

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND REVENUE

Budget Review Subcommittee on General Government, Finance, Personnel, and Public Retirement

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2020 Interim

September 16, 2020

Call to Order and Roll Call

The third meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on General Government, Finance, Personnel, and Public Retirement of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue was held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, at 8:30 AM, in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Robby Mills, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Robby Mills, Co-Chair and Representative Jim Stewart III, Co-Chair; Senators Dennis Parrett and Phillip Wheeler; Representatives Kevin D. Bratcher, Jim Gooch Jr., Joe Graviss, Mark Hart, Adam Koenig, Michael Meredith, Suzanne Miles, Jerry T. Miller, Patti Minter, Phillip Pratt, and Nancy Tate.

Guests: Keith Jackson, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA); Dean Stoops, Deputy Commissioner, KDVA; Mark Bowman, Executive Director, Office of Kentucky Veterans' Centers (OKVC); Mike Rodgers, Budget Analyst, OKVC; Stephanie Belt, Budget Specialist III, KDVA; Ben Adams, BG US Army (Ret), Executive Director, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs (KDMA); Rebecca Dittert, Staff Assistant, KDMA; Josh Keats, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS); and, Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director, KOHS.

LRC Staff: Emma Mills, Liz Columbia, Nick Peak, and Spring Emerson.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Representative Pratt to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Senator Wheeler, and the minutes were approved without objection.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Commissioner Jackson and Deputy Commissioner Stoops provided an overview of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and CARES Act funding.

Representative Miles expressed her appreciation for the agency helping out with Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims. Representative Pratt echoed her sentiments, adding that he gets questions regarding UI claims from his constituents on a daily basis.

In response to a question from Chair Mills regarding the Veterans' Centers, Mr. Bowman said their leadership team meets twice weekly to assess the possibility of accepting new patients. He added that a major consideration is access to care, and is not simply an admissions issue. He mentioned zoning systems for distancing both patients and staff members and the increase in need for personal protective equipment as examples.

In response to a question from Representative Bratcher regarding the nursing shortage, Commissioner Jackson replied that they are actively recruiting. Mr. Bowman added that there are continued challenges when filling vacancies and there is still much to do. He said they can only admit the number of patients that can be properly cared for with the staff they have.

Department of Military Affairs

General Adams provided an overview of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and CARES Act funding.

In response to a question from Chair Mills regarding the Kentucky National Guard's presence at violent protests, General Adams said the numbers are based on the need in each individual case and vary based on agency requests through the Governor's office.

In response to a question from Representative Miller regarding elections support, General Adams said he will provide that information later.

Office of Homeland Security

Mr. Keats provided an overview of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and CARES Act funding.

In response to a question from Chair Mills regarding teleworking, Mr. Keats said if the agency is required to maintain their staffing at current levels, they are equipped to do so, and approximately ninety percent of the work can be done remotely.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18AM.