



VETERANS TRUST FUND OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Board Meeting Minutes

12 December 2023

- I. **Call to Order:** The Board Meeting of the SC Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF) was called to order at 1300, by Mr. Dale Ellenburg, Chairman.
- II. **Attendance:**
 - A. Present: Dale Ellenburg, Melvin Poole, Jim Hawk, Shawn T. Pinkston, Secretary Todd McCaffrey, David E. Finley, Stephen L. Jones, Nick A. Mesenburg, Dr. Ada D. Stewart
 - B. Absent: Nancy B. Dunn, Brenda L. Stewart, Dr. Nikki Wooten, Mark A. Singleton
- III. **Minutes:** Minutes from the 20 September 2023 meeting were read and approved by those in attendance.
- IV. **Remarks from Todd McCaffrey, Secretary, SCDVA:**
 - A. Veterans' Trust Fund:
 - i. A \$2 million budget request was made for the Veterans' Trust Fund. This would help get the Trust Fund over the \$1 million threshold.
 - ii. Requested guidance from the General Assembly regarding fundraising authority. It is currently implied in the law but want fundraising authorization in the law. Senator Shealy will be the sponsor.
 - iii. Membership: The Trust Fund is not in compliance with the law at this time. For example, there are no County Veterans Affairs currently on the Trust Fund board. Not sure how this will work out as these are gubernatorial appointments.
 - iv. Section 25-21-20, which addresses membership requirements and terms states:

(A) There is created the Board of Trustees for the Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina composed of eleven voting members. The Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint the board consisting of seven members selected at large, two members currently serving as county veterans' affairs officers, and two members who represent veterans' service organizations. Of the seven members appointed at large, three must come from a rural county as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Of the eleven appointed members, at least six must be United States Armed Forces veterans. Any veteran who serves on the board, must have been honorably discharged from the armed services. No more than one appointed member may reside in the same county. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall serve as the Executive Director of the Trust Fund and an ex officio non-voting member of the board. The

members of the board shall elect officers from among themselves as necessary and shall utilize the staff of the Veterans' Affairs Department in order to carry out its duties, as provided in Section 25-21-30.

(B) Individuals appointed at large by the Governor shall serve four-year terms, and the remaining initial appointees shall serve two-year terms. Upon the expiration of the terms of those members initially appointed, the term of office for the members of the board is four years, and until their successors are appointed and qualify. Members may succeed themselves; however, no member may serve more than two consecutive terms or eight continuous years, whichever is greater. A member shall not serve on the board in a hold-over capacity at the conclusion of his term for more than 180 days. Vacancies on the board must be filled in the same manner as the initial appointment for the unexpired term.

B. County Veterans Affairs Offices

- i. SCDVA is requesting that there be two full-time employees in each County Veterans Affairs Office, which is not the case in 11 counties.
- ii. Not all counties are members of the SC Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers.

C. Military Enhancement Fund:

- i. SCDVA administers the Military Enhancement Fund as directed in Budget Provisos which state, "Funds appropriated to the department for the Military Enhancement Plan may be allocated to items including but not limited to, land acquisition, recreational purposes, education purposes, and facilities for military personnel. Eligible recipients are counties and municipalities with federal military installations."
- ii. S.3934 was introduced in 2023 by Representative Hixon to provide that Fort Eisenhower (fka Fort Gordon) be designated a South Carolina federal military installation so it can apply for grants from the Military Enhancement Fund. Aiken and surrounding counties cannot apply without this designation.

D. Veteran Homelessness:

- i. Two years ago, the General Assembly appropriated \$10 million to address Veteran Homelessness in South Carolina.
- ii. A grant program was created to provide up to \$250,000 in grants after the first of the year. Hope to have the first grant out by 1 July.
- iii. If appropriated monies are not spent, they would carry over into the next fiscal year.

B. Veteran Homes transitioning from DMH to SCDVA, effective 1 July 2024:

- i. Five contract Veteran Homes will be transferred over on 1 July 2024 and Stone Pavilion, a 90-bed facility, will transfer over 1 July 2025.
- ii. Four of the Veteran Homes are contracted to a third-party vendor, HMR out of Anderson. A Request for Proposal for the fifth Veteran Home, which is in Sumter and is expected to be completed in Spring or early Summer, should be going out soon.
- iii. Future construction of Veteran Homes in Horry County, Orangeburg County, and Lexington County would bring the total number of beds to 1,089, which according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, is the number of beds South Carolina is authorized.

V. Bylaws Discussion (draft bylaws were passed to board members:

- A. Mrs. Clark, General Counsel for SCDVA explained these were administrative changes and bringing the bylaws into compliance with the statute and grouping like with like.
- B. Terms: Under the changes to the statute, board members can serve no more than two four-year terms (eight years). The position of the Chair is a two-year term, but there is no limit on the number of terms. **Motion and Vote:** Mr. Jones introduced a motion to accept the bylaws as amended; seconded by Dr. Stewart; passed unanimously.

VI. New Business:

- A. There was no Secretary's report at this time.
- B. Treasurer's Report was reviewed with the Board and accepted as read.
- C. Committee Reports:
 - Investment/Financial Strategy Committee, David Finley, Chair: Nothing to report at this time.
 - Public Relations/Marketing Committee, Mr. Pinkston:
 - Has shared with Ms. Stewart some things he had put together.
 - Spoke with the Daughters of the American Revolution over Veterans Day weekend about services and benefits for those who need them. A Navy nurse was the only Veteran in the group and discussed reaching out to sisters across the state to get the \$2 million requested in the state budget.
 - Discussion regarding the \$2 million requested: The Veterans Trust would be able to do fundraising; SCDVA would help with the advertising. SCDVA does not have a resourcing arm, which is why the Veterans' Trust Fund is important. Policies can be established to allow for restricted funds and unrestricted funds.
 - Long-Range Planning Committee, Mr. Mesenburg: Nothing to report at this time.

VII. Items for Discussion:

- A. Mr. Ellenburg reintroduced for consideration the request from Honor Flight SC who requested \$21,000. The issues with the Secretary of State's office have been resolved.
 - i. Mr. Poole introduced a motion to reconsider. A vote was taken: four in favor, four against – the motion failed.
- B. Donations:

Mr. Hawk suggested uses of the funds remaining for distribution in the Veterans' Trust Fund for 2023: VA Medical Centers, Fisher House, cemeteries, nursing homes, other non-profits, homeless programs, transportation.

It was decided by all present to donate \$9,250 to the Disabled American Veterans and \$9,250 for the Center on Aging to be used in their transportation programs for Veterans.
- C. Meeting dates for 2024 are:
 - 13 March
 - 12 June
 - 11 September
 - 11 December

- D. Grants requests:
 - i. Should be submitted by 1 July
 - ii. Will be discussed in September
 - iii. Grant awards will be in December

VIII. Items for Next Meeting:


- A. Ms. Stewart to put something strong together that the Board members can use when talking about the Veterans' Trust Fund – will create a "one voice" slide deck with branding.
- B. Dr. Wooten to draft an Executive Summary or Abstract about the Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina
- C. Suggestions for Fundraisers:
 - i. Mr. Jones suggested a fundraiser at the York Town Museum. Calls would need to be made to key people to plan an event.
 - ii. Golf Tournament

IX. Identification of Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina will be at 1300 on 13 March 2024 at SCDVA at 1800 Saint Julian Place, Suite 305, Columbia, SC 29204

X. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned.



TerryLynn Di Chiara, Secretary



Date of Approval



Dale Ellenburg, Chair
Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina



Date of Approval