

Virginia Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees
Virginia War Memorial
621 S Belvidere St
Richmond, VA 23219
Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2025
10:00AM – 12:00PM

DRAFT

A meeting of the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees was held on Monday, June 16, 2025 at the Virginia War Memorial, 621 S Belvidere St, Richmond, Virginia. The meeting was called to order at 10:05a.m.

Trustees Present

- Brad Williamson (*Veterans Services Foundation Chairman*)
- Mike Coleman
- Marc Anderson (virtual)
- Allan C. Burke
- Tim Pillion
- Craig Colucci
- Shannon Spencer-Watson
- Joel Griffin
- Brandy Jones (virtual)
- Heather Hopkins (virtual)
- Danny Vargas (virtual)

Trustees Absent

- Kathleen Murphy
- James R. Poplar
- Omari Faulkner
- Jarris L. Taylor, Jr.

VSF Advisors Present

- Chuck Zingler (*Commissioner of Department of Veterans Services*)
- Jordan Stewart (*Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs*)

VSF Staff Present

- Kayla Arestivo (*Executive Director*)
- Darius McKenney (*Business Manager*)

Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Attorney General

- James Flaherty (*OAG, Assistant Attorney General*)

Board of Veterans Services Members Present

- Dara Hector, DVS

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Services Organization Members Present

- Bill Aramony, Chairman (*virtual*)

DVS Representatives Present

- Kim Barton
- Tammy Davidson
- Patrice Jones
- Brandi Jancaitis
- Guy Dinkins
- Eric Johnson

- Kendra Ellison
- Dara Hector
- Monique Bradham
- Zuri Polk
- Antionette Johnson
- Ben Shaw (virtual)
- Brody Brown

Materials Distributed and Attached

- VSF Agenda (*Attachment 1*)
- VSF March 13th Board Meeting Minutes (*Attachment 2*)
- *Chairman Report*
- *BVS Chairman Report*
- *JLC Chairman Report*
- VSF Finance Committee Report (*Attachment 3*)
- Schedule of Receipts, Expenditures and Budget, by Activity For the Month Ended June 30, 2024 (FM12) (*Attachment 4*)
- Schedule of Receipts, Expenditures and Budget, by Activity For the Month Ended July 31, 2024 (FM01) (*Attachment 5*)
- Statement of Assets For Month Ended July 31, 2024 (FM01) (*Attachment 6*)
- VSF Sept 2024 Development Committee Update (*Attachment 7*)
- VSF Procedures and Policies Committee Report (*Attachment 8*)

1. Call to Order

a. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

VSF Chair Williamson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:05a.m. Chair Williamson led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

b. Roll Call of Trustees and Quorum Determination

With 10 of 15- trustees present, VSF Chair Williamson advised a quorum was determined.

c. Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was previously sent to the Trustees electronically, and a printed copy was included in the Board Agenda Packets.

Chair Williamson asked if everyone had the opportunity to review the meeting agenda, to which there were no objections. (Colucci) **moved** to approve the meeting agenda and (Burke) **seconded** the motion.

2. Review and Approval of March 13, 2025, VSF Meeting Minutes

VSF Chair Williamson asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Burke **moved** the approve the minutes as presented and Pillion **seconded** the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. REPORTS

A. Secretary's Report: Craig Crenshaw, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs

Deputy Secretary Jordan Stewart shared remarks on behalf of the Secretary's office, expressing appreciation for the progress made over the past three and a half years. She thanked all attendees for their individual and collective contributions to that success. As the administration enters its final six months, Stewart emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum and supporting the Governor's vision for Virginia to be the best state for veterans to live, work, and raise a family.

She acknowledged that efforts to solidify this legacy will continue and encouraged those present to remain engaged and contribute ideas for finishing strong.

Stewart also gave special recognition to Brody Brown, the summer fellow working in the Secretary's office. Brown is a student at James Madison University, majoring in chemistry and participating in the

JMU band. During his fellowship, he will be actively involved with both DMA and DVS and has made a strong impression with his dedication so far.

