



# pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY  
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
DELAWARE VALLEY  
VETERANS' HOME

## DELAWARE VALLEY VETERANS HOME

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – November 12, 2025, 10:00am

### Advisory Council Members

#### **In person**

Benjamin Mastridge, Veterans of Foreign Wars, President Advisory Council  
James Ritchie, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vice President Advisory Council  
John Schwartz, American Legion  
Leonard M. Johnson, Disabled American Veterans  
Douglas Craig, Catholic War Veterans  
Claudette Campbell, Military Officers Assoc. Of America  
Patricia (Tricia) Udicious for Martina White, PA House of Representatives  
Ashley Conaway, for Senator Frank A. Farry

#### **Conference Call**

Samuel Huhn, Blinded Veterans Association

### Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and Delaware Valley Veterans Home

Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care  
Barbara Raymond, Director of Veterans' Homes  
Margo Coleman, Commandant, DVVH  
Rita Yeung, Deputy Commandant, DVVH  
Violetta Berdichevskaya, Chief Medical Officer, DMVA  
Rinisha Thomas, Clinical Service Manager, DVVH  
Veronica Royster, Assistant to the Commandant

### Absent

Allan Abramson, Jewish War Veterans  
Ed Horan, Marine Corps League  
Richard Fine, AMVETS  
Larry Holman, Jewish War Veterans  
Maureen Weigl, Deputy Adjutant General-VA  
Yahvae Jones, Admissions and Marketing Coordinator, DVVH  
Erica Moore, Regional Program Outreach Coordinator  
William McGoldrick, Volunteer Resource Coordinator, DVVH  
Regional Compliance Officer

### Residents

Bobby Malone, Resident Representative

### Guests

Employee of the month, DVVH  
October 2025 -Sunitha Wilson, Kristian Ali, Mariamma Jacob, Hannah Hetzel, Heather Solomon, Jennifer Reyes-Cruz, Jeffrey Spencer, and Derrick Jones.  
November 2025- Rodica Pasculescu.

*Benjamin A. Mastridge Sr.*



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- Moment of Silence
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call
- Approval of Minutes of August 13, 2025.

## **Report from Violetta Berdichevskaya, Medical Director**

- Unfortunately, yesterday we had 1 patient who tested COVID positive. We have COVID vaccines available for the staff and residents. It is not mandatory.
- Flu season started and almost everyone received vaccinations.
- No norovirus, we provide excellent hygiene for our residents.
- We keep providing excellent hospice here in our facility. This morning 1 passed away, we have around 6 or 7 residents. The census for hospice is rising. Our goal is to make it painless.
- Benjamin Mastridge replied, it is always nice to have a good positive report from you.

## **Report from Margo Coleman, Admissions/Marketing**

- Yahvae is off today, I can give you a quick report.
- We have a current census of 161 residents, and we would like to increase our census to 167 by the end of the year. Since the beginning of September, we have admitted 12 new residents to DVVH.

## **Employee Recognition, Margo Coleman, Commandant**

- I am very excited to be able to announce our employees of the month for September, October and November. Our employee for the month of September was Marquis Willis, and he could not make it here today. He was recognized for his teamwork, and he is always willing to help the residents and help the Dietary department with a smile on his face.
- For October employee of the month, you probably recognize their faces, because some of you work closely with them on a regular basis. Our activities department need no further introduction, they do an excellent job and were recognized for always thinking outside of the box, going above and beyond to make sure our residents are happy and have a lot of things to do. They do horse racing, and they do big events like the one yesterday for Veterans Day. I wanted to make sure they came today to get recognition for being employees of the month.
- The employee of the month for November is Rodica, she works in our administration department keeping everything running for us. Rodica has worked at DVVH for 15 years. Rita works very close with Rodica. Rita replied I would like to give kudos to Rodica, she has been a very great help, and very pleasant. If any department needs help, she is always there. She makes herself available. I am very glad to have her.
- Margo added, I would like to mention that the Adjutant General award is given to one person every year, throughout the entire department of Military and Veterans Affairs. This year the recipient was here at Delaware Valley Veterans Home given to Kristian Ali. Congratulations to Kristian. Ben replied, "I volunteer sometimes with Kristian and she is fantastic, my wife agrees with me and says the same thing."



