

MINUTES

**Meeting of the
Missouri Veterans Commission
Innovation Task Force
November 7, 2018 — 2:00 PM
Hilton Garden Inn
3300 Vandiver Drive
Columbia, Missouri**

I. Welcome & Opening Remarks – Tim Noonan, Chair, Missouri Veterans Commission

Commissioner Noonan called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm.

Task Force Members in attendance:

Scotty Allen – Office of Missouri Attorney General
Ron Azdell – Mexico Missouri Veterans Home Assistance League
Elliott Barrowclough – Missouri National Guard
Steven Beem – Ft. Leonard Wood
Daniel Bell – Missouri Veterans Commission
Shawn Burnette – Missouri Veterans Commission – SE MO area
Kim Chamberlain – St. Louis County Veterans Program
Shams Chughtai – MO Division of Workforce Development – Veteran Services
Todd Cowan – Team Red, White & Blue
José Dominguez – Missouri Veterans Commission
Angela Drake – University of Missouri – Columbia – Veterans Law Clinic
Michael Elmore – Disabled American Veterans
Lowry Finley Jackson – American Legion
Sarah Froese – Harry S Truman VA Medical Center – Columbia
Elaine Gerstenberger – Missouri Veterans Commission – NW MO area
Karen Gettinger – United Way of Missouri – KC
Betty Gonzales – Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations
Adam Gresham – Office of the Lt. Governor
Jennifer Henderson – Missouri Veterans Commission – SW MO Area
Jeff Huffman – University of Central Missouri – Veteran Services
Mark Jones – Missouri National Guard – Skyline
Jacki Kelley – MO Department of Corrections Probation & Parole
Bill Kiefer – Focus Marine Foundation
James Klahr – Missouri Veterans Commission, Deputy Director
Jason Klaus – Perry County Sheriff's Department – MO Crisis Intervention
Mike LeBlanc – American Legion
Grace Link – Missouri Veterans Commission, Executive Director
John McKenzie – Missouri Department of Revenue
Jamie Melchert – Missouri Veterans Commission
Tim Noonan – Missouri Veterans Commission, Chairman
Jim Nugent – Missouri Veterans Cemetery Program
Sara O'Connor – Team Red, White & Blue
Roystan Pais – Missouri Veterans Commission

Angela Peacock – Washington University – Brown School of Social Work
Megan Price – Office of Senator Jill Schupp
KC Rafferty – MO Office of State Courts Administration
Naveed Razaque – Missouri Board of Nursing Homes
Efram Rivers – Johnson Controls
Terry Roberts – Veterans United & Welcome Home, Inc.
Robert Ross – University of Missouri – Student Veterans Center
Tony Russell – Pierson Construction, Inc.
Jon Sabala – MO Department of Mental Health – Veterans Services Program
Jeanne Savel – ESGR & St. Louis Veterans Support Network
Terressa Sherlock – Missouri Veterans Commission
Melissa Skinner – Missouri Veterans Commission
Mike Smith – Missouri Veterans Commission – NE MO area
Adrienne Spadavecchia – Missouri National Guard
Jeff Stewart – Missouri Veterans Commission – Incarcerated Veterans Re-Entry
Randy Watson – Missouri Veterans Commission
Dave White – MO Department of Corrections
Melissa Wilding – Missouri Veterans Commission
Sandy Wilson – Institute for Community Alliances
Tim Woods – Missouri National Guard
Nancy Yohe – St. Patrick Center – St. Louis

Task Force Members absent:

Spencer Bartlett – MO Department of Revenue
Joe Driskill – Office of the Missouri Military Advocate
Jennifer Greene – Whiteman Air Force Base
Terry Jarrett – Healy Law Offices, LLC
Sarah Parsons – Missouri Housing Development Commission

Commissioner Noonan mentioned that students from Washington University Business School had completed a Practicum Project in spring 2018 to propose a Task Force to study Veterans' needs in Missouri. A copy of that study – Launch of the Veterans Innovation Task Force - was provided to all Task Force members.

II. Member Introductions – James Klahr, Deputy Director, Missouri Veterans Commission

Each Task Force member completed a notecard indicating the person's name, position, and the most important issue facing Veterans. Each Task Force member then selected one of the cards and introduced the fellow Task Force member based on the information completed on the card.