Deputy Secretary Stewart concluded by reminding everyone that the Secretary's office remains accessible and open to collaboration. She welcomed suggestions and encouraged ongoing communication as the team works to close out its final phase with purpose and gratitude.

B. Department of Veterans Services

Commissioner Chuck Zingler opened his remarks by reflecting on his 20 months of service with DVS, following a 31-year career in the Navy and experience in the business sector. He emphasized the outstanding caliber of the agency, noting that it is built on high-performing teams dedicated to serving Virginia's veteran population.

Commissioner Zingler praised the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VSF), calling it a unique and powerful partner. He shared that other states often express a desire to have a similar foundation to support their veterans, as there are never enough resources—time, talent, or treasure—to fully meet the needs of the more than 700,000 veterans in Virginia, in addition to approximately 40,000 transitioning service members and their families, survivors, and dependents.

He acknowledged the ambitious goals set by the legislature, the Board of Veterans Services, and the Governor, all aimed at making Virginia the best place for veterans to live, work, and raise a family. Zingler credited the Foundation's energy and support for enabling DVS to expand its reach and impact, expressing deep gratitude for the partnership.

The Commissioner addressed the ongoing work on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DVS and VVSF, sharing his commitment to improving collaboration, communication, and alignment between the two entities. He emphasized the importance of mutual transparency and a unified effort to move forward.

Commissioner Zingler closed by reaffirming his and his team's dedication to supporting the Foundation now and into the next administration. He offered his continued availability to the Foundation and expressed appreciation for the collective work being done to support Virginia's veterans.

C. Chairman's Report

Chairman Brad Williamson began his report by highlighting the importance of maintaining a full board of trustees. He acknowledged that one trustee seat remains vacant and emphasized the value of filling that final position to ensure the board's strength and effectiveness. He thanked Deputy Secretary Jordan Stewart and others for their efforts in identifying strong nominees.

Chairman Williamson noted that the Foundation has successfully achieved its fundraising goals for the fiscal year, meeting targets for both in-kind support/grants and monetary donations. He encouraged continued focus on securing unrestricted donations, which offer the Foundation greater flexibility in supporting diverse DVS programs. While acknowledging the value of restricted donations—often inspired by meaningful experiences with specific services like care centers or cemeteries—he stressed the overall strategic advantage of unrestricted funding.

He went on to mention the Nominating Committee met during the past quarter and was scheduled to present nominations for Chair and First Vice Chair during the meeting. He also acknowledged that the Finance Committee has met and will present the FY26 budget allocation to DVS later in the meeting.

Chairman Williamson provided an update on the annual MOU between VSF and DVS. While the hope had been to finalize and sign the agreement at this meeting, additional legal review is required. The goal remains to get the MOU finalized and agreed upon prior to the start of the new fiscal year on July 1.

He then previewed upcoming fundraising events, including Bull Run Harley-Davidson Poker Run on July 12, VMI MOAA Golf Tournament on July 18, and a Hampton Roads area fundraising event, which he is personally coordinating and hopes to finalize in the upcoming months.

Chairman Williamson closed by announcing that the next VSF Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on September 18, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, at the Virginia War Memorial.

D. Board of Veterans Services

DVS Policy Analyst, Dara Hector reported that the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) has met three times since the last joint meeting. At the March 20 meeting, board members attended the Women Veterans Week ceremony at the Virginia War Memorial and received a presentation from DVS Benefits Service Line, which included updates on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in benefits claims processing.

The next meeting was held on April 23 and focused on leadership transition, as the board prepared for upcoming elections and discussed how to strengthen its collaboration with DVS.

The most recent meeting was held on June 5, during which Matthew Miller was elected Chair and Scott Davidson was elected Vice Chair. The board also heard from the DVS cemeteries, leading to a productive discussion and increased interest from legislative members in BVS.

Ms. Hector concluded by noting the board's continued engagement and interest in advancing DVS initiatives.

