

HOLLIDAYSBURG VETERANS' HOME (HVH) ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, April 16, 2026

10:00 AM

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brian Querry (Council Vice President), Centre County, Director of VA
R. Raymond Lenz (Council Secretary), American Legion Department of PA
David Wagner, DAV
Todd Warner, Pennsylvania State Association County Director of Veterans Affairs
Thomas Williams, VFW
Rick Orłowski, Resident Representative
Jay Buchanan, MOAA
Joseph Rodkey, Resident Representative
John "Goose" Marin, Catholic War Vets
Henry Gaunt, AMVETS
Tim Susengill, Vietnam Veterans Association

DMVA PRESENT:

Maureen Weigl, Deputy Adjutant General
Travis Davis, Executive Director of Long-Term Care, Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Barbara Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans' Affairs

HVH PRESENT:

Chrissy Dambeck, Commandant
Kelly Smith, Deputy Commandant
Desiree Kearney, Director of Nursing
Rich Hall, Medical Provider
Joe Patterson, Admissions and Marketing
Joe Megahan, Assistant to the Director of Nursing
Gale Rodriguez, HR Director
Rob Pletcher, Dietary Director
Matt Smearman, Maintenance Director
Emily McDowell, Volunteer Services Director

Dylan Nelson, Assistant to the Commandant and *Recorder*

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mia Williams
Micheal Zenz
James Lammison
Jeff Groke
Russ Ryan
Charlotte Rochine
Jacklynn Wagner
Constance Stradsky
Mick Hoover
Mike Ryan
Anna Marie Rodkey

VACANT POSITIONS:

None

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ildephonse “Duffy” Hines (Council President), Marine Corps League
Cathy Keefe, Resident Representative

1. Call to Order & Opening Remarks

- Brian Querry called the meeting to order.
- Announced the resignation of Duffy Hines from the Advisory Council.
- A moment of silence was observed followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Members Present:

Brian Querry, Barb Raymond, Travis Davis, Maureen Weigl, Rick Orlowski, Tom Williams, Jay Buchanan, Tim Susengill, John Marin, Todd Warner, Henry Gaunt, Joe Rodkey, Ray Lenz, Dave Wagner, Chrissy Dambeck, Kelly Smith, Desiree Kearney, Mia Williams, Michael Zenz, Jim Lammison, Jeff Groke, Russ Ryan, Charlotte Rochine, Jacklynn Wagner,

Constance Stradsky, Gale Rodriguez, Rob Pletcher, Mick Hoover, Mike Ryan, Anna Marie Rodkey, Rich Hall, Matt Smearman, Emily McDowell, Joe Megahan, Joe Patterson

3. Swearing-In

- Conducted by Maureen Weigl.
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4. Approval of Previous Minutes

- Previous meeting minutes were reviewed.
 - No corrections were noted.
 - Minutes approved unanimously as written.
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5. Reports

Admissions & Marketing (Joe Patterson)

- **January 2026:** 10 admissions, 2 transfers, 8 losses
 - **February 2026:** 8 admissions, 1 discharge, 6 losses
 - **March 2026:** 8 admissions, 1 transfer, 8 losses
 - **Quarter Total:** 26 admissions (21 veterans, 5 spouses, including 1 couple)
 - 1 discharge to Southeast
 - Beds available across all levels; currently 9 nursing care beds open
 - No backlog or waitlist
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Employee Recognition

- Kelly Smith – 15 years
 - Gail Rodriguez – 15 years
 - Rob Pletcher – 30 years
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Donation

- Jim Lammison presented a \$750 donation from AMVETS for storage bins
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DMVA Headquarters Update (Maureen Weigl)

- Mark Ferarro retiring in September; Travis Davis to succeed
 - Barb Raymond transitioning roles to Travis Davis's position
 - Volunteer background checks required for DAV participation
 - Veteran Conference scheduled April 6–10 in Pittsburgh
 - Website updates to include centralized state benefits
 - Ongoing outreach and engagement initiatives
 - Acknowledgment of HVH staff efforts and upcoming challenges
 - Donations and partnerships noted (PA Wounded Warriors, National Guard activity)
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Operations & Facilities (Travis Davis)

- New nursing facility opening preparation underway
- Increase in nursing home closures statewide impacting families
- Survey activity: 13 inspections (VA, DOH, DHS, life safety, complaints)
- Facility rating: 4-star (above average)
- No current respiratory illness cases
- March: 60 admissions, 44 discharges
- Current census: 190 residents (200 capacity planned)
- 160 individuals on waitlist statewide
- Construction goal: Ribbon cutting on Veterans Day

Legislative Updates:

- House Bill 1970 – Veterans Essential Medications Act
 - Additional bills: 3532 and 7747 (inspection-related)
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Resident Care & Administration (Barb Raymond)

- Transition planning for new facility
- Seasonal events and upcoming observances (State Veterans Homes Week, Nurses Week, Memorial Day)
- Survey findings and corrective actions reviewed
- Menu revisions underway to better meet resident preferences
- Auditor General audit completed with minor deficiencies corrected

- Updates to documentation, compliance, and resident communication practices
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Compliance Report (Mia Williams)

- Hotline available for reporting concerns
 - Compliance officer position currently open
 - Ongoing surveys and policy updates
 - HIPAA and waste management training updates
 - Risk assessment processes being internalized
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Construction Update (Matt Smearman)

- Systems testing (gas, water, electricity) ongoing
 - Facility preparation for move-in (equipment, supplies, furnishings)
 - Utilities fully operational
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Commandant Report

- 13 new hires reported
 - Participation in events: conferences, Special Olympics Polar Plunge, tours, ceremonies
 - Installation of furniture and final preparations underway
 - Regulatory updates: compliance restored after recent inspections
 - Upcoming events include Veterans Homes Week celebrations
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Falls Prevention Program (Desiree Kearney)

- Implementation of unit-based safety huddles
 - Incentive program for fall reduction
 - Weekly interdisciplinary review meetings
 - Staff education initiatives ongoing
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Financial & Strategic Planning (Kelly Smith)

- 5-year plan submissions in progress

- Budget meetings ongoing
 - Coordination of departmental needs and logistics
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6. New Business

- Todd Williams announced retirement; Jeff Croak introduced as potential replacement
 - Ray Lenz announced resignation; Charlotte Lashine was nominated as successor
 - Advisory Council recognition efforts discussed
 - Discussion on improving admissions process for homeless veterans
 - Group photo proposed following meeting
 - Announcement of Duffy Hines' resignation and acknowledgment of his contributions
 - Governor's disability commission initiative introduced, request for veteran participation
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7. Additional Announcements

- Armed Forces Day celebration confirmed
 - Discussion on storage bin procurement
 - Encouragement to nominate veterans for recognition initiatives
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8. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned by Brian Query at 11:32 AM

Next Meeting: July 16, 2026

Secretary