



Present: Mr. Joe Higgins, Chair
Mr. Wyatt Batchelor, Vice Chair
Mr. Bob McMahon, Secretary
Mr. Alan Danzig, Member
Mr. John Phillips, Member
Mr. Destry Rogers, Member
Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner
Ms. Shelley Seinberg, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Amy Sillmon, 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, Chief Operations Officer, GDVS
Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information and External Affairs, GDVS
Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS

On Thursday, January 8, 2026, the Veterans Service Foundation Board meeting was held by video/tele-conference. The members and visitors listed above were present.

Mr. Higgins called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Mr. McMahon made a motion to approve the minutes of the December meeting, which were previously distributed to members to review. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OFFICER REPORTS

Ms. Thompson did not have anything to report.

Ms. Holstick did not have anything to report.

Ms. Hammond stated that she had sent out the report below for members to review before the meeting. There were no questions.

The funds in the accounts are allocated as follows:

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General Funds	\$43,930.26
Annual Training	\$ 171.42
Homelessness	\$ 106.21
New Homes	\$ 1,025.00
State Benefit Book Ads	\$ 59.23
Suicide Prevention Hardware	\$ 1,383.06
Suicide Prevention Summit	\$ 3,299.47
<u>Women & Diversity</u>	<u>\$ 314.53</u>
TOTAL	\$50,289.18

One additional donation was added to the total because it was transacted in December. Ms. Hammond completed mailing out the giving statements to everyone who had made donations to the Foundation in 2025.

DIRECTOR ACTIVITY REPORTS

Mr. Danzig reported that last month his Legion Post hosted the National Commander and also the State Commander for the Legion, Michael Schwartz. Commander Schwartz affirmed that he already works with the Department to help meet our goals.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. May reported that she is waiting for the invoice to arrive for the brochures. Once the invoice is paid, the brochures will be printed and should arrive in about three to four weeks. We can then distribute them to Foundation members.

For the record, the Foundation Board held an electronic vote between meetings to approve paying for the brochures out of Foundation funds.

Commissioner Ross updated the Board on the Fox Suicide Prevention Grant. We will be revising what we do under the grant, with more case management and providing financial support to those who meet the mental health criteria of the grant. We submitted a new budget proposal to the VA which they will be able to accept in April. In the past we have done outreach and training events. Now we hope to provide funding for financial needs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Higgins announced that the Savannah VA Clinic was shut down most of yesterday and today so far due to a water line break that flooded half of the clinic. Mr. Phillips noted that the same thing recently happened at the Cobb County Clinic.

Mr. Higgins announced that after six years, he came out of the seat as Chairman of the Veterans Council. That will free him up to spend more time on Foundation business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. McMahon made a motion that the homeless issue will continue to be the Board's primary focus for 2026. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously after discussion. Mr. McMahon noted that he believes the homeless issue is the best way to use Foundation funds to help veterans and where we can make a difference. Mr. Rogers asked how we plan to spend the funds we raise. Mr. Higgins answered that the funds will go to meet the needs as determined by GDVS. Mr. Danzig noted that the Foundation paperwork states that we raise funds for the construction and maintenance of the nursing homes, so we need to add homelessness to that statement. Mr. Phillips mentioned that Georgia will be doing their PIT count in January and suggested everyone learn how that takes place. He asked if the Department of Community Affairs could join our next meeting to explain how the process works, where they get their data, and what happens to the data.

Mr. McMahon made a motion to allow funds to be raised and used for the Woman Veteran of the Year Luncheon that will take place on March 13 in Douglasville. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rogers requested an update on the investigation into the people who pretended to be with Sen. Ossoff's office to get into the Milledgeville War Veterans Home. Sen. Ossoff's office had contacted Capitol Police who determined that the group did misrepresent themselves. Their investigation is complete and they are not taking any further action. We did put a formal visitor's policy into place.

Mr. Rogers also asked about how many open beds we have and about getting homeless persons into the Homes and what this would entail. Commissioner Ross stated that 23 of 40 beds have been filled in the sub-acute unit. Applications have slowed, perhaps in response to the newspaper articles being written about the Home. We have a legislative initiative that Sen. Rick Williams has agreed to sponsor, specifically making it possible for veteran spouses and Gold Star family members to be allowed as patients in the Homes, as long as this stays below 25% of the number of patients in the facility. For a

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homeless person to be allowed into the Home, a VA physician would have to sign off saying they require skilled nursing care and that they can't perform their daily duties without assistance.

Mr. Higgins announced that the next meeting will be on February 5 at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Higgins adjourned the meeting at 10:34 a.m.

SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Higgins", written over a horizontal line.

Joe Higgins, Chair

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob McMahon", written over a horizontal line.

Bob McMahon, Secretary