

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

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2024 Interim

September 25, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection held its fourth meeting of the 2024 Interim on September 25, 2024, at 11:00 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Rick Girdler, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Rick Girdler, Co-Chair; Representative Walker Thomas Co-Chair; Senators Karen Berg, Gary Boswell, Matthew Deneen, Denise Harper Angel, Jimmy Higdon, Stephen Meredith, Brandon Smith, Gex Williams, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Steve Bratcher, Stephanie Dietz, Myron Dossett, Chris Freeland, Courtney Gilbert, Mark Hart, DJ Johnson, Matthew Koch, Scott Lewis, Candy Massaroni, Marianne Proctor, Scott Sharp, Sarah Stalker, Pamela Stevenson, Ashley Tackett Laferty, and Bill Wesley.

Guests: Colonel (Ret.) Frank Bland, Distinguished Veteran; Shirley Bland; Jane Higdon; Tanya Deneen; Major Todd Kidd, Division of Electronic Services, Kentucky State Police (KSP); Brandon Marshall, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, KSP; Dr. Aaron Thompson, President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education; Dr. Phillip Neal, Acting Executive Vice President and Provost, Kentucky Community and Technical College System; Kelly Jenkins, Executive Director, Kentucky Board of Nursing; Dr. Anyah Hoang-Ansert, Chief Operating Officer, Volunteers of America Mid-States, Dallas Hurley, Senior Project Director of Recovery Ready Communities, VOA Mid-States; Al Duncan, MSG U.S. Army (Ret.), Director of State Veteran Cemeteries, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA); Juan Renaud, Deputy Commissioner, KDVA; and Frank Rogers, Future Operations, JLC Services.

LRC Staff: Jessica Zeh, Mark Mitchell, and Logan Schaaf.

Approval of August Minutes

On a motion and a second, the minutes of the August 28, 2024, meeting were approved by voice vote.

Distinguished Veteran

Senator Jimmy Higdon, Senate District 14, introduced Colonel Frank Bland and his wife,

Shirley, and presented Colonel Bland with a VMAPP Challenge Coin.

Interoperability and Statewide Communications: Kentucky State Police

Major Todd Kidd, Division of Electronic Services, Kentucky State Police (KSP), and Brandon Marshall, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, KSP, provided an overview of KSP's three-phase statewide emergency communications infrastructure plan.

Responding to questions from Senator Williams, Mr. Marshall highlighted the costs and challenges of the plan. He noted that the three-phase plan will cover western, central, and eastern Kentucky, in that order.

Responding to questions from Representative Sharp, Mr. Marshall discussed the timeline for phases two and three, the awarding of grants for emergency communication projects, and the expansion of services into eastern Kentucky.

Representative Johnson requested that a representative from the Finance and Administration Cabinet appear at the October VMAPP meeting to discuss property acquisition issues with potential sites for the emergency communication towers.

Representative Tackett Laferty said she could connect KSP with emergency service representatives from her district ahead of the October VMAPP meeting.

Heroes to Healers

Representative Steve Bratcher, House District 25; Dr. Aaron Thompson, President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education; Dr. Phillip Neal, Acting Executive Vice President and Provost, Kentucky Community and Technical College System; and Kelly Jenkins, Executive Director, Kentucky Board of Nursing, discussed the creation of the Heroes to Healers program, a proposed initiative to help military medics become licensed practical nurses (LPNs).

Responding to a question from Senator Boswell, Representative Bratcher and Dr. Thompson said the Heroes to Healers program could open a path from LPN to registered nurse (RN).

Senator Wilson commended the presenters and the proposed Heroes to Healers program.

Volunteers of America Mid-States

Dr. Anyah Hoang-Ansert, Chief Operating Officer, Volunteers of America Mid-States, and Dallas Hurley, Senior Project Director of Recovery Ready Communities, VOA Mid-States, discussed their history and operations, including support to veterans and first responders. The VOA Honor program includes support services for veteran families, a homeless veteran

reintegration program, and a suicide prevention program.

Responding to a question from Senator Boswell, Dr. Hoang-Ansert said most funding for VOA veterans programs comes from the federal government and private donations.

2024 RS HB 86: Discussion

Representative Bill Wesley, House District 91; Al Duncan, MSG U.S. Army (Ret.), Director of State Veteran Cemeteries, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA); and Juan Renaud, Deputy Commissioner of the KDVA, discussed House Bill 86 from the 2024 Regular Session, which would expand interment eligibility in state veterans' cemeteries to include eligible National Guard and Reserve service members and their families. Representative Wesley said he hopes the bill will pass both chambers in the 2025 Regular Session.

Responding to a question from Senator Higdon, Mr. Duncan explained the criteria for interment eligibility in state veterans' cemeteries.

Representative Tackett Laferty thanked the KDVA for their service to veterans.

eTMS

Frank Rogers, Future Operations, JLC Services, discussed the electroencephalogram combined Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (eTMS) program, a non-invasive, drug-free treatment procedure for a variety of conditions, including substance abuse disorder. Mr. Rogers urged Kentucky to fund an eTMS program, following Ohio, Missouri, and Florida.

Responding to a question from Representative Gilbert, Mr. Rogers discussed the path to securing eTMS funding in Ohio.

Responding to a question from Representative Massaroni, Mr. Rogers discussed the process of patient outreach and referral for veterans and first responders who would like to receive eTMS treatment.

Responding to a question from Co-Chair Girdler, Mr. Rogers said the treatment is effective against both post-traumatic stress and opioid addiction.

Responding to a question from Senator Boswell, Mr. Rogers said eTMS has the potential to save states significant money.

Responding to a question from Senator Higdon, Mr. Rogers estimated a budget request for eTMS in Kentucky would be roughly \$4 million per year.

Adjournment

With no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.