

**Thursday, July 6, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.**  
**Minutes - Veterans Service Foundation Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

Present      Ms. Shon Barnwell, Member  
                 Mr. Wyatt Batchelor, Member  
                 Ms. Samantha Brown-Parks, Member  
                 Mr. David Goode, Member  
                 Mr. Joe Higgins, Member  
                 Mr. John Phillips, Member  
                 Mr. Rick White, Member  
                 Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner  
                 Mr. Mark Demers, Foundation CEO, Grants Implementation Manager, GDVS  
                 Mr. Kerry Dyer, Foundation COO, Chief Operations Officer, GDVS  
                 Ms. Julie Hammond, Foundation CFO, Commissioner's Executive Assistant, GDVS  
                 Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information and External Affairs, GDVS  
                 Ms. Shareka Monday-Robinson, Director, Human Resources, GDVS  
                 Ms. Monica Dorsey, Communications & Outreach Specialist, GDVS

On Thursday, July 6, 2023, the Veterans Service Foundation Board meeting was held in person and by video/tele-conference.

Commissioner Ross called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS:**

Each Board member gave a brief introduction. GDVS employees also introduced themselves to the Board.

**OVERVIEW OF BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Board is an extension of GDVS and the Veterans Service Board, which is the governing Board of GDVS. This Board will work together to support veterans in Georgia by connecting and finding resources. The Board will establish priorities to meet the needs of Georgia's veterans.

Commissioner Ross sent an overview to members before the meeting. See Attachment 1.

**APPROVAL OF BYLAWS:**

The Bylaws have been revised to reflect the changes in law regarding the Veterans Service Foundation Board. Meetings will now be held quarterly instead of annually. Membership has been expanded from 7 members to up to 13 members, some of which can be non-veterans. Family members and others will now have an opportunity to serve on this Board.

As the Board expands and grows, the Bylaws can be reviewed, and changes made.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the Bylaws as written. Ms. Brown-Parks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

An overview of position responsibilities was given. The Chair will coordinate the meetings, ensure there is a quorum for each meeting, keep track of who will be attending meetings, and sign meeting minutes. The Vice Chair will step in for the Chair if the Chair is unavailable. The Secretary will assist in capturing the minutes and signing them. The Treasurer will track funding. Terms are for one year.

Mr. Joe Higgins volunteered to serve as Board Chair. Mr. White made a motion that Mr. Higgins serve as Chair. Mr. Phillips seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. David Goode volunteered to serve as Board Vice Chair. Ms. Brown-Parks made a motion that Mr. Goode serve as Vice Chair. Mr. White seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Samantha Brown-Parks volunteered to serve as Board Secretary. Mr. Higgins made a motion that Ms. Brown-Parks serve as Secretary. Mr. Goode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Wyatt Batchelor volunteered to serve as Board Treasurer. Mr. Higgins made a motion that Mr. Batchelor serve as Treasurer. Mr. Goode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **REPORT ON STATUS OF FUNDING:**

A spreadsheet was presented which shows an accounting of income and expenditures for the Foundation. The Synovus account, opened by the original members of the Foundation Board, has a remaining balance of \$186.71. This account will be closed, and the funds transferred to the Truist account.

The activity on the Truist account was summarized. The remaining balance is currently \$12,119.75. Of that, approximately \$1,252.85 are the remaining funds that have been designated to the activities of Ms. Veda Brooks, the Women Veterans and Diversity Coordinator.

#### **FUNDING PRIORITIES:**

Mr. Batchelor suggested that we establish a budget and then establish the spending priorities based on that budget. Mr. White questioned if we are registered with the Secretary of State's Office, which we are.

Commissioner Ross made the following observations:



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- ❖ States around us have had Foundations for many years and are well-established. We are just beginning.
- ❖ We have to decide if we are going to work with community based organizations, or help individuals.
- ❖ We need to decide if there is a certain dollar amount that can be spent without the Board's approval as long as it falls within the priorities established by the Board. Will the Chair and Treasurer need to be a part of all approvals, or can the CEO, COO and CFO do this within a certain dollar amount?
- ❖ We are hiring a Business Analyst to help track finances for the Foundation.
- ❖ There is the long term ability in the law for a Director of the Foundation, which would be funded through the Foundation.