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## Report from Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care

- This is one of the things when I came to our Veterans' Homes that was eye opening to me, the clinical care, facilities are beautiful, and the activities that we do. We have activities in the afternoon every day of the week and we provide activities every weekend. When I was working in private sector, we probably did one activity per day. It was based around if we could staff that activity. I think it is really important that we keep our residents really busy with a wide variety of activities. They do an excellent job here and across our other homes.
- Dr. B. did give an overview of COVID, and we have been doing well over the last few months with COVID. I think this week we had no COVID amongst any residents or staff members.
- Admissions- We continue to do more admissions than discharges every month, that is our goal. We work with all the homes to make sure we are pushing our admissions quickly.
- Construction- We have a lot of activity going on behind the building. They were pouring concrete, I think they are pouring today as well for the patio. We ran into a little bit of a setback, and it is back and resumed. It is going to be great when we have that open, and have the ceremony back there, it will be a large area and a big pavilion with a canopy covering. It is going to add a lot more reasonable space for our residents here. Our other big construction project is our new veterans' home in Hollidaysburg, that is moving right along. We are planning to start moving residents in the first quarter of next year, there are a lot of inspections we have to go through. It is about 98 percent complete. It is a beautiful campus, anyone who drives through the Altoona area should drive by and check it out.
- Back on November 4<sup>th</sup>, we had a small fire here, not the call that you ever want to get. I have to give kudos to the team, they responded tremendously well. Around midnight on the 4<sup>th</sup>, we had a CNA who was rounding the building, and she noticed there was a small fire in one of the bathrooms, from one of the lights above the sink. She quickly called for help and got the fire out even before the sprinkler system was ignited. The response was really quick. It saved us from a lot of damage that could have occurred, and safety concerns. Margo team was in here immediately that night. Housekeeping was in here, the housekeeping facility director was in here well over 12 hours after being called in here in the middle of the night, to make sure it was cleaned up. We had to move some residents out of the rooms that were impacted, we did not have to evacuate the building. The fire department was on the scene. The light that was in the bathroom was faulty. If you recall from last year, we had a small fire where the sprinkler system did engage. That is what we believe could have been caused by another light. We started to replace lights immediately, and they started last week. By the end of this month there will be 330 light fixtures being replaced. We do a lot of training for emergency preparedness, and we do fire drills. You never want to have to use them, when you do you hope that the things you trained, and practiced year-round are successful. Del Val did an excellent job.
- The Advisory Council reports through Act-20, we talked about this last meeting. We are down to like the finish line for having to get this annual report submitted to the Adjutant General and to the General Assembly. If you recall, each advisory council was going to create their own annual report, then consolidate all six homes into one report. What we did was take the minutes from all of our meetings and put together a report. Next year we are going to have some more guidance for the advisory, so that our reports are similar in structure, so it flows better. Right now, where we are at is the DMVA want to meet with the presidents of each advisory council. There has been an email from Josh Pulling that went out, to see if we can hop on a quick call before Thanksgiving, to show all the council presidents here is the reports, section for recommendations and challenges, we took that from



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open comments at our meetings. WE want to make sure we are in line. Hopefully, if you are able, please join us for the call. Claudette Campbell asked where does it go? Travis Davis replied to the legislature. Benjamin Mastridge added, last month I had two stents put in my heart, I have been a little bit out of contact with this, I am fine now, I am good. Travis replied the annual report is summarized, I think it is on page two. It is kind of like an executive summary report, and there is a lot of work that had to go with this. We had to work with the war council to make sure memberships, and terms are understood before we go into this. We have three new representatives, and one has to be a family member of a former or current resident.

- Margo Coleman asked for a moment of silence, because TAPS was being played for one of the residents who passed away.
- Barbara added, Travis sent out a letter to all of our families maybe a month ago, another letter will be going out with a little bit more detail to work with the commandant directly as far as who should be nominated. It is possible for our residents to nominate their family. We are going to work through some of those challenges, once we get through that it will be like an election. It could be another resident.
- State and federal budget- Hopefully for both of us it is a resolution, it has been business as usual, we have seen some of our survey activity, Department of Health has cut back a little bit on surveys. Traveling and hiring bands, we provided a lot of justification for those positions that are needed.

