

# LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

## Minutes

January 15, 2026

### Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee was held on Thursday, January 15, 2026 upon adjournment of both chambers, at approximately 3 p.m. in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Greg Elkins, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### Present were:

Members: Senator Greg Elkins, Co-Chair; Representative Scott Sharp, Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll, Gerald A. Neal, Matt Nunn, Aaron Reed, Reginald L. Thomas, and Phillip Wheeler; Representatives John Blanton, Lindsey Burke, Adrielle Camuel, Matt Lockett, Steve Riley, Tom Smith, and Wade Williams.

Guests: Chuck Myers, chief executive officer, Quarterhill; Bradley Copenhaver, legal counsel, Quarterhill; Mark Bowman, executive director, Office of Kentucky Veterans Centers; Lily Patteson, legal counsel, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs; Senator Jimmy Higdon, District 14.

LRC Staff: Committee Staff Administrator William Spears; Committee Analysts Jacob Blevins, Austin Fraley, Christopher T. Hall, Taylor Johnston, Jonathan Rickett, Austin Sprinkles, Shane Stevens, Joel S. Thomas, and Holly Tracy; and Research Assistant Maegan Mohr.

### Approve Minutes from November 13, 2025

Upon motion by Representative Lockett and second by Senator Wheeler the minutes for the November 13, 2025, meeting were approved without objection.

### Quarterhill Testimony Regarding RiverLink Tolling Operations for Louisville Bridges

Chuck Myers, chief executive officer of Quarterhill and legal counsel Bradley Copenhaver, testified about Quarterhill's experience as the outgoing toll contractor for RiverLink, the toll system monitoring the bridges linking Louisville, Kentucky, and Jeffersonville, Indiana. In his presentation, Mr. Myers addressed concerns from the Transportation Committee regarding revenue collected by Quarterhill, the company's operating and administrative costs, and the company's customer service practices. Their full presentation is available on the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee webpage.

In response to questions from Senator Higdon, Mr. Myers answered that one of the major takeaways from Quarterhill's experience as the outgoing contractor for RiverLink is to listen to

industry experts rather than consultants. Typically, agencies pick consultants to write contracts for vendors like Quarterhill, which creates a conflict in providing both the vendor and consumer with the best service. In the past, consultants were former toll agency operators who wrote contracts requiring only what was necessary of the vendor. Now, contracts have more extensive requirements.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Myers believed that the vendor that preceded Quarterhill left the partnership due to contractual disputes.

In response to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Myers answered that increased toll collection was due to increased traffic as well as increased tolls.

In response to a question from Senator Elkins, Mr. Myers attributed a \$34 million increase in revenue from 2023 to 2024 to Quarterhill being contracted for only the last 3 months of 2023.

In response to a question from Senator Higdon, Mr. Myers said that Quarterhill had an 85 percent collection rate because enforcing collection can be difficult without more intense measures like registration holds. Mr. Copenhaver said there is a discount for customers who use a transponder to pay tolls.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Mr. Myers said that RiverLink employed a single engineering consulting firm.

### **Staff Report on Veterans' Centers**

Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee analysts Shane Stevens and Holly Tracy presented the staff report on Veterans' Centers. Staff's full presentation is available on the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee webpage.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Mr. Stevens confirmed that functional capacity is based only on the number of beds available and does not consider the number of staff available.

In response to a question from Senator Thomas, Mr. Stevens said that the question regarding how federal government shutdowns affect the state's veterans' centers would be better answered by the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs representatives.

In response to a question from Representative Lockett, Mr. Stevens answered that each veterans' center had different procedures for communicating with applicants regarding waitlists and that staff recommends a standardized database to streamline the decision process. Ms. Tracy stated that each facility operates independently in regards to applicants.

### **Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs Response to Staff Report**

Mark Bowman, executive director of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) and Lily Patteson, legal counsel for KDVA presented the agency's response to the LOIC staff report.

Mr. Bowman said the report was a platform to provide better data in a more transparent way to serve veterans, families, and the General Assembly. Plans are in place to implement a better system by which applications are reviewed, accepted or declined, and how those decisions are communicated to applicants.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Mr. Bowman said that KDVA has maintained the certified capacity of beds because officials at KDVA were concerned that reporting the functional capacity would be misunderstood. The LOIC recommendation for formalized reporting would help the gap in communication between the agency and the legislature. The time is approaching for a decision on whether to officially progress toward a single-occupancy room standard.

In response to a question from Senator Elkins, Mr. Bowman said KDVA is establishing a system to consistently define and communicate to veterans where they stand in the application process.

In response to a question from Senator Thomas, Mr. Bowman said that a potential government shutdown would have no effect on state veterans' centers since the federal Department of Veterans Affairs ensures that programs for veterans are paid regardless.

In response to a question from Representative Smith, Mr. Bowman said that a study regarding the need for high acuity facilities would reveal Kentucky's need but that solutions would be expensive.

After a roll call vote, the staff report *Kentucky Veterans' Centers* was adopted without objection.

### **Adjournment**

Upon motion by Representative Lockett and second by Senator Reed, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.