

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY AFFAIRS, AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

## **Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2018 Interim**

**November 8, 2018**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The 4th meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection was held on Thursday, November 8, 2018, at 1:00 PM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Albert Robinson, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Albert Robinson, Co-Chair; Representative Tim Moore, Co-Chair; Senators Julian M. Carroll, C.B. Embry Jr., Ernie Harris, Jimmy Higdon, Dennis Parrett, Mike Wilson, and Max Wise; Representatives John Blanton, Tom Burch, Myron Dossett, Chris Fugate, Mark Hart, Ruth Ann Palumbo, Rob Rothenburger, Dean Schamore, and Walker Thomas.

Guests: John Holiday, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security; Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security; Kayla Matola, Critical Infrastructure Special Events Analyst; Colonel Blaine Hedges, Executive Director, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs; Zach Morgan, Executive Assistant, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs; Russ Watts, Project Manager, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs; Fran Ruth, Executive Director, Kentucky Law Enforcement Council; Jack Mattingly, Chairman, Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations; Carlos Pugh, Legislative Officer, Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations; Larry Arnette, Legislative Committee Chair, Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations; Captain James R. Thompson, Executive Officer, Nashville Recruiting Battalion; Lisa Aug, World War I Centennial Committee.

LRC Staff: Jessica Zeh, Jonathan Philpot, and Elizabeth Hardy.

### **Minutes**

Representative Thomas moved to adopt the September 13, 2018, meeting minutes. Representative Hart seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted.

Senator Embry moved to adopt the October 11, 2018, meeting minutes. Senator Wilson seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted.

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

Co-chair Moore led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Kentucky Office of Homeland Security**

John Holiday, Executive Director of Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS) gave updates of the last reporting cycle and highlight geospatial information systems capabilities. In the 2018 reporting cycle, KOHS provided 735 state employees with active shooter aggressor training. He also reported 125 new KOHS Intelligence Liaison Officers (ILOs) received training for both public and private sector partners.

Kayla Matola, Critical Infrastructure Special Events Analyst, expanded on the topic of ILOs. The goal is to train law enforcement and fire personnel on aspects of homeland security, including suspicious activity reporting. These officers become a point of contact between their agency and KOHS.

Mr. Holiday explained that over 106 Kentucky counties have been affected by KOHS. From FY 2017 there was a 26 percent increase in products produced and distributed to different law enforcement agencies. Weekly threat and hazard briefings are sent to Governor Bevin's office. According to the FY 2018 report, 8 counties adopted text-to-911, which is a 100 percent increase from FY 2017. Communication between agencies and KOHS is important, as is providing products that encourage homeland security. For the first time, KOHS received a grant to fund homeland security non-profit grant program for \$127,000. KOHS also received \$200,000 from the US Department of Justice for the school safe initiative. KOHS continues to seek to be used to protect the Commonwealth.

Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director of Kentucky Office of Homeland Security and Administrator of the Kentucky 911 Services Board, stated a 6-month fiscal review was conducted this year and the results showed a misconduct of procedures and past funds had been misappropriated, including \$200,000 funds dedicated to 911 center grants. After the review, a quarter of a million dollars was reimbursed to the grant fund. New policies and procedures were implemented to ensure positive financial reviews in the future.

KOHS contributed to the passage of HB 424 which enforces the integration of 911 services board into homeland security. Paired with 2016 legislation, KOHS was able to decrease operating expenses and saw 25.8 million dollars in receipts for the 911 services board. Mr. Sunseri also discussed the next generation 911. It was explained that instead of a copper based voice only technology, an IP based digital infrastructure that allows voice, text, photos, and videos will be applied once the grant and local funds are received.

In response to Senator Higdon's question, Mr. Sunseri explained that some counties have been updating equipment to embrace next generation 911, but there is no statewide plan. KOHS hopes to implement a statewide plan in 3-4 years.

Responding to Representative Burch, Mr. Holiday said KOHS does not classify every active shooter as a terrorist, but a shooter can absolutely be considered a terrorist. KOHS uses social media and their private sector agencies to try to get participants in active shooter aggressor training.

In response to Senator Carroll, Mr. Holiday explained there are many ways the legislative body could help homeland security in Kentucky. Threats evolve over time, and legislation has a hard time keeping up with those threats. KOHS is not directly involved with the healthcare of veterans once they return from duty. There is no trend that indicates veterans as a threat to the public.

In response to Representative Dossett's comments, Mr. Holiday thanked Representative Dossett for his words and stated that homeland security begins with home town security.

Responding to Representative Rothenburger's question, Ms. Matola explained they try to provide trainings in different areas of the state for ILOs. There are more trainings scheduled this year in London and Frankfort.

