

ODVS Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes April 29, 2022

Chair Victor Wilson convened the virtual meeting at 10:30 AM via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting opened with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance led by Chair Victor Wilson, followed by a moment of silence.

Chair Victor Wilson asked Ali Yogmour to do roll call. After roll call was complete, it was confirmed that there was quorum.

Roll Call:

Committee Members:

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Attended	Absent
SUSAN	GREEN	ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN VETERANS		X
ERIC	HALL	AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF OHIO	X	
VICTOR	WILSON	AMVETS	X	
TED	MOSURE	CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS	X	
JAMES	KASTER	DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS	X	
ED	ZORETIC	KOREAN WAR VETERANS		X
CARL	PRICE	MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART	X	
DON	PERRY	MARINE CORPS LEAGUE	X	
ERIC	SOWERS	VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS		X
PAUL	WILSON	VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA	X	
CHRIS	BELMAREZ	OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL	X	
CHRIS	MABE	LABOR ORGANIZATION	X	
PAUL	HALLER	COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASOC OF OHIO	X	
KARISSA	BINCKLEY	OHIO NATIONAL GUARD ASSOC	X	
BILL	RADCLIFFE	MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOC OF OHIO	X	
ED	ZACKERY	OHIO STATE ASSOC OF CONTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS	X	
JON	WARMELING	OHIO STATE ASSOC OF CONTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS	X	
CRYSTAL	BENNETT	OHIO STATE ASSOC OF CONTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS	X	
VACANT		OHIO STATE ASSOC OF COUNT VETERAN SERVICE COMMISSIONERS		
TED	BRUNER	OHIO STATE ASSOC OF CONTY VETERAN SERVICE COMMISSIONERS	X	
JERRY	HAYS	OHIO STATE ASSOC OF CONTY VETERAN SERVICE COMMISSIONERS	X	

Ohio Department of Veterans Services Staff in Attendance:

Sean McCarthy, Assistant Director
 Jen Stires, Chief Legal Counsel
 Dale Vitale, Principal Assistant Attorney General
 Jeff Rapp, Communications Director

Chairperson Victor Wilson asked if there were any visitors at the meeting. Five visitors in attendance:

Scott Palider, Legislative Liaison, American Legion
Doug Beckley, Paralyzed Veterans of America
Doug Fricker, Disabled Veteran Outreach
Elizabeth Brocklehurst
Bill Jones

Chairperson Opening Comments- Chair Victor Wilson reminded everyone that this is a public meeting. He then asked Director Ashenhurst to give the ODVS update.

Update from Assistant Director Sean McCarthy

Assistant Director McCarthy reminded the committee that Director Ashenhurst and other staff including Legislative Chief Lucas Denney were spending time today with the Secretary of the VA.

Assistant Director McCarthy gave an update on GI Bill benefits and the State Approving Agency. He also provided an update on Workforce Development's efforts on training employers on the benefits of hiring veterans. He said both the State Approving Agency and the Workforce Development team at ODVS have no hires and are operating at full capacity.

Assistant Director McCarthy gave an update on the Ohio Veterans Homes and explained that there were some significant system operations that needed repaired at the Sandusky Home, but that the Home remained in full operation throughout the process.

Douglas Beckley asked about a contact for Workforce Development. Assistant Director McCarthy said that Ryan Blackburn would be the contact and said he would put Mr. Beckley in touch with Mr. Blackburn.

Assistant Director McCarthy explained that ODVS will likely be approaching the legislature regarding future Veteran Home improvements.

Edward Zackery asked if ODVS has a plan for building a new Veterans Home. Assistant Director McCarthy gave an overview of what costs would be associated and the research that has been completed in terms of what the impacts would be and what the restrictions are. Mr. Zackery asked ODVS to consider other states and Ohio's position in terms of taxes and veteran population.

James Kaster noted that the DAV is committed to assisting the build of new veteran homes.

John Warmeling said that he appreciated Assistant Director McCarthy's responses and conveyed that the organizations are receiving a lot of pressure on building new veterans homes. He said he appreciated the efforts of ODVS.

