

# State of Tennessee Department of Veterans Services

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

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

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

### **Members:**

Tess Partridge – 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 Stephen Todd

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 Daniel Noffsinger

TN State Senator – Rusty Crowe

TN State Representative – Jay Reedy

### **Guests**

- Michael Scholes
- Chelsea Anderson
- Deanna Day
- Travis Murphy
- Kathryn Held
- Sherry Pickering
- Mary Deel
- Dan Moore
- Paul Overholser
- Nathan Fown
- Scott Ziegler
- Antwane Bohanon
- Jeff Dent

**Welcome:** Nick Atwood welcomed everyone, reviewed the meeting's agenda.

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

### **Members:**

- Tess Partridge – In Person
- Scott Brower – Teams
- Marilyn Childress – In Person
- Blake Hogan – In Person
- 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 Col. Stephen Todd – Teams
- Commissioner Deniece Thomas – Not Present
  - Designee Daniel Noffsinger – In Person
- Commissioner Marie Williams – Not Present
  - Designee Sejal West – In Person
- TN State Senator Rusty Crow – Not Present
- TN State Representative Jay Reedy – In Person

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Nick Atwood

### **Welcome**

- **Opening Remarks**
  - 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 & Veteran Coordination Platform Update**
  - Nick Atwood provided a brief update on the strategic plan for the council.
  - Commissioner Baker provided a brief update on the Veteran Coordination Platform.
- **Tri-Stars & Stripes Quarterly Meeting Dates for 2025 – 2026**
  - Meeting dates have been determined for council meetings through 2026:
    - October 21, 2025
    - January 20, 2026
    - April 21, 2026
    - July 21, 2026
    - October 20, 2026

- **Military Childhood Education Coalition – Purple Star School Initiative**
  - Nick Atwood provided an overview of the Purple Star School (PSS) initiative, and the Military Child Education Commission (MCEC), who serves as the national advocate for the PSS.
  - Increasing the number of PSS Schools in Tennessee is part of the strategic plan for the council (Goal 3, Objective 3.2).
- **Guest Speaker & Tour – TCAT President, Dr. JacQuene Rainey**
  - Dr. Rainey was introduced to the council and provided remarks.
  - The council was given a tour of the facility following Dr. Rainey's remarks.

#### **Announcements:**

- **TDVS Announcements**
  - Chattanooga Benefits Field Office Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
    - August 22, 2025 at 3:00pm EST
    - 7407 Lee Highway, Suite 101, Chattanooga, TN 37421
  - Veteran Ready Business Recognition Program Symposium, West Tennessee
    - October 16, 2025, 8:00am – 3:00pm CST
    - First United Methodist Church, 200 S Church St., Jackson, TN 38301
  - Additional programs discussed:
    - VA Updates – sign-in changes
    - TN Veteran Ready Business Recognition Program
    - Veteran-Owned Small Business Program
    - DoD Data Sharing Update
    - Soldiers to Sidelines
- **Upcoming Meeting Date Proposed:** October 21, 2025

#### **Public Comment Period:**

- N/A

**Adjourn meeting -**