



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs**

**SOUTHEASTERN VETERANS' CENTER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**October 9, 2025**

The Southeastern Veterans' Center Advisory Council met on October 9, 2025 at 10:00 AM via Microsoft Teams conference call. The meeting took place virtually due to the state budget impasse and travel restrictions for meeting members.

**Advisory Council Members Participating:**

Barry Amole, Vietnam Veterans of America, President  
Thomas Applebach, Lehigh County Office of Veterans' Affairs, Vice President  
Eric Hofer, Military Officers Association of America  
John Getz, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Robert Richardson, Resident Representative

**Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs/Southeastern Veterans' Center:**

Maureen Weigl, Deputy Adjutant General of Veterans' Affairs – DMVA  
Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care – DMVA  
Tunisia Weedon, Compliance and Ethics Officer- DMVA  
Brian Gula, Commandant – SEVC  
Mildred Butler-Coleman, Deputy Commandant- SEVC  
Johanna Valenti, Social Services Director- SEVC  
Jill Alwine, Admissions and Marketing Coordinator- SEVC  
Dr. Sin Kei Yeung, Medical Director- SEVC

**Visitors:**

Nikki Whitlock, Chief of Staff, Senator Katie Muth's Office  
Dan Kuper, Personal Care Resident  
Terra Shaner, Geriatrics and Extended Care Services Business Manager, CVAMC  
Dee Banyai, Community Member

**Excused Absence:**

Kenneth Schweitzer, American Legion, Secretary  
Doug Forsythe, Disabled American Veterans  
Kenneth Nadwodny, Catholic War Veterans  
Thomas Brown, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Emil Messikomer, Marine Corps League  
Jeffrey Elliot, PA AMVETS  
Thomas Coreau, Dauphin County Office of Veterans' Affairs  
The Honorable Tracy Pennycuik, PA State Senate  
The Honorable Dan Williams, PA House of Representatives  
MG John R. Pippy, Adjutant General – DMVA  
Barbara Raymond, BVH Director – DMVA

**Call to Order:**

The Advisory Council Meeting was called to order by Barry Amole at 10:00 AM. There was a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Swearing in of Council Members:**

No members were sworn in at the meeting.

**Review and Approval of July 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes:**

Due to the lack of a quorum, a vote to approve the July 10, 2025 meeting minutes could not take place. Approval of the minutes will take place next meeting if a quorum is present.

**Report of the Medical Director - Dr. Sin Kei Yeung - SEVC:**

Dr. Sin Kei Yeung, Medical Director, provided an update to the council. We welcomed our 2nd CRNP last week, Christene Nyaboke. She is a geriatric and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner with 10+ years of experience in geriatrics, primary care, and mental health. She has her master's from the University of Pennsylvania and post master's certificate from the University of Wilkes. This new addition to the team will make it possible to have monthly medical provider care for our skilled residents and provide our residents timely and effective medical care.

In the last quarter, we have had an onset of respiratory illnesses ranging from colds to Bronchitis to Pneumonia, which is similar to the diseases seen in the community. We have had no Covid 19, RSV, or Influenza cases in this last quarter. We think this speaks to our vaccination efforts in house with 88 percent of residents vaccinated for RSV, 65 percent of residents vaccinated for Influenza, and a 77 percent vaccination rate for Prevnar 20. We will start administering Covid 19 vaccination boosters soon.

**Report of the Admissions and Marketing Coordinator - Jill Alwine - SEVC:**

Jill Alwine, Admissions Coordinator, reported that our current census is 237. We have admitted 77 residents so far this year. Our occupancy rating for skilled nursing is 82 percent and our occupancy rating in personal care is 76 percent. We still have 48 bed offline, 40 of which are due to a change in room size for infection control purposes. We have 65 applicants on our waitlist, 55 veterans and 10 spouses. Our waitlist times are 2-3 months for personal care, 3-4 months for skilled nursing and our secured unit is a 9-12 month wait.

**Employee Recognition:**

Brian Gula, Commandant, announced to the council that at the end of October, our beloved Mildred will be retiring. Mildred has dedicated more than 40 years to nursing, of which 31 of those years she served as a Nursing Home Administrator. Since 2016, she has been the Deputy Commandant here at Southeastern, where she's been a tireless advocate for both residents and staff. Her leadership and compassion have made a lasting difference for so many of us.

However, we are excited to share that Johanna Valenti will be taking over the Deputy Commandant position. Johanna has been with SEVC since 2019, serving as the Social Services Supervisor and she has 21

years of long-term care experience. With her credentials as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator and her deep dedication, we know she will be an outstanding leader for our home.

**Report of the Deputy Adjutant General – General Maureen Weigl – DMVA:**

General Weigl stated that the major things we are dealing with right now are the Federal government shutdown and the state budget impasse. The federal government did shutdown the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh National Guard field offices. Federal employees are being furloughed, and national guard drills are not being run, so we have seen some impact, but the day-to-day operations at the homes are seeing little to no effect. The state has enacted a spending freeze due to the delay in the budget passing. For us, the spending freeze has put restrictions on “non-essential” job travel, hiring non-direct care workers, and educational credit grants.

Our 2025 Veterans Conference will still be taking place on October 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> and we are very excited for that.

**Report of the Executive Director, Long Term Care – Travis Davis – DMVA:**

Travis Davis stated that we have had approximately 20 surveys throughout the 6 homes since June 1<sup>st</sup>, this number also includes our internal surveys that we have been doing at the homes. The most recent survey was a Department of Health survey at Delaware Valley. Our compliance team has completed all of our internal Facility Performance Assessment surveys for this year and are currently setting the schedule for next year.

The 5-star ratings for the homes are as followed: Delaware Valley and Gino Merli are 5-star facilities, Hollidaysburg, Southeast, and our Erie facility are 4-star facilities, and Southwestern is at 3-stars.

