

State of Tennessee Department of Veterans Services

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

Meeting of April 15, 2025, at 11:00 am

Nashville, TN-Tennessee Tower, 3rd 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

- Commissioner Alvarado
- Deputy Commissioner Amosun
- Cody D'Alessandro
- Chelsea Anderson
- Deanna Day
- Travis Murphy
- Kathryn Held
- Sherry Pickering
- Mary Deel
- Dan Moore
- Paul Overholser
- Josh Burch
- Matt Watkins
- JP Guess
- Nathan Fown
- Scott Ziegler

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 – Teams
- Marilyn Childress – In Person
- Blake Hogan – In Person
- Ralph Schulz – In Person
- Joey Hale – In Person
- Wes Golden – Not Present

EX- Officio Members:

- Commissioner Baker – In Person
- TAG BG Warner Ross, II – Not Present
 - Designee Col. Stephen Todd – 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: Marilyn Childress
 - Seconded: Joey Hale
 - Vote – Approved Unanimously

New Business:

- **Strategic Plan Update**
 - Nick Atwood discussed that the strategic plan had been sent over to the Governor's team and was pending approval.
- **Veteran Coordination Platform Update**
 - Commissioner Baker discussed that there were some edits needing to be made, and the RFP process would continue after revisions.

- **Tri-Stars and Stripes Website**
 - Nick Atwood provided an overview/demo of the new Tri-Stars and Stripes Council website/page, hosted in the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services website.
- **Jason T. Evans – Chief Executive Officer of Operation Stand Down, LTG US Army Retired**
 - General Evans was introduced to the council and provided remarks.
- **TN Department of Health Traumatic Brain Injury Program**
 - Deputy Commissioner Amosun from the Department of Health and Cody D’Alessandro, one of the Governor’s Veteran Fellows, presented on the TBI Program through the Department of Health.

Announcements:

- **TDVS Announcements**
 - Veteran Ready Business Recognition (VRBR) Summit – May 8, 2025 from 8:00am – 12:00pm, located at the Redemption Church, 3550 Pleasant Ridge Rd, Knoxville, TN 37921
 - Governor’s Memorial Day Ceremony – May 20, 2025 at 2:00pm, located at the Tennessee State Capital, Nashville, TN
 - Sherry Pickering discussed the Tennessee Veteran Ready Business Recognition Program
 - Sherry Pickering discussed the Veteran-Owned Small Business Program:
 - The Tennessee Department of General Services now offers access to Federal Surplus Property specifically for certified Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs). This program enables qualifying businesses to acquire valuable government surplus items directly related to their business operation at significant savings.
 - Assistant Commissioner Travis Murphy discussed the DOD Data Sharing initiative and showed the postcards being sent to individuals transitioning out of military service.
- **Upcoming Meeting Date Proposed:** July 15, 2025 from 11:00am – 2:00pm
 - Hosting the meeting in an alternate location (West or East TN) was discussed, and more information will be sent to council members as a location is determined.
- A special presentation was made for Charlie Trussell, who will be leaving the Council, as her family is relocating due to military orders. Ms. Trussell was recognized as an inaugural member of the reconstituted council, and was presented with a Tennessee state flag.

Public Comment Period:

- N/A

Adjourn meeting -