## **Report from Barbara Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans Homes**

- We had a really busy week with the Veterans Day ceremonies, as well as the Marine Corps birthday. We are gearing up for the country 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, we will coincide that State Veterans Home week.
- We are preparing for the Adjutant General visits at our facilities for the Christmas and New Year holidays. The veterans and residents love to see the troops come in uniform, as we mentioned yesterday, we had a great event here, and the residents love to see the Adjutant General come in.
- COVID- We have done a really good job, we only have one resident with minor issues. I do not know if the news media made it down this far. We had a COVID outbreak at our Erie facility, it was a little bit higher than normal, total of 44 residents, 21 had mild symptoms and out of the 21, 3 went to the hospital, they all ended up making it back. Unfortunately, the news media did get involved, the facility did a great job at keeping things clean, residents were isolated, and all those things we are supposed to do.
- Vaccinations- We are doing very well, a little over 50% for our resident's flu vaccination. We are up over 30% for our staff vaccinations.
- Staffing-Continues to be our biggest challenge across the homes. The last time we talked we did not have everything finalized with the staffing bill out of the federal government. That has now been pushed aside by a federal judge out of Texas. All of those things we have been talking about for the last couple of years, we were very concerned from that staffing prospective, is currently on hold, we are looking at regulatory changes and what the changes in our system are to keep those staffing numbers up.
- Our Southwestern and Southeastern facilities had two areas where we had a fall with severe injury and fractures, and Del Val with the fire. What we do for any of our incidents is look at what happened, why it happened, and what we could put in place to prevent it from happening again. We call it something fancy like a four-point plan. Those two situations where we did have the falls and fractures at the two facilities, the Department of Health did come in to investigate the situation, and they found



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that our facility did a fantastic job with what we can do to prevent it. The Department of Health did give us deficiencies at those two facilities. However, they gave us what is called pass non-compliance. What that means is, yes it did happen, and the Department of Health recognizes our facility did a great job working from it happening again.

- Menu changes- When you come in for your visits, if you hear our residents or veterans talking about, we have made some menu changes, we are working through some of the challenges and concerns our residents and veterans expressed to us. We have already streamlined and fixed some areas. We will continue to move forward to make sure we meet all the nutrition and dietary requirements, we are good stewards of the taxpayer dollars, as well as making our residents and veterans happy. We are working on this.
- Benjamin Mastridge asked about unions, Barbara replied, "we work with our unions on various issues, for example we talked in the past about the grants we get from the federal VA. The federal VA rules and regulation on those grants, it has to be direct care nursing staff members. Our union sometimes tries to work with us. Can we make this grant for housekeeping? We try to work with the union on making sure we do not hold anything up from the grant dollars.
- Compliance- We have an FPA (facility performance assessment) coming up at our Southeastern facility next week, and the week after Thanksgiving we are going to be at our Southwestern facility. It is a mock survey, if you will, to just prepare for our regulatory surveys.

## Report from Margo Coleman, Commandant

- I hope you all had a great day celebrating Veterans Day. Our residents had a great day yesterday. The love and support of the community that was here was absolutely overwhelming. Maj. General Pippy was joined by Robert Irvine, and Red Lobster catered the event for all of our residents. There was shrimp, pasta, salmon, cupcakes, and cheddar biscuits. The Red Lobster CEO flew in just for the day to say thank you to our veterans, and flew right back out, it was really impressive. They had a pinning ceremony, and every veteran received a pin for their specific branch. We had a wonderful brass band come as well. At nighttime The Dining car diner catered the dinner, they had chicken fettucine Alfredo, and all kinds of deserts, turkey, cranberry sauce. It was absolutely incredible and to cater for that many residents at one time is really an act of love.
- We had 14 residents attend the Veterans Day parade on Sunday. I do not know if you had a chance to go, it was off and on rain, we still had a great time. Robert Irvine was there as well and came over to say hello and they had a great time being there with their fellow veterans from the community.
- Our Starfish program we implemented back in September is up and running, and is really gaining ground, so far, we have given out 7 of the Starfish awards. Thanking our employees for going above and beyond here at Delaware Valley Veterans Home.
- Our annual employee recognition ceremony that was held back in September, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs recognizes different members for things they have done throughout the year for leadership or outstanding service. Kristian received the TAG award, we were also able to recognize two other employees, Donald Keiter from Security and Marcus Davis from Housekeeping for outstanding service awards to the veterans and to Delaware Valley Veterans Home.
- Travis did touch on our back patio construction, and we are looking forward to having that open up.