Assistant Director McCarthy noted a chat remark from Chris Mabe that commented on staffing concerns at current facilities.

Mr. Zackery said that he agreed with everything that Assistant Director McCarthy said and noted that the time seems right for a new Veterans Home. Carl Price noted that Southeast Ohio needs veterans service and mentioned the Appalachian veteran population is significantly underserved.

Mr. Beckley said that everyone needs to see that action is being taken. Chair Wilson requested that a study be done on the creation of a new Veterans Home for Ohio.

Legislative/Budget updates- ODVS Assistant Director Sean McCarthy

Maps - Have been rejected a 3rd and 4th time by the State Supreme Court. The original primary date (May 3rd) will go forward with statewide offices and legislative seats will be held at a future date that has yet to be determined but will most likely be August 2nd. The Ohio Redistricting Commission has until May 6th to adopt and submit a map, but outside groups say the urgency of the situation has “dramatically increased” because of a federal court’s decision to implement the third map found unconstitutional by the supreme court as the map to use during the 2022 election season. The U.S. District Court said they would order the use of the map, which was found to be unduly advantageous to Republicans, if no plan was adopted by May 28. There may be a 5th map submitted by May 6th but if there is not, the 3rd map, although rejected and with the US District Court saying it is “irredeemably flawed” will likely be the working map for the August primary. Again, all of this leads to a dragged-out legislative process that has led to less legislative action on other priorities of the legislature. The legislative calendar is scheduled to pick up its normal pace on the week of May 16th and continue until the second week of June before breaking for the summer but all of this could be changed.

State Bills

SB 268 (Hoagland) Update- This bill had just been introduced during our last meeting so I have some more information now to provide you. The bill would exempt all honorably discharged veterans from property tax. The process would be similar to the current \$25,000 homestead exemption that is in place for 100% disabled veterans where the county auditor handles the processing of the application and exemption itself. Homestead exemptions are by state law reimbursed to the local authorities by the state through a GRF expenditure. This bill would lead to a \$876 million/year reimbursement from GRF to local authorities to make the jurisdictions whole on the exemption according to LSC. This bill has had its first hearing in Senate Ways and Means Committee

SB 259 (Hoagland)- Would add Paralyzed Veterans of America to the VAC. Bill passed Senate floor 32-0.

SB 287 (N. Manning)- Bill would allow CVSC to use credit cards for emergency purposes. Bill passed Senate floor 32-0.

HB 291- Road naming bill that the Governor signed on April 21st includes the Medal of Honor highway across Route 20 which has previously been discussed by this committee. Full list below.

- “Ohio Medal of Honor Highway” All of U.S. Route 20, as it extends across the northern portion of Ohio
- “Army Sergeant Patrick Ryan Carroll Memorial Highway” The portion of SR 162, running in an easterly and westerly direction, between Fitchville and the boundary of the municipal corporation of New London, in Huron County Army Sergeant Patrick Ryan Carroll died on February 7, 2011, in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds sustained when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 319th Military Intelligence Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C”
- “SSG Kyle R. McKee Memorial Highway” The portion of SR 86, running in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction, between the eastern and western border of Leroy Township in Lake County SSG Kyle R. McKee was a helicopter repairer and a member of the Multinational Force and Observers, a peacekeeping force overseeing the terms of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in the Sinai Peninsula. He died on November 12, 2020 in a helicopter crash.
- “Army Sgt. Vernon R. Judd Memorial Highway” The portion of County Road (CR) 321, running in an easterly and westerly direction, one-half mile to the east and west of the intersection of that road and Muffly Avenue SW, in Stark County U.S. Army Sgt. Vernon R. Judd of Navarre, Ohio, died on February 14, 1951, at Hofong Prisoner of War camp (also known as Pukchin-Tarigol) during the Korean War. His remains were returned to Ohio in 2019.
- “Sgt. Thomas Cole Walker Memorial Bridge” The bridge spanning West Branch Conneaut Creek that is part of SR 7 and that is located in the municipal corporation of Conneaut, in Ashtabula County Army Sergeant Thomas Cole Walker, of Conneaut, passed away on October 20, 2019, in a training accident at Fort Stewart, Georgia.
- “Air Force 2nd Lt. William Vaughan Memorial Bridge” The bridge spanning I-80, located in Mahoning County and being a part of the highway known as SR 46 William Vaughan was a radio operator of a volunteer bomber crew which undertook an important and dangerous photo-mapping mission over the heavily defended enemy Buka airfield on the island of Bougainville during WWII. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action on this mission.

