



## VETERANS TRUST FUND OF SOUTH CAROLINA

### Board Meeting Minutes

20 September 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, Jim Hawk, Shawn T. Pinkston, Secretary Todd McCaffrey, Nancy B. Dunn, David E. Finley, Stephen L. Jones, Dr. Nikki Wooten, Mark A. Singleton
  - B. Absent: Melvin Poole, Nick A. Mesenburg, Dr. Ada D. Stewart, Brenda L. Stewart
- III. **Minutes:** Minutes from the 14 June 2023 meeting were read and approved by those in attendance.
- IV. **Remarks from Todd McCaffrey, Secretary, SCDVA:**
  - A. *Mission – What We Do: Help South Carolina Veterans thrive!* (handout)
    - i. There is no standard for a thriving Veteran.
    - ii. What Veterans are entitled to is less than what they deserve.
  - B. *Enabling a Coalition – What it Takes to Make a Network Effective* (handout)
    - i. Have to resource, integrate, and couple – the missing leg is resourcing.
  - C. Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina
    - i. Veterans' Trust Fund could be the principal resourcing arm.
    - ii. The Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints board members.
    - iii. SCDVA could advise the Board where to provide money for Veterans.
    - iv. \$2 million in state appropriations has been requested for the Veterans' Trust Fund – this is not a huge amount. Board Members need to reach out to their legislative delegations and ask them to be supportive. This would help the Veterans' Trust Fund get over the \$1 million dollar threshold.
    - v. May need a slight modification for fundraising. Need to get the legislature to make this more explicit.
    - vi. Resourcing could allow the Veterans' Trust Fund to become more effective, and act independently so they cannot be accused of picking favorites.
    - vii. People don't know what the Veterans' Trust Fund does; its mission is buried in the SC Code of Laws.

**D. Earmarked Funds**

- i. SC General Assembly passed \$34 million to SCDVA in earmarked funds. \$17 million went to non-profits, and \$15 million to a museum at Shaw. SCDVA could advise where to spend the money for the most impact if the earmarked funds were disbursed to the Veterans' Trust Fund.
  - 1. Typical perspective is homelessness, drug addiction, etc.
  - 2. Veterans on the thriving side could be helped with education skills, etc.
  - 3. A lot of legislators want to support Veterans but don't have specific non-profits in mind.

**E. State Budget**

- i. For FY 2024, SCDVA received \$5.3 in operating and personnel; \$1.16 million for four cemetery personnel, \$600,000 for cemetery improvements (raise and align headstones); \$255,000 for the VSO Honor Guard program.
- ii. For FY 2025, SCDVA is requesting \$115,000 to build out a VTAP (Virtual Transition Assistance Program) for those separating from the military. This will be an app on your phone, which is a part of the Coalition package. SCDVA is also requesting \$100,000 for the Palmetto Pathfinder Program.
- iii. The budget for FY 2025 will be submitted in two parts. The first part will be for the existing agency and the second part will be for everything associated with the transfer of Veterans Homes.

**V. Bylaws Updates:**

**A. Article VII: Officers of the Board of Trustees**

- i. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs serves as the Executive Director of the Trust Fund and is an ex officio non-voting member of the board.
- ii. Board member terms: There was some conversation regarding term limits for board members. Section 25-21-20 (B) of the South Carolina Code of Laws states: "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."
- iii. Mr. Jones moved to leave this section of the bylaws as it is currently written; seconded by Mr. Singleton; passed unanimously.

**B. Article VIII: Duties of the Officers pertaining to finances.**

- i. Currently Jim Hawk and TerryLynn have checking account signature authority.



- ii. Mr. Jones introduced a motion that checking account signatories from the Board will be the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Immediate Past President, and from SCDVA it will be TerryLynn Di Chiara, Executive Assistant, and Colleen Clark, General Counsel. This was seconded by Mr. Singleton and passed unanimously. Fanta Coleman, Director of Resource Management, will be responsible for balancing the accounts and financial reports. At no time will both signature lines on a Trust Fund check be signed by SCDVA staff.
- iii. Signatories for the TRUIST Investment account will be Dale Ellenburg, Chair; Jim Hawk, Immediate Past President; and David Finley, Chair of the Investment/Financial Strategy Committee.

