

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

## **Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2022 Interim**

**July 20, 2022**

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

The 2nd meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection was held on Wednesday, July 20, 2022, at 10:00 AM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator C.B. Embry Jr., Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator C.B. Embry Jr., Co-Chair; Representative Walker Thomas, Co-Chair; Senators Jimmy Higdon, Stephen Meredith, Robby Mills, Dennis Parrett, Wil Schroder, Whitney Westerfield, and Mike Wilson; Representatives John Blanton, Kevin D. Bratcher, Myron Dossett, Chris Freeland, Al Gentry, Scott Lewis, C. Ed Massey, Bobby McCool, Patti Minter, Scott Sharp, Ashley Tackett Laferty, Bill Wesley, and Buddy Wheatley.

Guests: Kevin Thacker, Floyd County Sheriff's Deputy; Ross Shurtleff, Prestonsburg Deputy Chief of Police; Robbie Williams, Floyd County Judge Executive; Gary Wolfe, Floyd County Constable; Josh Keats, Executive Director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security; Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security; Jeremy Harrell, Founder of Veterans Club INC; James Mangels, Director of Student Services & Personnel, Trigg County Schools; Duncan Wiggins, Chief of Police, Cadiz Police Department; and Steve Bratcher, brother of Representative Kevin Bratcher.

LRC Staff: Jessica Zeh and Logan Schaaf.

On a motion by Senator Meredith and a second by Senator Mills, the June meeting minutes were approved.

### **Discussion and Tribute – Allen, KY**

Representative Ashley Tackett Laferty, Floyd County Sheriff's Deputy Kevin Thacker, Prestonsburg Deputy Chief of Police Ross Shurtleff, Floyd County Judge Executive Robbie Williams, and Floyd County Constable Gary Wolfe paid tribute to the four officers killed in June in Allen, KY: Ralph Frasure, William Petry, Jacob Chaffins, and K-9 Drago.

Representative Blanton thanked the guests for their tributes to the fallen officers and praised the work of first responders, highlighting their sacrifices and service to their communities. He also noted the importance of in-line-of-duty death benefits for the families of police officers.

Representative Tackett Laferty presented citations from the House of Representatives and challenge coins from the VMAPP Committee, which were accepted on behalf of the fallen officers by Deputy Thacker, Deputy Chief Shurtleff, and Judge Williams. She also spoke about mental health services for police officers.

### **Next Generation 911**

Josh Keats, Executive Director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS), and Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director of KOHS, presented on the status of the adoption of Next Generation 911 in Kentucky. Mr. Sunseri highlighted the scope of KOHS operations, the evolution of 911 call centers, the role of the 911 Services Board, funding trends, and the future of Next Generation 911.

Mr. Sunseri explained some of the new features of Next Generation 911 (NG911), including geospatial call routing, text and video to 911, and the connection of all call centers via IP network. He also noted some of the challenges to meeting the NG911 readiness standards at the local level, including ever-diminishing landline fees, understaffed call centers, and enhanced mapping standards. Finally, Mr. Sunseri spoke about the federal NG911 grant program, which provides funds to update Kentucky's NG911 plan, implement statewide GIS mapping, and add a supplemental data portal and aerial photography.

Responding to a question from Senator Higdon, Mr. Sunseri said that to the best of his knowledge, concerns about 5G services near airports do not create any issues for the NG911 program.

Responding to questions from Representative Wheatley, Mr. Sunseri said that the next steps towards implementing the NG911 program will come when legislation is passed increasing funding, which will allow KOHS to survey vendors and determine who can supply the best NG911 system at the most competitive price. Tennessee and Indiana both currently have next generation systems. A typical time to transition to NG911 systems is 18-24 months after funding is secured.

Responding to a question from Senator Higdon, Mr. Sunseri said that a one-time sum of six million dollars would fund the project and help maintain dual systems while transitioning everyone to NG911. He also noted that there would need to be a continuous stream of funding after the transition, which would be classified as a fee rather than a tax.

## **Veterans for School Safety**

Jeremy Harrell, Founder of Veterans Club INC, said that veterans could help protect schools while deterring shootings and other violence. He noted that veterans are dedicated to service and often look for more ways to serve their communities after they get out of the military. Mr. Harrell said that there will need to be processes for certification. Veterans are trained to deal with and respond to high stress situations and want to assist law enforcement in school safety.

Responding to a question from Representative McCool, Mr. Harrell emphasized the importance of proper training to ensure that no additional issues are created.

Responding to a question from Representative Wesley, Mr. Harrell said that the next step is to contact the Department of Criminal Justice Training.

James Mangels, Director of Student Services and Personnel for Trigg County Schools, spoke about the evolution of school safety over the last twenty years. Trigg County Schools are partnered with the Cadiz Police for school resource officers. Mr. Mangels said that he has full confidence in the ability of the Trigg County SROs to respond to any threats.

Representative Dossett praised the SRO program.

Responding to a question from Representative Blanton, Mr. Mangels said that students greatly appreciate their SROs. He also praised the work of students and SROs in preventing a potential violent incident.

Duncan Wiggins, Chief of the Cadiz Police Department, traced the development of school safety procedures in Trigg County. He spoke about the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Reaction Training (ALERRT) program, based out of Texas, which is now the standard for active shooter training. Mr. Wiggins highlighted the importance of funding for active shooter prevention training programs.

Responding to a question from Representative Sharp, Mr. Harrell spoke about some opposition from people concerned about veterans with PTSD, but said the majority of people are supportive.

Representative Thomas said that the ALERRT program would be holding demonstrations in Cadiz in December.

With no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM. The next meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection is August 23, 2022, at 9:00 AM.