We wanted to provide some information regarding the overall climate of the nursing home industry in Pennsylvania. Since the start of the pandemic, it is estimated that at least 30 nursing homes in Pennsylvania have closed. Furthermore, in mid-2024, 21 skilled nursing or personal care facilities filed for bankruptcy in a 16-day period, and eight more were sold out of bankruptcy in Western PA. We bring this up to highlight that Pennsylvania’s nursing home industry is shrinking and becoming more fragile. This environment places added importance on our state veterans’ homes as a stable, mission-driven care option.

Respiratory illness update: we have 12 positive residents at PA Soldiers and Sailors, all of which have remained at the facility. We also have 7 positive residents and 1 positive staff member at Delaware Valley. We have no cases of influenza at any of the homes. The CDC & APIC have been reviewing vaccine recommendations, we do not anticipate any changes to the annual flu recommendations and are preparing for flu season. The flu vaccine and latest Covid vaccine are available at the 6 homes. The RSV vaccine continues to be a ‘one & done’ vaccination.

Our census across the state is continuing to grow. Southeast had a great month of admissions. Our current census across all six homes is 1181 residents. We have about 255 veterans and spouses on our waiting list. In July, we did 36 admissions and 26 discharges.

We submitted our VA grant application for next year, so we can continue our recruitment and retention incentives for our direct care staff.

Construction update: we are hoping to have a ribbon cutting ceremony for Hollidaysburg's new CLC building in the beginning of next year, but that is still tentative. We did have an issue arise with the flooring. The flooring had to be completely ripped out due to a manufacturing issue that was causing the planks to separate. We were told that the new flooring may take weeks to be delivered. We are working with the Department of General Services to get a better estimate.

Construction has resumed at Delaware Valley to expand the back patio and put in artificial turf.

The Southwest construction project to renovate all of the resident bathrooms and bedrooms is currently in the design phase. We need to submit the schematics to the Federal VA per the grant guidelines.

Per the new bill that made changes to our Advisory Council compositions, ballots will be going out to the resident councils to nominate community members to the Advisory Councils for next year.

**Compliance Report – Mia Woods – DMVA:**

Tunisia Weedon, Corporate Compliance Officer, gave the Compliance Report on behalf of Mia Woods. There was one report of possible fraud this quarter that was made by an employee. It was referred to labor relations and the report was unsubstantiated.

**Report of the Commandant – Brian Gula– SEVC:**

Brian Gula started by providing a regulatory update. Our VA Corrective Action Plan is in progress. We are continuing to complete audits and provide education. We also had the Department of Health show up on October 7<sup>th</sup> for an abbreviated survey following a medication error incident. We did receive a deficiency for the incident, but we were cited past- noncompliance, so no further actions were needed on our part.

Recruitment update: we had 25 new employees start since our last meeting in July. Our next orientation class is slated for October 14<sup>th</sup>, and we have 7 people that will be in that class. Some positions we are currently recruiting for are an Accountant 3, an HR Director, and an HR Assistant 2. We are not sure when we will be able to fill these positions as there is a non-direct care hiring freeze due to the budget impasse, but we are hoping to fill them as soon as possible.

One of the local Veterans of Foreign Wars groups recently hosted a meeting at Southeastern so that residents could attend. They also provided dinner for the residents. They are hoping to periodically host meetings at the facility to allow our veterans to participate, since most of them can not get to the meeting on their own.

We have a special event for Veterans Day this year. We are going to be having the "Rat Pack" perform at the facility. We had a recent event where we had a Frank Sinatra impersonator perform and the residents absolutely loved it. We are having the same performer return, along with his two impersonator friends, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr.

**Report of the Deputy Commandant- Mildred Butler-Coleman- SEVC:**

Johanna Valenti, Social Services Director, provided an update on daily operations and construction projects on behalf of Mildred Butler-Coleman.

Elevator access was updated in both buildings to include a lock out system for residents wearing ESDs due to being an elopement risk. This will assist with the prevention of elopements by making the elevators inaccessible to residents that wander. The lockout system can be overridden by staff by swiping their badge.

All entrances now have ID badge swipe access to open doors, instead of the number keypads. Only employees with ID badges can gain access to the stairwells, corridor doors, and lobby entrances. This increases security for the building and decreases the risk of an elopement.

The DMVA is updating every employee breakroom at all six veteran's homes. The breakrooms on the units have already been updated. The contractors are currently working on the renovation for the main employee breakroom located on the ground floor of Coates Hall. We are anticipating the project to be completed in the coming week.

Our Institutional Fire and Safety Specialist, Zach Guziak, held simulated evacuation drills for employees to practice using evacuation equipment in the event of an emergency. Employees participated in the many scheduled sessions as part of our Emergency Operations Plan.

Security posted signage on the sidewalks of both buildings to provide residents with a visual boundary for safe walking areas with security visibility. We also installed "speed bumps" on the roads leading to/from the campus. This is to prevent cars from going too fast and putting our resident in harm's way, as we have many residents that like to walk around outside. The speed bumps will slow down cars and decrease risk for residents, visitors, and staff as we walk about the center grounds.

Our new Southeastern Veterans' Center sign was completed and unveiled during our 9/11 Memorial Ceremony in September. The signage will help direct visitors and families to the center.

**Comments from the Council:**

Nothing to Report.

**Old Business:**

Nothing to Report.

**New Business:**

Nothing to Report.


**Good of the Council:**

Nothing to Report.

**Time and Date for the next Meeting:**

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made to end the meeting. Motion carried. The next regular meeting of the Advisory Council will be held on January 8, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Approved:

  
Kenneth Schweitzer, Secretary

Minutes submitted by: Sarah Klufas