- “Adams County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway.” The portion of USR 52 running in an easterly and westerly direction across the entire southern portion of Adams County
- “CPL Benjamin C. Dillon, RLW, Memorial Highway” 18 The eastbound and westbound lanes of I-76 between mile marker number 44 and mile marker number 45, in Portage County CPL Benjamin C. Dillon was killed in action on October 7, 2007, while serving during Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- “Lake Township Veterans Memorial Highway” The eastbound and westbound lanes of SR 795 between Tracy Road and North Fostoria Road, located in Lake Township in Wood County
- “SGT Joseph P. Collette Memorial Highway” The northbound and southbound lanes of SR 158, between the intersection of that route and Ginder Road Northwest and the intersection of that route and Carroll Eastern Road Northwest, in Fairfield County Sergeant Joseph P. Collette died from wounds sustained in combat operations in Afghanistan on March 22, 2019. He earned, among other awards and decorations, the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Badge, and the Senior Explosive Ordnance Disposal Badge.
- “SFC Ron Rosser Medal of Honor Recipient Memorial Highway” The eastbound and westbound lanes of I-70, between mile marker 132 and 133, in Licking County SFC Ron Rosser earned the Medal of Honor while serving in the 38th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division during the Korean War. In January of 1952, Rosser and his regiment were dispatched to capture an enemy-occupied hill. Fierce enemy resistance caused heavy casualties. After being reduced to 35 men from the initial 170 sent out, the party was ordered to make one more attempt to take the hill. Rosser rallied the remaining men and charged the hill. Despite the heavy fire, Rosser attacked the enemy position three times, killed at least 13 enemy soldiers, and carried several men to safety.
- “U.S. Army Specialist Christian D. Ward Memorial Highway” The portion of SR 60, running in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction, between the intersection of that route and CR 121 and the intersection of that route and CR 87, in Washington County U.S. Army Specialist Christian Ward joined the Army in 2015 and was stationed in Fort Carson, Colorado. While in the Army, he earned the Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and the Aviation Badge. Specialist Ward was killed in a motorcycle accident on June 28, 2019, in Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- “Joseph K. Vrabel ‘Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame’ Memorial Highway” The eastbound and westbound lanes of SR 224 in the municipal corporation of Poland, in Mahoning County Joseph K. Vrabel was a Korean War veteran, a Post Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a Life Member of the American Legion Mahoning Valley Post 15. He died on January 21, 2009, and was posthumously honored as a 2013 inductee to the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame.

- “PFC Steven D. Smith Memorial Highway.” The northbound and southbound lanes of SR 13, between the northern border of Bellville and the southern border of Mansfield, in Richland County PFC Steven D. Smith served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and was killed in action on April 15, 1968.
- “SGT Gary Lee McKiddy Memorial Highway.” The eastbound and westbound lanes of SR 725, between South Union Road and Soldiers Home Road, in Montgomery County SGT Gary Lee McKiddy served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and was killed in action on May 6, 1970. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.

HCR 46 Veterans Medical Center (Reps Mark Johnson and Shane Wilkin) To urge President Biden not to recommend to Congress that the Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in Chillicothe, Ohio be closed. Essentially a letter to the President from the Ohio Legislature.

Federal Bills

Changes in Mammogram coverage for Veterans. Both of these bills have a reasonable chance of becoming law.

