



## Board Meeting Minutes

3 December 2025

- I. **Call To Order:** Mr. Ellenburg called the meeting to order at 1300.
- II. **Present (in-person):** Dale Ellenburg, Melvin Poole, Shawn Pinkston, Secretary McCaffrey, David Finley, Stephen Jones, Dr. Ada Stewart

**Attending virtually:** Lowell Koppert

**Absent:** Jim Hawk, Nick Mesenburg, Dr. Nikki Wooten

SCDVA Support Staff: Joseph McLamb, Chief of Staff; Bobby Patterson, CFO; Jennifer Hendrix, Senior Paralegal; Dave Rozelle, Director, Workforce Enhancement; Dan Wrightsman, Deputy Director, Workforce Enhancement

- III. **Review and Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from 10 September were passed unanimously as written.

### IV. Executive Director Update

#### A. Opening Remarks:

- Veterans' Trust Fund
  - Discussed the importance of this meeting: reviewing grant requests is the most important meeting of the year
    - Necessary to have a quorum – the 6 board members attending will decide on grant requests
    - SCDVA has provided distinctive recommendations, but the Board is not bound by the recommendations
    - Received a total of thirteen applications
  - Board Configuration
    - SCDVA is working with the Governor's Office in bringing the Trust Fund into compliance with the law

- New requirement for board membership: two County Veterans Affairs Officers and two Veteran Service Officers
  - Some members of the existing board will be departing
- Website
  - SCDVA will be making sure the credit card link on the website is active again
  - Hope to leverage December with tax donations
- American Heroes Bingo
  - Passed the South Carolina House unanimously
  - If it passes the Senate (currently in Senate Finance), it has the potential to make a stratospheric revenue stream for the Trust Fund

#### **B. American Heroes Bingo H.4137**

- This bill is adding a difference Class: G. It will be the first passage of electronic gaming in the history of South Carolina.
- ***“An amount of 15% of the net hold for a month derived from American Heroes Bingo of each veteran’s organization must be remitted to the Veterans’ Trust Fund.***  
A total amount of 10% of the net hold for a month derived from American Heroes Bingo of each veteran’s organization must be split and remitted equally to the South Carolina state headquarters of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans. Other chartered Veterans Service Organizations with membership in excess of four thousand also may submit a claim to the proceeds derived from American Heroes Bingo.”
- Revenue and fiscal affairs will run the process
- SCDVA and the Trust Fund are not equipped to manage the revenue that this could generate; may need to use some of the money to hire a contract accountant.

#### **C. 2026 Department Legislative Priorities**

- SCDVA Directors conduct a War Game to determine possible legislative priorities
- Get feedback from others
- Recommendations are presented to the Secretary
- A ‘Legislative Roadmap’ is created
- May only get 2-3 pieces in a legislative session read from Ed’s slide
- Priorities for this upcoming year:

- Enhancing County Offices, H.3510: Provides that the Secretary of SCDVA “shall appoint one County Veterans’ Affairs Officer for each county in the state and to provide that the General Assembly shall appropriate the necessary fund for two full-time employees in each county Veterans’ Affairs Office.” Everyone is a winner.
- Certificate of Need, S.693: This would clean up the language to include Veteran Nursing Homes in the list of exemptions.
- Protect Veterans from Claims Sharks, S.695:
  - Federal violation, but not enforced
  - this was a “side hustle for a lot of her colleagues.” Mr. Ellenburg stated, “there are groups looking for the Veterans, taking large amounts off the top.”
  - This is about initial disability claims being prepared by those who are not accredited by the USDVA.
- Other initiatives:
  - Veterans Treatment Courts: “In collaboration with solicitors, establish statewide standard for processes and procedures.”
  - Understanding the Constituency:
    - Require county coroners to determine Veteran status in any case characterized as a suicide by the coroner.
    - Suicide data is received from the USDVA, but it is two years old. Trying to get more real time data. 234 suicides in last report.
  - Attracting Veterans to the South Carolina Workforce:
    - Establish Veterans Friendly Business Enterprise: procurement program, recruitment and hiring
    - Require the Secretary of State to maintain a database of Veteran-owned business

#### **D. Grant Review Requests**

- An information brief about the Trust Fund will be presented to the County Veterans Affairs Office during their assessment.
- SCDVA will provide recommendations, but the Board is not bound by them.
- Being a member of the Coalition means you are a member of the SCDVA Team.
- Mr. Patterson informed the Board they had \$281,000 available for grant funding.
- The Board discussed the following grant requests:

**Rainy Day Fund**

**Requested: \$5,000**

**Award: \$5,000**

Mr. Jones introduced a motion to award \$5,000; passed unanimously.

**Lowcountry Legal Volunteers**                      **Requested: \$50,000**                      **Award: \$25,000**  
Mr. Jones introduced a motion to award \$25,000; passed with a vote: 4 to 2, Messrs Finley and Pinkston opposing.

**Hoof in the Sand**                                      **Requested: \$704,000**                      **Award: \$25,000**  
Mr. Jones introduced a motion to award; passed with a vote of 4 to 2, Messrs Poole and Finley opposed.

**Hoof in the Sand**                                      **Requested: \$67,000**                      **Award: Denied**  
Mr. Jones introduced a motion to deny; passed unanimously.

**Increasing H.O.P.E.**                                      **Requested: \$15,000**                      **Award: Denied**  
Mr. Jones introduced a motion to disapprove the request; passed unanimously

**Guns Garin Memorial**                                      **Requested: \$30,000**                      **Award: Denied**  
Mr. Poole introduced a motion to award \$25,000; denied with a vote of 1 to 4, Messrs. Pinkston, Jones, and Finley and Dr. Stewart opposed, Mr. Ellenburg abstained.

**Workout Warrior Foundation**                      **Requested: \$180,086**                      **Award: Denied**  
Mr. Pinkston introduced a motion to disapprove the request; passed unanimously.

**Friends of Fisher House Charleston**                      **Requested: 10,000**                      **Award: Denied**  
Mr. Pinkston introduced a motion to disapprove the request; passed unanimously.

**V. Executive Session**

**A. Unfinished Business:** None at this time.

Bylaws: Proposal to change bylaws for 2027 at the next board meeting

**B. New Business:**

a. Grant Award Process:

- Discussion about awarding grants once a year, quarterly, or bi-annually.
- Secretary McCaffrey proposed adjusting the by-laws for 2027 to quarterly or bi-annually.

b. Investment Policy:

- Mr. Patterson recommended preserving the principal.
- Mr. Jones introduced a motion to preserve the principal; passed unanimously.
- Proposed dates for FY 2026: 11 March, 10 June, 9 September, 2 December
  - i. Mr. Pinkston introduced a motion to accept; passed unanimously.
- Raymond James:

1. Mr. Patterson suggested having a representative from Raymond James provide an update to the Board.
  - ii. Mr. Jones recommended that they come once a year to present an update and answer any questions the Board may have.
  - iii. Mr. Finley will contact Jeannie Gravelle with Raymond James and invite her to the 11 March 2026 meeting.
- Other Investments:
    - i. Secretary McCaffrey recommended keeping a working capital.
    - ii. Mr. Finley suggested having Truist invest \$100,000 in CDs. Mr. Jones to follow through.

**VI. Closing Comments:** These are included in New Business.

**VII. Next meeting and Adjournment:**

- The next meeting the Trust Fund will be 11 March 2026 at 1300 at the South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs, 1800 Saint Julian Place, Suite 305, Columbia SC 29204.
- Meeting adjourned.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TerryLynn Di Chiara, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Approval

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Approval

