



August 25, 2016 Minutes

Present: Terry Allebaugh, Laura Anders, Jennifer Andrews, David Bailey, Fred Baker, Randy Baker, Laurie Barone, Archie Barrow, Dave Benson, Paul Berry, Michael Bishop, Kate Brett, Brenda Brubaker, Toni Bush Neal, Don Carter, Jennifer Chauncey, Maia Collier, Cajun Comeau, Tony Davis, Hank Debnam, Russell Ditzel, Max Dolan, Jeff Doyle, Tera Duthie, Lane Dyer, SFC Khan Eakin, Jennifer Endries, Li Fang, Ph.D., Blake Farley, Pat Fitzgerald, Meagan Gibbs, Moses Gloria, Emily Godfrey, Diana Graham, Susan Graham, Penny Greer-Link, Judy Harmon, D. A. Harris, Janine Hill, Andy Jackson, Angela Harper King, Chris Hluchyj, Katrina Holley, Matt Jenkins, Terri Kane, Joe Kelly, Rebecca Keogh, Nana Knowles, Chakakhon Lea, Martha Lobo, Neely Mahoney, Ron Mangum, Enrique Mcclymont, Larry McMullen, Bruce McMurray, Slavko Miling, Sarah Miller, Brenda Monforti, Henry Moore, Lynn Newsom, Terry Nichols, Ilario Pantano, Amanda Parkstone, Shane Perret, Toni Pinkston, Nicole Purdy, Juliza Ramirez-Wylie, Jean Reaves, Shanna Reece, Robin Reif, Donna Richardson, John Rimer, Carlos Robinson, Chas Sampson, James Simpson, Eugene Skinner, Jeff Smith, Wayne Smith, Tenita Solanto, Annette Stevenson, Charlotte Stewart, Lea Strickland, Dr. Samuel Strickland, MSG Robert Tabares, Lamont Taylor, Mark Teachey, Probe Thompson, Dr. Joseph Threadcraft, Cindy Travis, Eric Truesdale, Lucas Vrbsky, Crystal White, Joy White, Denise Whitely, Dwight Williams, Brandon Wilson, Jerry Wood, and Martin Woodard

Secretary Wilson welcomed everyone and introduced Joe Edger, Deputy Network Director of VISN 6. He is taking place Cheryl Rawls's place as the representative from the VA.

Joy White, Deputy, North Atlantic District, provided an overview of the Veterans Experience at the national level. She brought the Veterans Experience team with her to the meeting to give them the opportunity to attend our Governor's Working Group meeting. The Veterans Experience depends on the building of trusted relationships one Veteran at a time with VA staff. Secretary Robert McDonald's mission is to make the agency more Veteran centric. Over the years, the VA has lost the voice of Veterans and their families, so the office was set up to meet the needs of Veterans. The VA is focusing on improving the Veteran Experience; improving employee experience, improving internal support services; establishing a culture of continuous improvement; and enhancing strategic partnerships. She noted that Jean Reaves is one of 12 members of the national MyVA committee. The Veterans Experience is based on the experiences of successful corporations and was summarized by CEO Jeanne Bliss, "It is a proactive and deliberate orchestration of end-to-end journeys between a customer and a company. Each stage of the journey is architected to understand the emotions and needs of the customer and what he or she is trying to achieve." Critical to the Veteran experience are the dimensions of effectiveness, ease, and emotion. The field consultant's role was created to be a steward and honest broker for the VA and to live in the community. The US has been divided into 5 districts, with North Carolina being in the North Atlantic district, which has 15 states. The North Atlantic District is the first to be fully staffed. Surveys have shown abysmal results when Veterans are asked how they view their VA experience. Their goal is for 90% of Veterans to trust the VA.

Cajun Comeau emphasized the value of partnerships and says that he cares about doing the right thing for the right reasons. He highlighted the VA's transition to the new program, which is Veteran-centric. The initiative takes a 4 pronged approach: (1) improve Veteran/SM outcomes by connecting public and private resources and capabilities; (2) create forums where public and private efforts can learn about each other and work together to enhance their effectiveness and improve Veteran/SM outcomes; (3) enable Veterans/SMs to easily identify and reach all of the resources available to them, voice their opinions, and provide valuable input; and (4) create direct and open lines of communication within the community to

serve as an early warning system and enable local responsiveness to issues. In the process of creating networks of stakeholders and advocates at the grassroots level, Cajun will try to put people together to leverage their strengths and assist engagement boards in focusing on large scale and systemic issues having a negative impact on Veterans. He views the initiative as fully inclusive, accessible, community driven, flexible, and integrated.