E. Joint Leadership Council

Chairman Bill Aramony reported that the JLC had a successful legislative session, with four out of five of its proposed initiatives resulting in passed legislation. In addition, several budget items supported by the JLC were included in the final budget, marking a productive and impactful year for the council.

The JLC convened again on April 23 to begin developing its legislative priorities for 2026. Over 20 proposals were submitted, including potential bills and letters from the Chair. The council will continue reviewing and refining those proposals in the coming week.

Chairman Aramony expressed appreciation to those who participated in the April 23 meeting, including Commissioner Zingler, Deputy Secretary Jordan Stewart, and several veterans and service members who attended and contributed, even though they were not part of the legislative committee. Their presence and input were noted as vital to the JLC's ongoing advocacy efforts.

Chairman Aramony concluded his remarks by thanking VSF Chairman, Brad Williamson for his support of JLC. The next JLC meeting will take place on June 18 at 10:00 AM at the Virginia War Memorial.

F. Foundation Report

Executive Director Kayla Arestivo began her report by expressing her deep appreciation to Chairman Brad Williamson for his leadership and mentorship during his tenure. She extended her gratitude as well to Trustee Mike Coleman, acknowledging both individuals for their guidance and support. Arestivo credited Chairman Williamson's steady leadership as a key reason for the Foundation's current strong standing.

She then provided a brief overview of the Foundation's mission and emphasized the impactful services made possible through VSF funding. Arestivo reminded attendees that the Foundation's core purpose is to support and enhance programs across DVS, ensuring veterans and their families receive vital assistance statewide.

Executive Director Arestivo continued her report by sharing two impact stories from Ben Shaw, Central Regional Director of the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program. She used these

testimonials to highlight the real-life impact of Foundation-funded services and to emphasize the value of ongoing support. VVFS continues to be the largest recipient of Foundation funds due to the high demand for assistance across the Commonwealth. Executive Director Arestivo noted that there are hundreds of similar success stories taking place statewide, all made possible by the Board's and partners' continued support.

She then outlined the Foundation's Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) for 2025. Executive Director Arestivo reaffirmed the Foundation's goal of positioning itself as the best state-supported foundation in the nation serving veterans. She emphasized that it is a privilege to have a foundation of this kind, as very few states have such an entity in place.

The Foundation is projected to close the year having raised \$1.2 million, with more than \$300,000 in pending grant funding. This includes a recently secured \$15,000 grant, which is expected to be deposited before or shortly after July 1.

Executive Director Arestivo highlighted the Foundation's success in expanding engagement across the Commonwealth. She and Business Manager, Darius McKenney continue to attend and represent the Foundation at a wide range of events. She recognized Trustee Shannon Spencer-Watson for her exceptional efforts in consistently promoting the Foundation's mission. VSF is currently participating in at least 20 engagements per quarter, exceeding its goals for outreach and visibility.

Regarding donor engagement, Executive Director Arestivo shared that initial goals focused on increasing the number of active donors. However, with support from Chairman Williamson and Trustee Coleman in evaluating donor data, the Foundation has learned that the majority of its funding comes from a smaller group of high-capacity donors. As a result, donor engagement goals may be adjusted in FY26 to emphasize cultivating and retaining significant funders rather than increasing overall donor volume.

Executive Director Arestivo concluded this portion of the report by inviting Trustee Mike Coleman to share a few words. Trustee Coleman continued the Foundation report by presenting a chart illustrating donation trends and performance. He began by acknowledging that while the Foundation is doing an outstanding job raising funds—having exceeded its revenue goal for the year—the overall need remains much greater. He drew attention to a section of the chart showing donations by month, which clearly reflects growth over time.

Trustee Coleman then discussed the distribution of donations by size, noting that the Foundation's largest financial impact came from donations between \$10,000 and \$100,000, totaling \$639,000 from 18 donors. In contrast, the Foundation received \$45,000 from 225 donors who gave \$1,000 or less. This comparison, he explained, highlights that the number of donors is less significant than targeting those who can provide higher-yield contributions.