Mr. Phillips asked if there is an established chart of authority. There is not since we never had the funds to make this necessary.

Commissioner Ross briefly explained the platform GDVS has that provides for grant applications and award funding.

Mr. Higgins suggested that we work with community partners and organizations and focus on supporting those organizations. Commissioner Ross explained the Unite Us platform. We have 400 community based organizations which have joined the platform so far. The program provides insights, with heat maps that show where the needs are. So far it shows the most need around military installations and in Metro Atlanta. Food and housing are top priorities based on need.

Ms. Barnwell suggested using a corporate fundraising organization, which takes a percentage of monies raised. Commissioner Ross will check with the Attorney General's Office to make sure this is not prohibited.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The Board decided to meet quarterly. Some possible dates will be sent out to determine what works best. It will be a combination virtual and in-person meeting, set up at the GDVS.

Mr. Goode recognized Mr. Higgins and the assistance given when he was navigating his dad's hospice care.


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The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:07 a.m.

SIGNED:

  
Joe Higgins, Chair

ATTEST:

  
Samantha Brown-Parks, Secretary



## ATTACHMENT 1

**Mission Statement:** To serve Georgia's veterans through direct assistance or indirectly by working with trusted community partners to provide support at a hyper-local level.

**About us:** The Georgia Veterans Service Foundation, Inc. (GVSF) is a federal 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to better meet the needs of Georgia's almost 700,000 veterans. Structured under Georgia Department of Veterans Service, there are no administrative costs allowing for 100% of funds to meet veterans' needs.

The GVSF works to distribute funds raised to individual veterans or to thoroughly vetted and trustworthy community partners that are already well-established locally across the state. Partner organizations work on the front lines to serve veterans and their families. It is the Foundation's goal to provide supplemental help to community partners who provide direct services to veterans and their families through the generous gifts of individuals, families, organizations, and businesses who share our passion and commitment to veterans and service members.

### **How we serve Georgia's veterans:**

The Georgia Veterans Service Foundation works to secure funds and in-kind goods to conduct our mission to:

- Connect veterans to resources and organizations sufficiently equipped to address their specific needs.
- Provide supplemental funds to organizations working directly with veterans in every aspect and in every community throughout Georgia.
- Partner with federal, state, and community-based organizations to improve awareness and facilitate the expansion of employment and transition opportunities for veterans.
- Promote and expand Georgia's state war veterans' homes and cemeteries.
- Educate the public about veterans' affairs and issues important to this community.

**GOALS for FY2024** – to provide temporary assistance to veterans, enabling them to have time to become self-sufficient (assistance is available once per fiscal year).

- Temporarily house veterans and their families up to 30 days while working on permanent housing solutions and employment for 300 veterans/families for an average across the state of \$100/night (\$900,000)
- Provide rental/mortgage and first month's deposit assistance for veterans and their families not to exceed two months (\$1,500) for 200 veterans/families (\$300,000) to keep them permanently housed.
- Provide utility assistance not to exceed two months (\$1,000) for 200 veterans/families (\$200,000) to include overdue utility payments.
- Provide transportation costs for education and/or employment for up to 30 days (\$30/day) for 400 veterans/families (\$360,000)

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- Provide financial assistance for childcare to enable education and/or employment for up to 30 days (\$100/day) for 150 veterans/families (\$450,000)
- Provide food and gas assistance not to exceed a total of \$400 for the year for 2,000 veterans/families (\$800,000)
- Provide cremation or casketing assistance to families unable to afford funeral services not to exceed \$2000 for 100 veterans (\$200,000)
- Provide funding for essential medical expenses (co-pays, medicine, etc.) not to exceed \$2,000 for 100 veterans (\$200,000)
- Provide matching funding to establish a new Georgia War Veteran Home (\$22,750,000) as the Department of Veterans Affairs will provide 65% of construction costs for a total construction cost estimated at \$66,000,000.

Donors will be able to designate funds for a specific use. The GVSF through a grant and vetting process will provide funds to the community organization to directly assist the veteran or if a need is not supported by a trusted community partner, will provide direct support.