

# ODVS Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes March 18, 2022

Chairperson Victor Wilson convened the virtual meeting at 10:33 AM via Microsoft Teams.

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

Chairperson Victor Wilson asked Jared Nyhart 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:**

- Deborah Ashenhurst, Director
- Sean McCarthy, Assistant Director
- Jen Stires, Chief Legal Counsel
- Lucas Denney, Chief Legislative Officer
- Jared Nyhart, as Secretary to the Committee
- Tammy Puff, Military & Veteran Liaison to Governor DeWine
- Dale Vitale, Executive Agencies, Ohio Attorney General

Approval of the December 17 2021 minutes and March 18, 2022 Agenda – Crystal Bennett motioned to accept minutes and agenda; Carl Price seconded. Minutes and agenda approved.

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

Doug Beckley with the Paralyzed Veterans of America

Scott Palider from the American Legion (Legislative Liaison)

**Chairperson Opening Comments**- Chairperson Victor Wilson thanked Vice Chairperson Ed Zackary for stepping in the past several months while he was away on assignment and thanked everyone for attending to hold quorum for this meeting. He then asked Director Ashenhurst to give the ODVS update.

#### **Update from Director Ashenhurst**

Director Ashenhurst gave an update of the status of both OVH homes, including that both are maintaining a minimal amount of positive test results, zero positives with staffs and residents at the moment. And that OVH Sandusky is working through some infrastructure issues and bring things up-to-date.

Director Ashenhurst asked everyone in the meeting to canvas their organizations and bring issues to the committee so that ODVS and other committee members can tackle issues for Veterans in Ohio.

#### **New Business**

Vice Chairperson Ed Zackery discussed the topic of a legislative review committee to discuss federal issues/legislation that would affect Veterans in Ohio. He proposed that this be an informal committee. Carl Price and Eric Hall both agreed to be part of the informal committee for legislative review. Lucas Denney and Scott Palider both volunteered to meet with Carl Price and Eric Hall to discuss upcoming federal legislation and discuss what should be briefed to the VAC before upcoming meetings. Lucas Denney said he would work on determining a time and date for Eric Hall, Carl Price and Scott Palider to meet via Teams or phone call.

#### **Legislative/Budget updates**- ODVS Chief Legislative Lucas Denney

Virtual Meetings- The legislature approved an extension of public meetings that can be conducted virtually through the end of June. There is an appetite in the Senate to look at committees that can conduct their business more efficiently and just as effectively over modes of telecommunication. The Senate has asked the Lt. Gov's office to compile a list of executive agency committees that do not have any licensing role or the power to levy fines for possible inclusion in virtual meetings going forward. I have submitted this committee as well for recommendation. That does not preclude this committee from meeting in person it just gives the committee another option for meeting.

Chillicothe VA- Report from the VA on its operating footprint recommended a litany of changes including adjusting the Chillicothe VA from an inpatient facility to a larger CBOC-style facility. This of course has serious implications for the veterans of southern Ohio and the residents of Ross county. State legislators are discussing a resolution in opposition to this and other actions the state could take including a legislative commission report regarding the economic impact on the area if the recommendations are implemented.

Many legislators right now are focused on the redistricting of Ohio's congressional maps.

### **SB 215**

Constitutional Carry Bill was signed by Governor DeWine. Essentially removes licensing and training requirements to conceal a handgun. Sponsored by veteran, Senator Terry Johnson.

### **SB 287**

Would allow CVSO's to use county credit cards for certain purchases including temporary financial assistance. First hearing on this bill was this week. Monday the Director attended a Veterans Hiring Event in Parma where Senator Manning, County Commissioner Moore, and Lorain CVSO ED Jacob Smith were all in attendance. They discussed the bill and its inception stemming from wanting to provide quick assistance on a CC if needed. Brings the CVSO in line with the County Children's Assistance Office who have that capability.

### **HB 468**

Will establish the 988 national suicide hotline. We are monitoring to ensure that veterans still just need to dial 1 and will get priority. This is still the case and will continue to be our mission.

### **HB 569**

Ohio Hidden Hero Scholarship- Allow colleges and universities to establish a scholarship for caregivers of 100% disabled veterans. Colleges and universities also need to establish pathways to convert their specific caregiver activities into college credits. Was just introduced two weeks ago.

### **SB 259**

Introduced by Senator Hoagland. This bill would allow Paralyzed Veteran of America to the Directors Veterans Advisory Committee. Had second hearing in committee this week. Doug Beckley is with us today.

## **SB 291**

Introduced by Senator Hoagland. This bill would establish Veteran and Woman owned businesses in the same category as minority owned businesses. Executive agencies have to purchase a certain amount of their budget to minority owned businesses and if this bill passes Veteran and Woman businesses would be added to that.

## **SB 268**

Introduced by Senator Hoagland. This bill would Eliminate the requirement for a homestead exemption for only those at 100% VA disability. Would open up the exemption for any who were honorably discharged.

### **Chairperson Opened the Floor to Additional Comments**

Ed Zackary agreed that there is strength in numbers with Veteran owned businesses in regards to SB 259 and that having a list could help Veteran owned businesses conduct more business throughout the state. Carl Price added that the Department of Labor has a start of a list of Veteran owned businesses but the State of Ohio does not and it's hard to find what business is owned by a Veteran.

Jon Warmeling informed the committee about an article ran in a local Ohio newspaper regarding HB 29 (Allowing Sports Gambling in Ohio). He asked Lucas Denney if he's done other research on how other states have used funding from gambling license fees and if there were best practices. Denney reported that he's had conversations with the Casino Control Commission regarding the estimated amount of funds ODVS might see from the licensure fees. Warmeling asked more details regarding SB 268. Denney said the bill was just introduced and will provide more details as the bill passes through appropriate legislative channels.

Tammy Puff briefed the committee about Director Ashenhurst, Adjutant General MG Harris, ODHE Chancellor Randy Gardner and several other key staff members announced early March the Collegiate Purple Star Program, making Ohio the first state to establish a directive that will designate Ohio's public and private colleges and universities with the "Collegiate Purple Star" that are supportive and inclusive of military-connected students.

James Kaster informed the committee that DVA State President and Treasurer have both resigned. Jim Oaks is the acting State President of DVA.

Scott Palider with Ohio American Legion informed the committee about a public meeting hosted at Post #23 to discuss the possible closing of the Chillicothe's VA hospital and facility, a recommendation from the recent VA AIR (Asset and Infrastructure Review) market assessment. The American Legion has started a petition to oppose the possible closure of the VA hospital in Chillicothe and if you would like to sign the petition to reach out to Scott.

Director Ashenhurst and Lucas Denney reminded the committee that this recommendation is not final and that there were also a lot of good things to come from the AIR market assessment. Chris Belmurez from the Ohio Attorney General's Office reported to the committee that he is happy to be the new representative from the AGO and to be part of the committee.

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.

Ted Mosure with Catholic War Veterans informed the committee about the 2022 Ohio Military Hall of Fame at the Ohio Statehouse on April 22, 2022 and that the ceremony will begin at 11:30 am.

**Chairperson Closing** – Thanked the committee members for attending.

**Directors Closing Comments-** Director Ashenhurst again thanked the committee for all that they do for the veterans in the state and for staying informed on topics and legislation – federal and state - that effect Veterans.

**Close of Meeting-** Jon Warmeling motioned to adjourn the meeting, Carl Price seconded. Meeting ended at 11:22 am