While emphasizing the importance of cultivating major donors, Coleman also underscored the vital role of smaller contributors. He noted that smaller donors are often essential to raising awareness and broadening the Foundation's visibility, particularly in support of the VVFS program.

He concluded his remarks by pointing to a red bar on the chart, which indicated that only 23% of total donations were unrestricted. He stressed the importance of increasing unrestricted giving, as it provides flexibility to direct funds to areas of greatest need. Although VVFS is the Foundation's largest funding recipient, only 7% of total donations in the previous year, approximately \$53,000, were explicitly designated for VVFS. Trustee Coleman emphasized the need to focus outreach efforts on securing more unrestricted commitments from donors to better support priority service lines like VVFS. Trustee Coleman returned the floor to Executive Director Arestivo.

Executive Director Arestivo resumed her presentation by outlining the 2025 strategy, which trustees receive updates monthly. She emphasized the importance of collaboration with DVS to tell the story

behind the data and communicate measurable outcomes to funders. This alignment with DVS priorities ensures the Foundation can identify funding gaps and secure resources where they are most needed.

She reiterated the Foundation's commitment to statewide engagement, referencing ongoing outreach efforts and events across the Commonwealth, as part of a broader effort to maximize visibility and donor connection.

Executive Director Arestivo discussed the ongoing goal of increasing fundraising to meet the actual needs of DVS—estimated closer to \$3 million annually. She highlighted specific trustee-led events, including a successful fundraiser organized by Trustee Joel Griffin in Fredericksburg, which raised \$5,600 at no cost to the Foundation, and an upcoming event in August being led by Trustee Brandy Jones.

She also focused on grants, particularly those supporting the VVFS program. With the help of Darius McKenney and the Foundation's grant writer, Stephanie Blackman, the team continues to prioritize grant research and applications. Arestivo noted that topics like veteran homelessness and healthcare remain of high interest to funders.

On the topic of marketing, Executive Director Arestivo expressed a goal of expanding VSF's digital and social media presence, including online giving campaigns. She stressed the importance of reaching a younger donor demographic, noting that most current contributors are older individuals, not affiliated with private foundations and corporations. She cited her recent attendance at the "Zero Mills" conference in Washington, D.C., where she learned strategies for engaging younger generations in both service and philanthropy.

To support this initiative, Executive Director Arestivo proposed allocating up to \$10,000 for marketing and content creation in FY26, staying within procurement guidelines. She clarified that while she is not a voting member, this figure reflects her recommendation as Executive Director. The allocation could be drawn from either general funds or the previously approved VSF support fund. She noted that the Foundation is also currently allocating \$10,000 in general funds to DVS for marketing collaboration, pending finalization of the FY26 MOU. If DVS cannot support this need, the funds may be redirected to an outside vendor.

VSF Business Manager, Darius McKenney, has already held conversations with several veteran-owned and state-experienced firms to explore marketing partnerships within the proposed budget. These discussions are aligned with DVS procurement standards and guidelines.

Executive Director Arestivo concluded her presentation by showing photos from Foundation events and activities attended by staff and trustees over the previous quarter.

G. Treasurer's Report

Kim Barton presented the Treasurer's report. As of March 31, 2025, the total income for the FY 25 3rd Quarter reached \$800,758.27 Total expenditures during the same period amounted to \$1,004,078.03, resulting in an excess of income over expenditures of (\$203,319.76).

The beginning fund balance was \$2,944,460.68, leading to a total FY2024 3rd Quarter ending fund balance of \$2,741,140.92.

H. VSF Finance Committee Report

Trustee Coleman opened the finance report by referencing the Foundation's fundraising progress and noting that trustees had a copy of the finance report in their meeting handouts. He emphasized that one of the key responsibilities of the Finance Committee is to establish the annual budget—specifically, how much of the Foundation's donated funds will be allocated to DVS for execution in the upcoming fiscal year.