In a response to Senator Higdon's comments, Director Holiday said that KOHS uses social media and mass email to inform agencies about grants. He does not understand why more agencies are not applying for the grants.

### **Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs**

Executive Director Colonel Blaine Hedges provided an update on the strategic goals of the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs (KCMA). Defense contracting went from \$5 billion a year in 2016 to \$6.5 billion dollars a year in 2017. The numbers for 2018 will be "staggering." A Humana contract was signed on April 1, 2018 that went from \$25 billion in the last 5 years to \$58 billion. Over 700 hundred jobs were created due to the Humana defense contract.

Colonel Hedges discussed strategic goal number 3, "Develop and Implement the Model for Transitioning Service Members, Veterans, and Spouses." Over the last six months, through an effort of numerous strategic partners, Kentucky has brought in almost \$10 million for transitioning veterans and their spouses. This includes providing them with certifications, training, and job placement. Kentucky is ranked third for most job opportunities for veterans.

Russ Watts, project manager, expanded on the \$10 million grants topic. The Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) grant allowed the project manager to serve as the workforce element role. KCMA received a \$1.5 million grant from the Department of Labor called the Veteran Accelerated Learning for License Occupations (VALO). It provides veterans credit for what they have already accomplished during military service.

Colonel Hedges stated that KCMA is also working toward becoming the country's most military friendly state. A survey was produced and dispersed to relevant individuals and the results provided suggestions for legislators to help achieve this goal. The top four answers KCMA received were changes to the income tax, property tax, education benefits, and hiring of veterans and their spouses.

In response to a question asked by Representative Burch, Colonel Hedges explained he is not aware of any statistics being tracked regarding veterans that had jobs before they went into service. However, he stated that the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) may have more information on that subject.

### **Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations**

Jack Mattingly, Chairman of Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations (JECVO), discussed legislation JECVO has been working on for the upcoming session. The first being charitable gaming. Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) return a large amount of their income back to the community through donations. If that part of the income is taken, a part of the community will suffer as well. Mr. Mattingly explained the importance of having a green alert system. Any veteran that is disabled or mentally challenged goes missing, a search can be started immediately rather than waiting 48 hours. KDVA operating budget is important as well so that veteran's centers can be staffed and operate at full capacity. Expectations of property tax also hurts VSOs in a similar way income tax does because many organizations make charitable donations to their communities. He discussed taxation of pension income for veterans. An adjustment made from \$31,000 to \$41,000 would attract more military retirees to the state.

Carlos Pugh reiterated that charitable gaming is a lifeline for VSOs. It is how bills are paid, programs are funded, and how they help support schools. He will return during the coming session to go into more detail about the charitable gaming issue.

Larry Arnette expressed the importance of having a green alert system. PTSD and other mental disorders are increasing in veterans. Wisconsin implemented a green alert system and has had high success rates. The green alert will allow law enforcement and citizens to adapt to this type of situation as it should be handled differently than an amber alert or golden alert. He said that BR 7 has good intentions but does not fix the property tax problem for VSOs.

In response to Representative Blanton's comments, Mr. Mattingly stated he supports the construction of Veterans nursing home in Magoffin County and the construction of any veteran's nursing homes in Kentucky.

In response to Senator Higdon, Mr. Arnette stated that the federal government does assist with veteran's nursing home costs. The federal government provides each veteran with a per diem which helps cut costs of daily living.

Representative Thomas discussed prefiling bill BR 276 regarding tax exemption of military pensions.

### **ASVAB Career Exploration Program**

Captain Thompson, Executive Officer of the Nashville Recruiting Battalion, discussed the misconceptions of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Career Exploration Program (ASVAB CEP). This test is not just a tool used by recruiters to access students nor does it give a go ahead for recruiters to contact students. The ASVAB CEP is a post-secondary career planning resource. The ASVAB CEP mission is to provide a career exploration program for students and to recognize pre-qualified people for services in the military. Captain Thompson testified that once the ASVAB CEP was no longer required, the number of participants dropped to almost 50 percent in a school year's time.

Schools would save money by opting for the ASVAB CEP versus paying for other career exploration tests. Schools would be working directly with the local recruiter who then works with a military education service specialist who is ultimately responsible for the scheduling of tests, administrating the program, and analyzing results for the schools.

Captain Thompson talked about the benefits of the ASVAB CEP. No matter the test's results, the program will provide the student with a detailed goal-oriented plan on what they need to do to achieve their plan.

### **Resolution**

A resolution celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armistice Day was presented. Co-chair Moore moved to adopt the Resolution. Senator Embry seconded the motion. The resolution is adopted and presented to a KDVA representative.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:54 PM.