Cindy Travis, Blue Ridge Veterans Community Partnership, provided the local perspective. She has been on the frontlines for past 13 years. As one of three co-chairs, they will try to improve communication, identify homeless and at-risk Veterans, and inform and educate. Their challenges include their rural area with its transportation difficulties, homelessness, and financial support. The Partnership had its first meeting earlier this month, with the second meeting occurring in September. Their vision is make an impact in the lives of Veterans and to bridge the service gap at the local level.

Secretary Wilson noted that there are currently two pending bills in Congress. One is the Brave Act and the other concerns the hiring of Veterans. He praised NC Serves for the great outcomes they are getting in Charlotte. He also mentioned the homeless Veteran program being headed by Terry Allebaugh at the NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Rapid Results Institute was contracted to assist in the hosting of a boot camp earlier this year, with teams from across the State. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Technical Assistance Center on Service Members, Veterans, and their Families will host a meeting of stakeholders on mental health and substance use in Raleigh on September 20-21.

Mr. Edger said that “NC has opportunity to put exclamation point behind everything they do”. He said that the State is now to see results of legislation in NC, with new Health Care Clinics in Charlotte, Kernersville, and Wilmington and additional Community-based Outpatient Clinics opening in NC (<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?State=NC&dnum=ALL>). VISN 6 has added 1500 employees as a result of what elected officials have done for us.

Jean announced that Enfield (between Rocky Mount and Roanoke Rapids) is conducting an outreach on Saturday, from 9a to 2p to enroll Veterans in health care and teach them about benefits.

Mike said that there is an annual military providers and resource fair October 14 at NC National Guard Joint Force Headquarters. It is an opportunity to connect community-based organizations with the military. Wake County schools are planning to send all of their counselors to this event. On October 28, the Capital Area Veterans Stand Down will be conducted at the South Wilmington Street Center, 1420 South Wilmington Street, Raleigh 27603 on October 28 from 8:30a to 2:00p ([www.wakegov.com/veterans](http://www.wakegov.com/veterans)).

Lea Strickland hosts a radio program and has highlighted Veteran-related topics in the past. She is planning to highlight Veteran-owned business organizations in a future broadcast. This program will become a podcast afterwards.

Jeff Smith said that a shipment of 25,000 copies of the Resource Guide will be delivered to Joint Force Headquarters the week after Labor Day. Andy Jackson is the contact ([andrew.l.jackson8.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:andrew.l.jackson8.ctr@mail.mil)).

All VA Medical Centers are expected to host a Mental Health Summit in the upcoming month. The Durham VAMC will host theirs on August 26 from 8:00 to 4:30. Fayetteville VAMC will host theirs on August 31 from 8:30 to 4:30.

Ilario announced that there will soon be a one year review of NC Serves in Charlotte area. The Raleigh network is being set up by the USO of NC. Jacksonville and Wilmington will be the third network; there is currently a RFA out for the Coordination Center. The fourth network will be in the Asheville area.

Dwight thanked Cajun and the Veteran Services Officers for the Veterans Benefits Action Center in Smithfield. They did an outstanding job and served 1400 in 3 days. Only positive comments have been received.

Brenda announced two Stand Downs, the Bull City Stand Down at the Stadium and Armory across the street on September 16 and the Stand Down at armory in Butner on September 17.

Probe said that the FAA is opening up the door on drones. He is trying to connect Veterans to jobs in industry.

Moses announced a 3-day Veterans Benefits Action Center (VBAC) at the Herbert Young Community Center, 101 Wilkinson Avenue, Cary 27513 on September 8-10. The VBAC provides the opportunity for Veterans to file VA disability claims and/or appeals and to obtain assistance about other health care concerns. Coffee and water are provided free of charge. For more information, contact [rcspyrison@gmail.com](mailto:rcspyrison@gmail.com). More information is also available at <http://www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/233901/veterans-benefit-center-set-north-carolina>.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Ray Price Capital City Bikefest and Motorsports Expo will feature live music, stunt shows, a custom, bike show, fashion show, and food and vendors on September 23-25. For more information and a map of events, go to <http://capitalcitybikefest.com/>.