He reminded the board that the Foundation may only provide funds for programs administered by DVS or for initiatives that support the Foundation's fundraising capacity. The Foundation itself does not have the authority to spend money independently outside of those bounds.

To inform the budgeting process, the Finance Committee convened on April 23, inviting the Commissioner of DVS and all DVS service line directors to brief board members on identified needs. This meeting was attended by a cross-section of the board, including Finance Committee members, the Chair, and additional trustees.

Trustee Coleman explained that the agency presented a funding request document outlining five program areas and corresponding initiatives. In total, DVS requested \$2.5 million in funding from the Foundation for FY26—approximately \$200,000 less than their request for FY25. While this year's request is slightly lower, Trustee Coleman noted that the true annual need of the agency to adequately serve Virginia veterans likely falls closer to \$3 million. With approximately \$1.2 million raised this year, the Foundation still falls short of fully meeting that demand.

He further emphasized the consistency in DVS's funding needs over the past two years and expressed confidence that if the Foundation can provide the requested resources, DVS is fully capable of executing programming at that level.

Trustee Coleman proceeded to walk through the program-specific funding requests. He directed trustees' attention to the "Restricted Funds Available" column in the budget handout, which represents donor-designated funds for specific program areas. He used the VVFS program as a key example, noting that although VVFS requested approximately \$900,000, only \$1,000 in restricted funds were available for that service line—highlighting the critical need for unrestricted giving to meet actual demand.

He then referenced the Veterans Education, Training, and Employment (VETE) service line, which had \$105,000 in restricted funds available. However, those funds are further limited and may only be used for V3 Summit meetings or the Women Veterans Summit, underscoring how restrictions within restrictions can further limit flexibility in meeting broader program needs.

Trustee Coleman concluded this portion of the report by encouraging trustees to review the full breakdown of requested amounts by service area and invited questions from the board before moving into a discussion of the proposed FY26 budget recommendations.

Trustee Shannon Spencer-Watson raised a question regarding the Foundation's proposed investments in podcast production and outreach events. She emphasized that increasing public awareness should be a priority, as many Virginians remain unaware of the Foundation and its impact. Trustee Spencer-Watson expressed support for communications-focused initiatives and asked Commissioner Zingler how the board and Foundation could assist with these efforts.

Commissioner Zingler responded by providing historical context and current challenges regarding outreach at DVS. He noted that, prior to his tenure, the agency's focus had been heavily weighted toward crisis-driven needs such as veteran homelessness and post-9/11 invisible injuries like PTSD—important areas that built the agency's current reputation. However, when DVS launched its first comprehensive strategic plan (with bipartisan legislative, executive, and veteran community input), the top three priorities identified were: 1) increasing revenue to better fund services, 2) strengthening employment and economic opportunities, and 3) improving transition and health services.

Commissioner Zingler acknowledged the growing need for strategic communication and outreach, especially given the volume of veterans—estimated at more than 50,000 annually—who require employment and transitional support. He highlighted that communication had long been deprioritized, ranking as low as 30th on internal lists, even though only one in three veterans are even aware of DVS and its resources. He pointed to a recent internal study showing that, while transitioning service members

are aware of the GI Bill, they are largely unaware of other available services.

To address this, DVS has launched the Virginia Veterans Network, a digital portal meant to centralize veteran resources. However, the full development of the portal is projected to take another three years. In the meantime, outreach through modern platforms such as social media and podcasts is essential to reaching veterans—particularly in regions like Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, where digital consumption is high.

Commissioner Zingler supported the idea of launching a podcast but explained the significant funding barriers. While DVS has a podcast plan estimated at roughly \$500,000, the General Assembly has been hesitant to fund such initiatives, often categorizing them as “marketing” rather than essential services.

He emphasized that what is needed most is not just another caseworker, but outreach personnel who can connect with hundreds of veterans before they fall into crisis. If veterans are not reached early in their transition—within the first 24 months after leaving service—they are more likely to later need support from VVFS and its crisis programs.

