

# State of Tennessee Department of Veterans Services

## TriStars and Stripes: Governor's Council on Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

Meeting of July 18, 2024, at 10:00 am

Nashville, TN-Tennessee Tower, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Nashville Room

### **Members:**

Charlotte "Charlie" Trussell – Family Member of Currently Serving Tennessee Citizen

Scott Brower – Higher Education

Marilyn Childress – Veteran Service Organizations or Coalitions

Blake Hogan – Veteran Service Organizations or Coalitions

Ralph Schulz – Business Interests

Joey Hale – Business Interests

Wes Golden – County/City Mayor

### **Ex-officio Members**

Commissioner of Veterans Services – Tommy Baker

TN Adjutant General of TN Dept. of Military – TAG BG Warner Ross, II

- Designee Lt. Col. John Rigdon

Commissioner of TN Dept. of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services - Marie Williams

- Designee Jennifer Armstrong

Commissioner of TN Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development – Deniece Thomas

- Designee Jeff Dent

TN State Senator – Rusty Crowe

TN State Representative – Jay Reedy

### **Guests**

- Chelsea Anderson
- Deanna Day
- Stephen Bell
- Travis Murphy
- Lorenza Wills
- Patrick Rice
- Kathryn Held
- Sherry Pickering
- Donald Mays

**Welcome:** Chris Lancia welcomed everyone, reviewed the meeting's agenda.

**Call to Order & Roll Call:** Deanna Day

### ***Members:***

- Charlotte "Charlie" Trussell – In Person
- Scott Brower – In Person
- Marilyn Childress – In Person

- Blake Hogan – In Person
- Ralph Schulz – In Person
- Joey Hale – In Person
- Wes Golden – Not Present
  - Designee Andrew Kester – In Person

**EX- Officio Members:**

- Commissioner Baker – In Person
- TAG BG Warner Ross, II – Not Present
  - Designee Lt. Col. John Rigdon – In Person
- Commissioner Deniece Thomas – In Person
  - Designee Jeffrey Dent – In Person
- Commissioner Marie Williams – Not Present
  - Designee Jennifer Armstrong – In Person
- TN State Senator Rusty Crow – In Person
- TN State Representative Jay Reedy – In Person

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Steve Bell

**Welcome**

- **Opening Remarks**
  - Chief Gibson addressed the council, and recognized the importance of the work being done.
  - Commissioner Baker provided opening remarks.
- **Administrative Notes**
  - Chris Lancia provided information regarding directions to the food court, a clipboard for audience members to provide their information, opportunities to address the council and time limits for speaking.
  - Some technical issues were acknowledged regarding online audio in the beginning of the meeting, but efforts were made to resolve them to ensure effective participation.

**Old Business:**

- **Approval of Minutes**
  - Motion – Andrew Kester
  - 2nd – Blake Hogan
  - Vote – Minutes Approved

**New Business:**

- Chris Lancia discussed the most recent updates from subcommittees, and highlighted the ask of providing outcomes and outputs.
  - Outcomes: The goals the council would like to accomplish.
  - Outputs: The tasks to be completed to reach the goal.
- Chris Lancia asked if anyone had any new business to discuss before moving into committee reports. No new business.
- Chris Lancia asked for a motion to move into committee reports.

**Committee Reports/Updates** – During this part of the council meeting, Chris Lancia discussed how with each slide deck, council outputs and outcomes were tied to an Executive Order Goal.

- **Employment and Entrepreneurship Committee (Blake Hogan and Ralph Schultz)**
  - Discussed three focus areas: employment, startups/building businesses, and buying businesses
  - Goal is to increase veteran retention and recruitment in Tennessee
  - Highlighted need for better coordination and communication of resources
  - Suggested developing "Acquire TN" strategy to help veterans purchase existing businesses
  - Discussed leveraging \$170 million in state small business credit initiative funds
- **SMVF Education Benefits Committee ("Task Force York") (Scott Brower and Charlie Trussell)**
  - Discussed improving the Tennessee Strong Act program and portal
  - Suggested addressing challenges with graduation requirements for military children transferring schools
  - Recommended increasing military cultural competency training for school faculty/staff
  - Discussed expanding Purple Star school designations
  - Highlighted need to incentivize schools to implement veteran-supportive programs
- **SMVF Equity and Resources Committee (Marilyn Childress and Jeff Dent)**
  - Women's Committee conducted survey showing lack of communication on resources is major issue
  - Homelessness/Food Insecurity subcommittee exploring "Built for Zero" program
  - Justice-Involved Veterans subcommittee looking at improving Veterans Treatment Courts
  - All subcommittees emphasized need for better coordination and communication
- **SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee (Travis Murphy)**
  - Focusing on coordination, collaboration, and data-driven strategies
  - Exploring participation in VA suicide prevention community survey
  - Working to engage faith-based communities
  - Discussed establishing veteran endorsement for peer recovery specialist program
  - Goal to increase percentage of veterans enrolled in VA care
- **SMVF Outreach Committee (Joey Hale and LTC John Rigdon)**
  - Emphasized need for cohesive brand identity and consistent communication
  - Suggested hiring marketing agency to develop branding/messaging strategy
  - Discussed implementing CRM tool and ticketing system for resource coordination
  - Highlighted need for dedicated staff to manage communication efforts

#### **Announcements:**

- **TDVS Announcements (Steve Bell)**
  - Governor's Veterans Day program tentatively scheduled for November 7th
  - Upcoming town halls being planned, including one in Jackson
  - Encouraged Council members to follow TDVS social media accounts
  - Provided update on Tennessee Veteran Business Recognition program launch
- **Upcoming Meeting Date Proposed:** October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.
- **Floor Opened to Audience:**
  - N/A

**Adjourn meeting -**