- ***SR 2533 Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act.*** (Tester-MT) Just passed US Senate. Onto House

Among other things the VA must submit a strategic plan for improving breast imaging services for veterans, implement a three-year pilot program to provide tele screening mammography services for veterans who live in locations where access to breast imaging services at a VA facility is difficult or unfeasible, upgrade all mammography services at its facilities to use three-dimensional breast imaging, update guidelines to increase the use of molecular testing and genetic counseling for veterans diagnosed with breast cancer, and update its policies and directives to ensure that it confirms the accessibility of a breast imaging site when referring a veteran with a spinal cord injury or disorder to a non-VA provider.

- ***S 2102: SERVICE Act of 2021*** (Boozman-AR) Passed US Senate. Onto House.

This bill expands eligibility for Veterans Health Administration mammography screenings to veterans who served in certain locations during specified periods, including those who were exposed to toxic substances at such locations.

The specified locations and corresponding time periods include: Iraq between August 2, 1990, and February 28, 1991, and from March 19, 2003, until burn pits (areas used for burning solid waste in open air without equipment) are no longer used in Iraq; the Southwest Asia theater of operations, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar, from August 2, 1990, until burn pits are no longer used in such locations; Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen from September 11, 2001, until burn pits are no longer used in such locations; and other locations and time periods as determined by the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit

Registry. The bill specifies that the listed locations do not include bodies of water around or airspace above such locations.

- **S. 1875 Veterans' Emergency Care Claims Parity Act** (Rounds-SD) Passed Senate on April 7th.

Would require any health care provider not affiliated with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit a claim for reimbursement within 180 days of providing emergency care to veterans. Under current law, providers may take two years to submit claims for emergency care provided without prior authorization for conditions that are connected to or were caused by their military service; the deadline is 90 days for conditions that are not connected to veterans' military service. The bill also would shield veterans from financial liability for unpaid claims that are not submitted on time or that are delayed as a result of administrative errors made by the provider or the department.

Scott Palider asked if ODVS was tracking SB 252 Asbestos Claims. Assistants Director McCarthy said he would check on this with Lucas Denney.

Minutes/Agenda Approval

Jon Warmeling noted a correction to the minutes of 3/18/2022, Page 5:

"Jon Warmeling asked the committee that if anyone had any written comments/statements about tinnitus, sleep apnea and mental health, that would be submitted in regards to the VA changing the diagnostic codes in the Federal Register, to please send those to him."

Approval of the March 18, 2022 minutes and April 29, 2022 Agenda – Carl Price motioned to accept agenda; James Kaster seconded. Jon Warmeling motioned to accept the minutes with correction; James Kaster seconded. Minutes and agenda approved.

Legal Update/Ethics Training

Jen Stires reminded the committee that the annual ethics training is required and that proof of completed training must be sent to Jared Nyhart.

Jen Stires reminded the committee that the next meeting is required to be completely in person due to the expiration of virtual meeting legislation. Dale Vitale said that he would ensure that the committee was kept up to date. Assistant Director McCarthy confirmed.

Paul Wilson said that he took his ethics training through the county commissioners association. Assistant Director McCarthy, Jen Stires, and Dale Vitale confirmed that this training was acceptable and proof of this could be submitted. Ms. Stires said there is no need to complete the ethics training twice.

Chairperson Opened the Floor to Additional Comments

Paul Haller asked that the ethics training link be sent out to both the Advisory Committee and the Hall of Fame Committees. Ali Yogmour confirmed she would resend the link.

Jim Kaster from DAV said they are looking for a new employee.

It was noted that New York was working on legislation to Designate New York as a “Purple Heart State.”

Doug Beckley asked if we had his email for the ethics training. Assistant Director McCarthy confirmed that we do.

Chairperson Closing – Thanked the committee members for attending.

Directors Closing Comments- Assistant Director Sean McCarthy hoped the information provided was useful and thanked the committee for sharing their concerns on the state veterans homes.

Close of Meeting- Jon Warmeling motioned to adjourn the meeting, Carl Price seconded. Meeting ended at 11:18 am