Commissioner Zingler concluded by affirming the importance of outreach initiatives and reiterated the need to shift habits and priorities to support upstream interventions like communication and visibility. He welcomed continued Foundation support and input in these areas.

Trustee Coleman resumed his presentation by walking through the specific line items of the proposed FY26 budget. He reiterated that the Foundation receives an \$850,000 appropriation from the General Assembly to support DVS programs and that, by law, the budget must be balanced to that amount. The Finance Committee, however, has identified several areas where additional appropriation requests may be submitted to the Secretary of Finance. If approved, these requests would enable the Foundation to provide enhanced support without altering the balanced base budget.

Trustee Coleman began by noting that the committee is recommending \$610,000 for VVFS, the largest single allocation, reflecting the scale of services VVFS provides and its ongoing needs. VETE is recommended to receive \$50,000. While \$105,000 in restricted funds already exists for VETE programming, those dollars are further restricted for the V3 Summit and the Women Veterans Summit. The \$50,000 general support would ensure the broader program needs are also met.

Turning to the next line item, Trustee Coleman explained that two years ago, the Foundation received a grant from Walmart in support of the Virginia Community Resource Center. Those funds, totaling \$56,000, have yet to be used. He emphasized that the Foundation has an obligation to either execute the funds or return them, and he expressed his preference that the funds be put to good use as originally intended.

Next, he addressed a request for \$32,000 for the Suffolk Veterans Cemetery. This amount would be part of an additional appropriation request and used to purchase a locator machine to help visitors navigate the cemetery and locate gravesites. The need for these machines was previously identified by all state cemeteries, and Suffolk, having recently received a large, restricted contribution, is well-positioned to pilot the program.

Trustee Coleman then spoke briefly about the Foundation’s support for Virginia’s veterans care centers. He noted that the committee largely recommends meeting their requests. However, for certain items like bed rails at Davis and McGuire, the committee will submit requests for additional appropriation to avoid using limited base funding that could be redirected elsewhere.

Finally, he addressed the \$10,000 line item requested by Executive Director Arestivo to pilot a marketing initiative. This request would support content creation and outreach, with the goal of raising visibility and engagement across the Commonwealth, particularly among younger potential donors.

At the conclusion of his remarks, Chairman Williamson asked how much would remain in unrestricted funds if the proposed budget were approved. Trustee Coleman responded that executing this budget would leave the Foundation with \$97,382 in unrestricted funds. Tammy Davidson, representing the DVS finance team, added that this number is based on April's end-of-month figures and may be higher depending on more recent financial activity.

Trustee Craig Colucci offered remarks focused on the integrity of the Foundation's messaging and the unique position it currently holds. He emphasized that the Foundation is in a rare and enviable place among nonprofits, able to say that 100% of the funds it receives go directly to veterans' programs. He stressed that this messaging is powerful and uncommon in the nonprofit world—and that if the board votes to allocate funds for internal marketing expenses, that claim would no longer be accurate.

Trustee Colucci reflected on the financial structure, noting that many nonprofits have separate programming and administrative expense categories. He estimated that this year's administrative spending, totaling around \$492,000, makes up approximately 39% of the \$1.2 million raised—slightly higher than the Better Business Bureau's recommended 35% benchmark. He stated that while this is still a solid ratio, the ability to maintain the "100% to veterans" message is an important differentiator for the Foundation.

To preserve that claim, Trustee Colucci proposed a possible alternative: use the \$10,000 earmarked for Foundation marketing and instead route it to meet the Commissioner's communications priorities through DVS. He acknowledged the small scale of the amount in the broader picture but emphasized the symbolic and strategic value of doing so. He concluded by noting the interdependent nature of the Foundation and DVS, saying, "We need DVS for the programs, and they need us for the funding."

