year. Thanks to Mr. Batchelor for setting up the event. All feedback from the event has been positive. Commissioner Ross stated that she would send out thank you cards to the attendees of the event.

OLD BUSINESS:

GDVS is going to do a mockup of a nametag for Foundation board members. Commissioner Ross will send the mockup to everyone so they can see it and also confirm how they want their names to appear on the nametag.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Military Graveside Ceremony for PFC Buck Bagley will be on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at the Evergreen Cemetery, 279 Benjamin H Hill Dr E, Fitzgerald, GA 31750.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Higgins nominated himself to serve as Chair for the Board for the upcoming year and Mr. Goode seconded the motion. Ms. Magnus nominated Ms. Greentree to serve as Chair and Ms. Brown-Parks seconded the motion. Ms. Greentree was not present to accept the nomination so elections could not move forward. Ms. Brown-Parks made a motion to table board elections until the next meeting. Mr. Goode seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Wellspring Nonprofit Resource, a company who was scheduled to present their fundraising platform, did not attend the meeting.

Ms. Magnus asked if the Board members had been able to review her email regarding critical administrative issues (see attached). She suggested taking one month to review information and make a determination on steps to take to move forward. She then asked Commissioner Ross to go over the information regarding the critical care unit in Milledgeville.

Commissioner Ross explained that the purpose of the sub-acute therapy unit is to bring in veterans who may have mental or behavioral health issues as well as physical limitations to receive appropriate therapies and care and reintegrate back into society. We received construction funding of \$11 million from the federal government and \$6 million from the state. We have been unable to open the unit due to not receiving the funding from the state. We have not received an increase in funding for the homes for well over a decade. We need funding to get up and running. Once we open the facility, if we are not able to fill it with veterans, the federal government can require us to repay the \$11 million. We have been told that Georgia should have 1,995 beds for veterans in skilled nursing facilities. We have about 340 and are only serving about 13% of the population the VA says we should be serving. The sub-acute unit is not yet opened because the IT equipment is still being delivered. Once it is ready to open, we need to be ready to fill it because that is when the VA could ask for the funds to be repaid. Commissioner Ross has met with members of the appropriations committees for the House and

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Senate, and also with the Governor's Office of Budget and planning to explain the need for increased funds. The more voices the House, Senate, and other state leaders hear about the importance of this need, the better it will be. We are working on a 1-2 page summary of the need and expect the draft soon. This document will be disseminated to the Board once it is ready to use.

Ms. Magnus suggested that the Board takes the next month to get their strategic plan in place. Mr. Goode concurred that we need a strategy to move forward. Mr. Goode moved that we schedule a meeting in one month. Mr. Phillips seconded the motion. The next meeting was scheduled for September 12, 2024. Officer elections will also take place at this meeting.

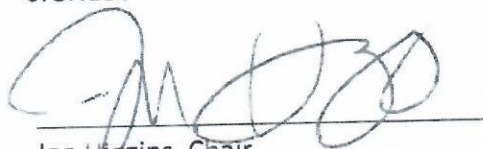
The Foundation's Bylaws are being reviewed by the Department of Administrative Services. The setup for the Board is different from the Veterans Service Board. This board consists of volunteers, whereas the members of the Veterans Service Board are considered employees of the State.

UGA Law School offers assistance to veterans. Mr. Goode is going to send the information to the board members. Commissioner Ross noted that they can also receive assistance from Emory Law and Atlanta's John Marshall Law School.

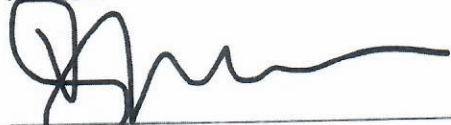
Ms. Magnus requested that Commissioner Ross send the Georgia State Veterans' Homes Needs Assessment and the Strategic Plan to the Board members.

Mr. Goode made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Brown-Parks seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:53 a.m.

SIGNED:


Joe Higgins, Chair

ATTEST:


Samantha Brown-Parks, Secretary

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EMAIL FROM MS. MAGNUS TO THE BOARD MEMBERS:

Fellow board members,

I want to thank each of you for your support in recommending my appointment to the Foundation Board of Directors. It is my honor to work with you on behalf of Georgia's veterans, active military and their families.

For the past two weeks, I read every document that I could get my hands on and peppered Comm. Ross and her staff with countless questions, of which they have been patient and accommodating.

As I've delved into the Georgia State Veterans' Homes Needs Assessment, GDVS Strategic Plan, Foundation By-laws, Foundation Board Minutes, etc., it appears the Foundation itself needs a strategic plan.

I propose we take the next month to create a framework providing structure, clarity and guidance to fulfill our mission. Below are some items that should be addressed.

Administrative

- Confirm directors and officers (D&O) liability insurance coverage is in place.
- Acquire board member signatures on policies (e.g. Conflict of Interest).
- Create new board member packet.

Action Items

- Determine desired criteria for the five board vacancies.
- Decide on process for identifying prospective board members.
- Assess and prioritize critical needs associated with the Milledgeville Veterans' Home (e.g. Subacute Therapy Unit, contractor compensation).
- Assess and prioritize fund raising objectives to construct two new veterans' homes (Dahlonega and Waycross).
- Create a plan for fund raising (e.g. grant-writing, publicity, events).

I look forward to seeing you on Thursday and discussing the future of the Foundation.

With best regards,
Meredith Magnus