SOUTH CAROLINA
VETERANS' TRUST FUND

Board Meeting Minutes

10 September 2025

I. **Call to Order:** Dale Ellenburg called the board meeting of the Veterans' Trust Fund of SC (Fund) to order at 1305.

II. **Attendance:**
   A. Present: Dale Ellenburg, Melvin Poole, Shawn Pinkston, David Finley, Stephen Jones, Nick Messenburg, Dr. Ada Stewart, Lowell Koppert (attended virtually), Joseph S. McLamb attended on behalf of Secretary McCaffrey
   B. Absent: Jimmy Hawk, Dr. Nikki Wooten
   C. SCDVA Support Staff: Bobby Patterson, CFO; Colleen Clark, Office of General Counsel; Erika Jones, Senior Workforce Development Officer

III. **Minutes:** Minutes from the 11 June 2025 meeting were reviewed and approved.

IV. **Executive Director Update**
   A. **Opening Comments from Joseph S. McLamb, Chief of Staff, SCDVA:**
      - Chief McLamb explained that he was sitting in for Secretary McCaffrey who was attending the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) in Wyoming.
   B. **Board of Trustees Configuration**
      - The Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions reached out to SCDVA regarding the configuration of the board.
      - The Governor's Office plans to submit eleven (11) names to the Senate in January – some are already on the board, others are not (County Veterans Affairs Officers)
      - The Governor's Office has sent applications to those who will remain on the board, with the exception of Mr. Koppert who was recently appointed.
      - Thank you to those who are not being reappointed.
   C. **Recommended Changes to By-laws**
      - Colleen Clark said there were minimal changes to the existing by-laws.
      - The following changes were suggested:

- Members of the Executive Committee: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Immediate Past Chairman; or, if the Immediate Past Chairman is not longer on the board, the Immediate Past vice-Chairman; or, if neither the Immediate Past Charman or Vice-Chairman remain on the Board, the Fundraising Committee Chairman; Finance Committee Chairman.
- Also, the Executive Board cannot remove a member.
- Chief McLamb pointed out the current by-laws were not aligned with the law.
- A motion to accept all the changes was introduced by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Finlay, and passed unanimously.

D. Grant awards

- Same criteria as last year was used; zero obligation to follow SCDVA suggestions.
- Thirteen (13) grant requests were received; however, five (5) did not meet minimum requirement and a rejection letter was sent to them giving them an opportunity to resubmit. The remaining eight (8) are on the rubric.
- The Board is no longer under legal cap restrictions because they now have over $1 million.
- Mr. Patterson recommended $281,875 for grant distribution, and retaining $1.5 million as an endowment and use as base pay; there are some bills that must be paid (i.e. CPA firm, SC Secretary of State)
- Chief McLamb reminded the board members they are not obligated to award any grants but is not suggesting that is the right answer.
- Ms. Jones reviewed the grant analysis with the board members.
- Chief McLamb explained a couple of programs SCDVA has:
    1. South Carolina Veteran Coalition program connects various Veteran Service providers electronically. The software sends an email to a source who has 72 hours to reach out to the Veteran. There is a QR code to connect them on the spot.
    2. Lock It SC: There has been a suicide issue the last 20 years. Clear scientific based data confirms that a barrier between the person and a weapon reduces suicide. It doesn't matter who locks the weapon(s) up. SCDVA's wants to get the following message out: "Be a responsible gun owner; lock it up when not in use. Treat your weapon like you did when you were in the military."
- Several board members did not receive a copy of all the grants.

V. Executive Session

A. Unfinished Business

Per Mr. Ellenburg, there is no unfinished business on record.

B. New Business

- Mr. Ellenburg assured members they are in good standing until the Governor tells them otherwise.

- The board was informed that Nancy Dunn and Jim Hawk were resigning from the Board.
- Grant Discussion:
  - Mr. Ellenburg: The $70,000 suggested by Mr. Patterson is a line in the sand, but can be crossed. He reminded everyone that the board needed to be good stewards of money; the board could entertain Mr. Patterson's recommendation which is a conservation approach
  - Mr. Pinkston introduced a motion to postpone reviewing grant request until the 2 December 2025 meeting as several people did not receive copies of the grant requests. This was seconded by Dr. Stewart; there was one dissenting vote, Mr. Finley.
- American Heroes Bingo
  - Mr. Jones requested a briefing on the proposed legislation.
  - Mr. McLamb explained:
    - SCDVA does not a position on this legislation.
    - There are various versions; not sure which one will make it through; there is ambiguity in all versions.
    - Electronic bingo games would be licensed through the Department of Revenue. License fees must be set by Department of Revenue.
    - Some portion of the proceeds from licensing fees would be distributed to the Veterans' Trust Fund and some to specifically named Veteran Service Organizations. Other Veteran Service Organizations are expected to get involved.
- Fundraising Campaign:
  - Need to set goals for 2026 and 2027 and determine what projects the board was to pursue.

VI. Next meeting and Adjournment:

- The next meeting the Trust Fund will be 3 December 2025 at 1300 at the South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs, 1800 Saint Julian Place, Suite 305, Columbia SC 29204.
- Meeting adjourned at 1415.

TerryLynn Di Chiara, Secretary

3 December 2025
Date of Approval

Todd B. McCaffrey, Executive Director
Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina

9 Dec 2025
Date of Approval