Chairman Williamson responded by clarifying that under the current MOU, the Foundation already provides \$10,000 to DVS for marketing support. He explained that the executive director's proposal was likely made in anticipation of the possibility that this support might be removed in the renegotiated MOU for FY26. Williamson agreed with Colucci's strategic perspective but issued a note of caution: while the Foundation and DVS operate in close coordination, fundraising language must legally reflect a level of independence. He said that the Foundation will need to consult the Office of the Attorney General to ensure any further integration of marketing efforts stays within legal and ethical bounds.

Trustee Joel Griffin took a moment to offer a broader perspective on the Foundation's outreach and donor engagement strategy. He highlighted a concerning disconnect between the scale of Virginia's veteran population and the number of individuals actively supporting the Foundation. While Virginia is home to one of the largest veteran populations in the country, Griffin pointed out that VSF currently has just over 250 donors—and we are emphasizing only 18 of them.

He underscored the weight of this imbalance, noting that the entire supplemental budget offered to DVS is built on the generosity of just 18 individuals. From his perspective, this is not sustainable. Griffin argued that if the Foundation intends to grow its impact and meet the increasing demand for funding across all DVS programs, it must significantly improve its ability to market itself.

He acknowledged and respected the desire to maintain the powerful messaging that "100% of donations go directly to veterans," but cautioned that this message only works if the Foundation is actually reaching people. "If we're only reaching 250 people," he said, "we drastically have to change our marketing approach."

Trustee Griffin went on to emphasize that while DVS carries out vital missions every day, it is not DVS's responsibility to market the Foundation. That burden falls squarely on VSF itself. He concluded by calling for a strategic shift, encouraging the Foundation to fully embrace its identity as a nonprofit and invest in the outreach necessary to scale its mission and donor base.

Concluding discussion in the room, Chairman Williamson asked if there were any changes wanting to be made. Trustee Colucci made a motion that the \$10,000 initially requested by the Executive Director for Foundation-specific marketing be redirected to support the Commissioner's communication priorities. Specifically, he proposed that the funds be allocated to the Virginia Veterans Network platform as part of DVS's broader outreach and public awareness efforts.

I. Development Committee Report

Trustee Spencer-Watson opened the report by referencing the last committee meeting, held on April 18th, and thanked Trustee Joel Griffin for hosting a successful fundraiser that brought in over \$5,600. She noted that the Development Committee is recommending a fundraising goal of \$950,000 for the upcoming year—an increase that balances ambition with realism considering current market uncertainty and giving trends.

The committee plans to focus on targeted community outreach as a pathway to achieving this goal. Trustee Spencer-Watson shared her personal experience asking members of the public whether they knew of the Foundation and receiving consistent “no” responses. She emphasized the importance of increasing visibility by attending events and engaging with local networks. The aim is to increase the number of active donors.

She mentioned ongoing efforts to connect with potential partners, including outreach to Boeing, and encouraged trustees to share contacts that could support development efforts. She also stressed the need to better leverage digital platforms like TikTok and Instagram, noting their fundraising potential. Other innovative strategies mentioned included virtual events, peer-to-peer fundraising, and partnerships with local businesses such as car dealerships or wineries that may donate space or time.

Trustee Spencer-Watson highlighted an example from another nonprofit that hosts a car giveaway for a veteran each year, suggesting the possibility of collaborating with similar groups for cross-promotional visibility. She committed to following up on upcoming event plans and encouraged trustees to turn ideas into scheduled events. She gave notice that she would be reaching out to Trustee Brandy Jones, who was then invited to share details of her own upcoming event.

Trustee Brandy Jones reported she would be hosting an event on August 30th from 4 to 8 p.m., which will include both a silent and live auction, food, entertainment, and guest speakers to promote awareness of the Foundation's mission. She plans to invite retired military members who have personally benefitted from services supported by the Foundation to share their stories.

Trustee Spencer-Watson concluded by encouraging all trustees to alert her or Executive Director Arestivo to local events where the foundation could be represented, either in person or virtually, and offered to help make introductions if needed. She also emphasized grassroots efforts and shared her own plans to speak at a local VFW post in the coming month.

