

# State of Tennessee Department of Veterans Services

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

Meeting of January 14, 2025, at 11:00 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 Sejal West

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
- Kathryn Held
- Sherry Pickering
- Mary Deel
- Dan Moore
- Paul Overholser
- Jennifer Allen
- Bryce Main
- Amanda Fucella
- Cody D'Alessandro
- Burton Nyhus
- Billy Kingdollar
- Rich Kramer

- Michael Bearden
- Josh Burch
- Caroline Cova
- Commissioner Van Epps

**Welcome:** Nick Atwood 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 – Virtual
- Ralph Schulz – In Person
- Joey Hale – In Person
- Wes Golden – 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 – Not Present
  - Designee Jeffrey Dent – In Person
- Commissioner Marie Williams – Not Present
  - Designee Sejal West – In Person
- TN State Senator Rusty Crow – Not Present
- TN State Representative Jay Reedy – Not Present

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Nick Atwood

**Welcome**

- **Opening Remarks**
  - Nick Atwood greeted the council.
  - Commissioner Baker gave opening remarks.
  - Nick Atwood opened up the floor for council members to share thoughts for a few minutes before moving into the approval of minutes.
- **Administrative Notes**
  - A reminder for everyone to turn their microphone on when speaking was provided, in order to ensure all comments were captured accordingly.

**Old Business:**

- **Approval of Minutes**
  - Motion: Ralph Schulz
    - Seconded: Mayor Golden
    - Vote – Approved Unanimously

## **New Business:**

- **State Benefits for Veterans in Tennessee**
  - Nick Atwood discussed a document for State Benefits for Veterans in Tennessee. This document is a central piece of what the council is charged in building/maintaining.
  - Not much awareness of the document among council members.
  - Council members asked to share the document.
- **Strategic Plan Discussion and Finalization**
  - The council reviewed Goal 1 of the strategic plan but did not have time to review Goals 2-4.
  - Two major omissions from the strategic plan were noted, which Nick Atwood indicated would most likely be addressed in Goal 4:
    - Women's veteran issues
    - Justice-related veteran issues
  - Members were asked to send feedback on Goals 2-4 directly to Nick Atwood.
- **Tri-Stars and Stripes SharePoint Demo**
  - Members were introduced to the Teams Channel and SharePoint.
  - A QR Code was shared for council members to scan and enter their information to sign up.
    - Subcommittee members can join, will have limited permissions/access compared to council members.
    - Federal .mil email addresses cannot be added to external teams groups. Members were advised to provide alternative email addresses for access to the Tri Stars and Stripes platform.
  - All subcommittee meetings should be entered on the Teams Forum.

## **Announcements:**

- **TDVS Announcements (Steve Bell)**
  - Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – Jackson Field Office on January 17, 2025 at 10:00 AM CST
  - Wreaths Across America – pickup scheduled, looking for Volunteers.
  - Presented a postcard being sent out for outreach purposes.
  - Discussed coalitions across the state.
- **Upcoming Meeting Date Proposed:** April 15, 2025 from 11:00am – 2:00pm

## **Public Comment Period:**

- N/A

## **Adjourn meeting -**