

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT, FINANCE, PERSONNEL, AND PUBLIC RETIREMENT

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2026 Interim

August 5, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The third meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on General Government, Finance, Personnel, and Public Retirement was held on August 5, 2026, at 9:00 AM (ET)/ 10:00 AM (CT) in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Chris Freeland, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representatives Chris Freeland, Co-Chair; Walker Thomas, Co-Chair; Senator Michael J. Nemes; and Representatives Al Gentry, Erika Hancock, Mark Hart, Kevin Jackson, and Matt Lockett.

Guests: Shane Stevens, Legislative Oversight Analyst, Legislative Research Commission (LRC); Holly Tracy, Legislative Oversight Analyst, Legislative Research Commission (LRC); and Juan Renaud, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).

LRC Staff: Joseph Holt, Emma Mills, and Jennifer Luttrell.

Approval of Minutes

Representative Lockett moved to approve the minutes from July 1, 2026. Representative Jackson seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Veterans Centers Update

Shane Stevens and Holly Tracy, Legislative Oversight Analysts for the Legislative Research Commission (LRC), provided an updated report on Kentucky Veterans Centers that was originally presented to the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee in January 2026.

In response to Representative Lockett's question, Mr. Stevens explained that veteran centers offer higher-quality care, better nurse-to-staff ratios, and more comprehensive services. These facilities are generally nicer and receive federal support. Veteran care centers accept residents based on their care needs rather than their payment sources. While there is the option to focus on Medicaid-eligible veterans to lower costs or increase federal funding, the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) prioritizes veterans with the greatest need.

In response to Representative Jackson's questions, Mr. Stevens explained that federal priorities influence the single-occupancy model. Kentucky is adopting this model to enhance residents' quality of life. Individual rooms provide more autonomy, reduce the risk of infectious diseases, and lessen behavioral issues associated with shared living spaces. He agreed that census trends show a declining need for nursing homes, particularly since the draft ended in the mid-1970s. While long-term admission data is insufficient to estimate demand among veterans, an anomaly in Kentucky reveals that, although the total number

of veterans is decreasing, the number at risk for long-term care—those over 65, with disabilities, and living in poverty—is increasing. For further insights, he recommended contacting the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA), which should provide real-time tracking of veterans over 65, with disabilities, and living in poverty in the future.

In response to Chair Freeland's question, Ms. Tracy said each center operates independently. They operate the same; they communicate across the board every week on what they will be doing, but each facility does operate independently. Each facility will have different needs based on their geographic location. Eastern Kentucky seems to be a facility that a lot of us would have staffing problems with. Still, actually, they are staffed the most and historically have had the best staffing when it comes to nurses because that facility in Eastern Kentucky draws people from Eastern Kentucky to work there. It's one of the better places to work and offers better opportunities for them. So, while different facilities do have different needs, it really does depend on your geographic location and staffing needs across the board, but each facility does operate independently. The transition to single-occupancy rooms began in 2013.

In response to Senator Nemes' question, Mr. Stevens noted that evaluating whether more female veterans need nursing homes was outside the report's scope. Demand for single rooms has likely changed. Providing these rooms could alleviate issues in double-occupancy settings, especially when new female residents arrive and require separate

accommodations until they can be grouped.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:47 AM (ET)/10:47 AM (CT).