The next Development Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 18th at 11 a.m., with invitations to be sent out soon. She encouraged trustees to brainstorm ways to support the committee's goals and ended up urging everyone to consider influential individuals in their circles who could help amplify the Foundation's platform.

J. Procedures and Policies Committee Report

Trustee Heather Hopkins presented the report on behalf of Trustee Jarris Taylor, Jr., crediting him for much of the committee's recent work. She explained that Trustee Taylor has led efforts to update the foundation's policies and procedures from the 2019–2020 version to reflect the 2024–2025 realities of the board's operations. These updates are not sweeping overhauls, but rather targeted revisions aimed at aligning policy with current practices and streamlining processes.

She noted that track changes were previously provided to trustees back at the March meeting, giving ample time for review. The updates touch on the bylaws and the MOU between VSF and DVS, focusing on clarifying operational procedures and the relationship between the two entities.

Trustee Hopkins emphasized that the revisions also speak to topics discussed earlier in the meeting, particularly regarding fundraising strategy and the use of funds. The updated policies now better reflect the current structure of the board, including election procedures, budgeting, revenue generation, and how funds are executed in practice. She reassured the board that there were no surprises in the document and that the updates are meant to formalize what is already happening in practice.

Executive Director Arestivo added that the updates took considerable time and effort. She reminded the trustees that the full draft of changes was reviewed in a previous work session where each policy was discussed in detail. Trustees were sent printed copies to take home and also received a follow-up email the previous week with PDF versions of the documents for further review. She reiterated that everything had been thoroughly vetted and that this meeting was the time to formally approve what has already been reviewed for several months.

K. Nominating Committee Report

Trustee Coleman presented the Nominating Committee report, noting that it was included in the meeting materials and is largely self-explanatory. In accordance with the Foundation's bylaws, the board must elect a Chair, First Vice Chair, and Second Vice Chair each year.

Three individuals initially expressed interest in serving in these leadership roles. However, one candidate later withdrew for personal reasons, leaving two individuals to fill the three required positions.

The Nominating Committee formally recommended Joel Griffin for Chair and Ros Poplar for First Vice Chair. Given the vacancy in the Second Vice Chair role, Trustee Coleman suggested that if no nominations came from the floor, the board might refer the matter to the Policies and Procedures Committee to evaluate whether three elected officer roles are still necessary moving forward.

Before that course of action was taken, Trustee Spencer-Watson nominated herself to serve as Second Vice Chair, filling the final vacancy.

Following the Nomination Committee report, Chairman Williamson made a motion to take a 5-minute break. Trustee Coleman **moved** the motion. Trustee Tim Pillion **seconded**.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Development Committee Recommendations: Board Chair (Vote)

a. Approval of FY26 Fundraising Goals – Trustee Colucci **motioned**. Mike Coleman seconded.

B. Approval of Finance Committee Recommendations: Board Chair (Vote)

1. Approval of DVS Budget Proposal – Colucci motioned. Coleman seconded. Joel Griffin opposed.

C. Approval of Procedures and Policies Committee Recommendations, if required Board Chair (Vote)

1. Approval of Policy Update – Tim Pillion motioned. Colucci seconded.

D. Approval of 2nd Quarter Financial Report

Trustee Colucci **moved** to approve the motion. Trustee Burke **seconded** the motion.

E. Approval of Nominating Committee Recommendations

Trustee Colucci motioned. Burke seconded.

F. Other New Business: Board Chair, Executive Director, Trustees, Others

1. **Chair: MOU Update – Coleman motioned, Colucci seconded.**

We met with the secretary's office. Still under review.

5. Public Comment

Trustee Colucci talked to Patrice Jones of DVS to discuss a potential partnership with VETE. They are going to have further discussion at a future date.

6. Passing of the gavel: Chair & New Chair

Trustee Brad Williamson to new VSF Chairman, Joel Griffin.

7. **Adjournment**

The next Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on September 18, 2025 at the Virginia War Memorial. The meeting was adjourned at 12:09pm.