

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

Minutes of the Third Meeting of the 2026 Interim

August 19, 2026

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 19, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 AM CT 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; Representative Bobby McCool, Co-Chair; Senators Karen Berg, Gary Boswell, Gary Clemons, Jimmy Higdon, Matt Nunn, Aaron Reed, Brandon Smith, Lindsey Tichenor, and Mike Wilson; and Representatives Chad Aull, John Blanton, Steve Bratcher, Adrielle Camuel, Myron Dossett, Chris Freeland, Chris Fugate, Jim Gooch Jr., Mark Hart, DJ Johnson, Savannah Maddox, Candy Massaroni, Adam Moore, Marianne Proctor, T.J. Roberts, Scott Sharp, Ashley Tackett Laferty, Walker Thomas, and Bill Wesley.

Guests: Michael D. Stoyonovich, Distinguished Veteran; Representative Michael Meredith, House District 19; Valerie Januski, Executive Director, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet; David Hynes, Vendor Representative, Valtir; Scott Boyd, Senior Regional Account Manager, RoadSafe; Bruce Roberts, Executive Director, Kentucky Fire Commission; Jeff Taylor, Legislative Affairs Director, Kentucky Professional Fire Fighters; Gracie Kelly, Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky League of Cities; Shellie Hampton, Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky Association of Counties; Shawn Butler, Executive Director, Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police; Tyler Hiser, Chief, Upton Fire Department; Matthew Haddle, Chief, City of Vine Grove Fire Department; Jason Buckles, Chief, Glendale Fire Department; and Scott Baker, Executive Director, Division of Engineering and Contract Administration/Division of Facility Efficiency (DECA/DFE), Finance and Administration Cabinet.

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

Approval of July Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Representative Roberts and seconded by Representative Johnson to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2026 meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

Distinguished Veteran

Michael D. Stoyonovich was introduced by Representatives Aull and Meredith. He was honored by the committee as a Distinguished Veteran and received a legislative citation and committee challenge coin.

Fire Truck Attenuator Systems

Valerie Januski, Executive Director, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet; David Hynes, Vendor Representative, Valtir; Scott Boyd, Senior Regional Account Manager, RoadSafe; Bruce Roberts, Executive Director, Kentucky Fire Commission; Jeff Taylor, Legislative Affairs Director, Kentucky Professional Fire Fighters; Gracie Kelly, Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky League of Cities; Shellie Hampton, Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo); Shawn Butler, Executive Director, Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police; Tyler Hiser, Chief, Upton Fire Department; Matthew Haddle, Chief, City of Vine Grove Fire Department; and Jason Buckles, Chief, Glendale Fire Department, discussed the benefits of attenuator systems for first responder vehicles.

A truck or trailer mounted attenuator system was described as a rear-mounted crash cushion designed to absorb the kinetic energy from collision impacts.

Ms. Januski, Mr. Hynes, and Mr. Boyd highlighted the recent success of attenuators in preventing death and serious injury during collisions.

Representative Dossett emphasized the importance of commercial drivers being proficient in reading and understanding road signs in English.

Responding to Representative Roberts, Mr. Hynes discussed testing procedures for attenuators, including both angled and head-on collisions.

Responding to Senator Boswell, the presenters discussed the purchase costs, as well as the disassembly and storage process for attenuators.

Senator Berg requested data comparing the severity of collisions with and without attenuators.

Mr. Roberts, Mr. Taylor, and Ms. Kelly highlighted the insurance and financial benefits of equipping attenuators on emergency vehicles, and discussed their cost-saving potential for fire departments.

Responding to Senator Higdon and Chair Deneen, Mr. Roberts discussed the uses of funds from the Firefighters Foundation Program Fund, including training, new equipment, and professional incentive programs. The surplus of the fund is approximately \$30 million.

Senator Higdon emphasized the dangers of distracted driving, particularly involving cell phone use.

Responding to Representative Johnson, Mr. Roberts said he would propose a new allocation system for existing funds from the Firefighters Foundation Program Fund, rather than requesting new or additional funding.

Ms. Hampton and Mr. Butler emphasized support from KACo and the Association of Chiefs of Police for equipping attenuator systems on emergency vehicles. Mr. Butler highlighted the dangers faced by police on roadways while directing traffic.

Fire Chiefs Hiser, Haddle, and Buckles shared their experiences with traffic accidents and other road dangers faced by fire departments.

Chair Deneen discussed a proposal for supplying attenuators and training on their use to fire departments.

Radcliff Veterans Center HVAC Project – Update

Scott Baker, Executive Director, DECA/DFE, Finance and Administration Cabinet, provided an update on the replacement of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system at the Carl M. Brashear Radcliff Veterans Center.

Patients will be moving into new wings beginning September 1, 2026. Center core 100 will be complete by December, 2026, and sections 400 and 500, the final two patient wings, will be completed by July 5, 2027, and September 13, 2027 at the latest, respectively.

Responding to Representative Sharp, Mr. Baker discussed the spreadsheet of repair history to the old HVAC system provided by the Radcliff Veterans Center.

Responding to Representative Bratcher, Mr. Baker estimated that the full HVAC replacement project will be completed by September, 2027 at the latest.

Responding to Representative Roberts, Mr. Baker said the old Radcliff HVAC system's failures were anomalous, and not seen in other projects throughout the state during the same time period.

Responding to Senator Nunn, Mr. Baker praised the contractor for the new HVAC system and said he has not identified any issues apart from equipment delivery that could delay completion of the project.

Responding to Representative Gooch, Mr. Baker said the original, faulty system was a Samsung product sold under the Trane label.

Adjournment

With no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned.