

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

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2025 Interim

August 27, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The third meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection was held on August 27, 2025, at 11:00 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Matthew Deneen, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Matthew Deneen, Co-Chair; Senators Karen Berg, Gary Boswell, Jimmy Higdon, Matt Nunn, Aaron Reed, Craig Richardson, Lindsey Tichenor, Mike Wilson, and David Yates; and Representatives Steve Bratcher, Myron Dossett, Chris Freeland, Chris Fugate, Jim Gooch Jr., Mark Hart, Scott Lewis, Savannah Maddox, Candy Massaroni, Adam Moore, Marianne Proctor, T.J. Roberts, Scott Sharp, Pamela Stevenson, Ashley Tackett Laferty, Walker Thomas, and Bill Wesley.

Guests: Marty Hart, Police Chief, Falmouth Police Department; Nicholas Timon, Assistant Police Chief, Falmouth Police Department; Sergeant Ken Hall, Investigation Supervisor, Falmouth Police Department; Sergeant Broderick Schmeing, Patrol Supervisor, Falmouth Police Department; Officer Matthew Campbell, Falmouth Police Department; Officer Shy Thompson, Falmouth Police Department; Officer Jonathan Bayless, Falmouth Police Department; Chaplain Abraham Crozier, Falmouth Police Department; Marilyn Belcher, Office Manager, Falmouth Police Department; Senator Shelley Funke Frommeyer; Sergeant Major (Ret.) Jimmy Thorne, Distinguished Veteran; Brigadier General (Ret.) Charles T. Jones, Executive Director, Department of Military Affairs; Eric Gibson, Director, Division of Emergency Management; Corey Ann Jackson, Legislative Liaison and Policy Specialist, Department of Military Affairs; Jeff Jones, Daviess County Coroner; Pat Elmore, Hardin County Coroner; and Jeff Ivers, Shelby County Coroner.

LRC Staff: Mark Mitchell, Chris Jacovitch, and Logan Schaaf.

Approval of July Minutes

The minutes of the July 30, 2025, meeting were approved by voice vote.

Falmouth Police Department

Police Chief Marty Hart, Assistant Police Chief Nicholas Timon, Investigation Supervisor Sgt. Ken Hall, Patrol Supervisor Sgt. Broderick Schmeing, Officer Matthew Campbell, Officer Shy Thompson, Officer Jonathan Bayless, Chaplain Abraham Crozier, and Office Manager Marilyn Belcher, all of the Falmouth Police Department, were honored by Representative Hart and Senator Funke Frommeyer for their recent responses to a shootout and a fire, where they saved multiple lives.

Representative Hart and Senator Funke Frommeyer presented each with a legislative citation.

Chair Deneen and Senator Reed thanked the officers and employees for their heroic actions.

Honoring Brian Hatt

Senator Higdon honored Lieutenant Brian Hatt of the Raywick Fire Department, who died on duty on Monday, August 25, 2025.

Distinguished Veteran

Senator Nunn and Representative Maddox honored Vietnam veteran Sergeant Major (Ret.) Jimmy Thorne as the Distinguished Veteran. They presented Mr. Thorne with a VMAPP Challenge Coin.

Department of Military Affairs: Emergency Management Update

Brigadier General (Ret.) Charles T. Jones, Executive Director, Department of Military Affairs; Eric Gibson, Director, Division of Emergency Management; and Corey Ann Jackson, Legislative Liaison and Policy Specialist, Department of Military Affairs, provided an overview of response efforts to recent natural disasters and updated the committee on the Commonwealth Sheltering Program, Disaster Recovery Centers, and the Urban Search and Rescue program.

Responding to Representative Moore, Mr. Gibson discussed the impact of the January, 2025 ice storms, and highlighted efforts to persuade the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to declare a disaster, which would create the opportunity for federal assistance.

Representative Wesley thanked Mr. Gibson for his service to the Commonwealth.

Responding to Senator Boswell, Mr. Gibson said Emergency Management is understaffed, and he and General Jones are working diligently to fill open positions. Mr. Gibson noted that Emergency Management uses contractors in times of extreme need, especially in immediate disaster responses.

Responding to Representative Bratcher, Mr. Gibson said Emergency Management has recently moved closer to a pre-deployment strategy, positioning resources ahead of time where disasters are expected to hit. Pre-deployments largely rely on volunteers, as most resources cannot be used until a disaster is officially declared. General Jones highlighted recent pre-deployment actions ahead of anticipated natural disasters.

Representative Fugate thanked Mr. Gibson and General Jones for their work in Eastern Kentucky after the 2022 floods.

Responding to Representative Thomas, Mr. Gibson discussed Emergency Management's collaboration with long-term recovery groups, which are active in 13 counties.

Kentucky Coroner's Association

Jeff Jones, Daviess County Coroner; Pat Elmore, Hardin County Coroner; and Jeff Ivers, Shelby County Coroner, discussed the work of county coroners in the aftermath of major natural disasters.

Mr. Ivers said the Coroner's Association wants to have several disaster response trailers spread throughout potential disaster hotspots.

Responding to Chair Deneen, Mr. Ivers said the Coroner's Association would like the state to fund five more disaster response trailers, each covering approximately 12 counties. Mr. Ivers estimated a total cost of \$160,000 to \$200,000 to equip the five trailers. Chair Deneen encouraged the committee members to consider this request.

Senator Boswell thanked Mr. Jones for his career of public service.

Adjournment

With no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:25 PM.