**VI. New Business:**

- A. There was no Secretary's report at this time.
- B. Treasurer's Report was reviewed with the Board.
- C. Committee Reports:
  - Investment/Financial Strategy Committee, David Finley, Chair:
    - Mr. Jones introduced a motion that the Trust Fund invest the \$532,893.62 from TRUIST Investment plus \$100,000 from savings. Seconded by Mr. Finley, passed unanimously.
    - Mr. Singleton asked why the Trust Fund used TRUIST Bank and if other banks had been looked at. TerryLynn explained this was the bank the Trust Fund started with because it (BB&T) had the best rates at the time. Several years ago, the Finance Committee checked into the possibility of transferring the accounts to another bank and/or splitting the funds between different banks but then decided to stay with BB&T/TRUIST and do investments.
    - Mr. Jones and Mr. Singleton talked about holding a golf tournament as a fundraiser – it would take several months to put together. There was concern over the financing of a golf tournament. Ms. Clark said there would be no problems as long as the Trust Fund didn't pay for it. Mr. Singleton will be meeting with several sponsors on Friday and is looking at having it in the Spring or early Summer of 2024. One possible location would be to play at the Dunes.
  - Long-Range Planning Committee, Dr. Wooten:
    - Nothing to report at this time.
  - Public Relations/Marketing Committee, Brenda Stewart, Chair:
    - Mr. Pinkston said there was nothing to report at this time.
    - Mr. Singleton asked about the "one over the world" message, he wants to make sure all the board members are saying the same thing.

**VII. Grants:**

- A. Dr. Wooten asked if there was a rule regarding resubmits. There are no restrictions.
- B. Discussion regarding submitted applications:
  - i. Operation Patriots FOB - \$10,000
    - Received \$10,000 from the Trust Fund in June 2022 and \$100,000 in earmarked funds from the General Assembly in 2023

- Mr. Jones introduced a motion to not fund their request at this time, seconded by Mr. Singleton, and passed unanimously.
- ii. Project Golf - \$8,000
  - Mr. Singleton said there was a story done about this group a couple of months ago, and disabled Veterans were very happy with it.
  - Mr. Pinkston introduced a motion to approve their request for \$8,000, seconded by Dr. Wooten, and passed unanimously.
- iii. SFC Charles A. Judge Jr. Memorial Stand Down - \$5,000
  - The paperwork was incomplete.
  - Grant request denied as they did not meet all the requirements.
- iv. Honor Flight SC - \$21,000
  - According to the Secretary of State, this group was dissolved in 2018.
  - Dr Wooten introduced a motion to deny, the application is incomplete and cannot be reviewed, seconded by Mr. Pinkston, and passed unanimously.
- v. Footprint, Inc. - \$10,000
  - Discussion: Help homelessness and have outreach. Their application generates more questions than answers.
  - Mr. Singleton introduced a motion to deny their request, seconded by Dr. Wooten, a majority voted to deny, Mr. Pinkston disagreed.
- vi. Guiding Reins - \$24,000
  - Discussion: Studies show these programs are helpful. Concern that none of the mental health providers are licensed in South Carolina.
  - Mr. Pinkston introduced a motion to deny their request, seconded by Mr. Singleton, passed unanimously.

**VIII. Items for Next Meeting:**

- 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
- Dr. Wooten to draft an Executive Summary or Abstract about the Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina
- Be prepared to discuss possible donations to charities (e.g. Fisher House, Veterans Homes, etc.)

**IX. Identification of Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Board of Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina will be at 1300 on 12 December 2023 at SCDVA at 1800 Saint Julian Place, Suite 305, Columbia, SC 29204

**X. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned.**

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TerryLynn Di Chiara, Secretary

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Date of Approval

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Dale Ellenburg, Chair  
Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina

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Date of Approval