III. Briefing on Sunshine Law – James Klahr, Deputy Director, Missouri Veterans Commission

James Klahr provided a basic overview of the Sunshine Law and indicated that this Task Force would be subject to the law under Chapter 610, RSMo. Task Force members were briefed to contact Shawn Holzhauser, Assistant to the Executive Director, if any requests for records are received.

IV. Overview of Recent Veteran Studies – Melissa Wilding, Outreach & Advocacy Director, Missouri Veterans Commission

Jeff Huffman, Director of Military and Veterans Affairs at the University of Central Missouri briefed the Task Force members on the study he and others from the University have compiled to analyze the quality of life available in Missouri for military service members and their families who are preparing to separate from military service. That study – A Comprehensive Analysis of Missouri’s Efforts to Improve the Quality of Life of Military Service Members and Their Families – was provided to all Task Force members.

Discussion followed about identifying points in a service member’s life at which the service member and family are in a transition and how the appropriate resources need to be made available to those service members and their families. One example is having the Missouri Veterans Commission be involved in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) as military service members prepare to separate from service. Another was the Joplin Chamber of Commerce’s efforts to recruit veterans who are looking for employment after their military service.

Challenges identified in the transition process included the large amount of information provided to service members as they prepare to separate from the military and the lack of personal mentorship, which if made available, could help the service member be more successful in his or her post-military life.

V. Introduction to the Missouri Veterans Commission – Grace Link, Executive Director, Missouri Veterans Commission

Director Link provided an overview of the main duties of the Commission, providing care for our Veterans in 7 State Veterans’ Homes, honoring the memories of our Veterans in 5 State Veterans’ Cemeteries, and assisting our Veterans in filing claims for benefits through our Veteran Services Officers.

VI. Task Force Next Steps

Tim Noonan concluded the meeting by identifying work groups areas based on the Veterans issues identified by the members themselves. Eight work groups were identified with Chairs and Co-Chairs to lead the work of those work groups. In addition, a staff member from the Missouri Veterans Commission was assigned to each work group:

Those committees are:

Increase Access to Veterans Benefits

Chair: Scotty Allen, Office of MO Attorney General

Co-Chair: Michael Smith, Missouri Veterans Commission

MVC Staff Member: Kevin Colyott

Increase Employment Opportunities for Veterans

Chair: Shams Chughtai, MO Division of Workforce Development
Co-Chair: Jeanne Savel, St. Louis Veterans Support Network
MVC Staff Member: Terressa Sherlock
MVC Staff Member: Melissa Skinner
MVC Staff Member: Kathryn Welch

Increase Access to Education and Job Skills Training for Veterans

Chair: Robert Ross, University of Missouri – Student Veterans Center
Co-Chair: Terry Jarrett, Healy Law Offices, LLC
MVC Staff Member: Randy Watson

Decrease Veteran Homelessness

Chair: Grace Link, Missouri Veterans Commission
Co-Chair: Terry Roberts, Veterans United
MVC Staff Member: Melissa Wilding

Increase Access to Behavioral Health and Decrease Veteran Suicide

Chair: Jon Sabala, MO Department of Mental Health
Co-Chair: Roystan Pais, Missouri Veterans Commission
MVC Staff Member: Kathryn Welch

Enhance Service Member Readiness for Transition into Civilian Life

Chair: Jeff Huffman, University of Center Missouri
Co-Chair: Mark Jones, MO National Guard/Skyline Contractor
MVC Staff Member: Jamie Melchert

Increase Community Coordination Supporting Veterans

Chair: Adrienne Spadavecchia, MO National Guard
Co-Chair: Mike LeBlanc, American Legion
MVC Staff Member: Jill Delgado

Enhance Coordination of Services for Veterans in the Justice System

Chair: Jacki Kelley, MO Department of Corrections
Co-Chair: Sarah Froese, Harry Truman VA Medical Center – Columbia
MVC Staff Member: James Klahr
MVC Staff Member: Jeff Stewart

VII. Next VITF Meeting Date

The next meeting of the VITF Task Force will be Friday, January 25, 2019, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm at the Springfield Job Center, 2900 East Sunshine Street – Dogwood Room, Springfield, MO.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Grace Link, Executive Director
Missouri Veterans Commission