- Our Department of Health conducted a desk audit about two weeks ago to clear us of our annual survey, and we received clearance. They put us back in full compliance as of September.

I was hoping that Dr. B. was going to be here today, I would like to give an announcement about our new part-time Medical Director, Dr. John Peacock. I would like to thank Dr. B. for her unwavering service and commitment to Delaware Valley Veterans Home over the last 8 years. She has been here in morning meeting, and she has done a great job to move the mission of the organization forward. I wish she was here. She will not be leaving us. She is going to fulfill her full-time role as Chief Medical Officer for the Bureau of Veterans Homes. Dr. Peacock spent 8 years in the US Navy as a Hospital Corpsman and 5 years as an Undersea Medical Officer. He is currently a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard and has served in various roles including Flight Surgeon, Physician and State Surgeon. Dr. Peacock brings a wealth of knowledge and experience having held positions as Medical Director and Geriatrician at several local facilities within the Greater Philadelphia Area. He is also working at Coatesville VA as one of the doctors. We are very happy to have him join our team, and he has been here officially in the role as of November 1<sup>st</sup>. Thank you Rinisha and Rita as well, because truly this mission could not move forward without their support and dedication. Benjamin Mastridge asked, "were there any events about when the entrance way is being fixed? Patricia (Tricia) Udicious replied, the problem right now is the PA budget, we are working on this. Benjamin added the right-hand turn curve sticks out. John Schwartz asked what they are doing in the driveway? Patricia replied, it is going to be wider, I was talking to the guy in our office, he said they are making some kind of left turn lane.

#### **Report from Rita Yeung, Deputy Commandant**

- Along with the good stuff already mentioned from yesterday, I just want to mention the residents received long sleeve polo shirts. To wear Veterans Day. With the branch of service. Thank you to Barbara for approving that request, the residents were very happy. They enjoyed good food, good meals, and the concert. They had a really great day.
- Comcast cable upgrade was completed last week. The residents' rooms all have a new cable box, remote control, and the new channel list.
- Travis already touched base on the construction project, the concrete is being poured, as of yesterday they are still working on the back patio by Bravo and Charlie neighborhoods. We estimate the project to be completed in three more weeks. If not the end of November, maybe the beginning of December. We can start utilizing that next spring. Alpha Avenue neighborhood door project is 90% completed, now they are working on the wiring to complete that.

#### **Bobby Malone, Resident Representative**

- I would like to piggyback on the comment that was made about the back patio. I have to give it to the Commandant. She has kept us informed as to what is going on. I was put in a position where everybody was coming to me, and I would refer it over to the Commandant who is good at explaining it. Thank you very much to everyone that was involved yesterday.

#### **Report from Rinisha Thomas, Director of Nursing**

- We had 1 resident we were looking for signs of symptoms, contact tracing and it was negative.
- We have 9 agency staff CNAs working with us. Staffing is getting better.



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- Flu vaccine is completed for all of the residents and staff is still going on.
- We have a veteran who is going to the sixers game on November 17<sup>th</sup>, to be honored. Benjamin Mastridge asked Rinisha what her title is and said I think she should be added to the agenda. Travis Davis replied, on that advisory report we talked about, we noticed every home has a little bit of a different agenda, we will standardize that as well.

### **Samuel Hunh, Blinded Veterans Association**

- I appreciate everybody's comments, and it sounds like the home is running in good order. I want to thank Veronica for locating a check I sent in. They said they had lost it, and she went and found it somewhere. I check to see if you cashed it but you did not. I just want to say the Blinded Veterans association is celebrating 80 years this year in service to our fellow blinded veterans. It is a shame that we have to continue, but people get blinded for some reason. We are there to help them through their claims and whatever else. Thank you, all very much and happy Veterans Day, to everybody.

### **James Ritchie, Veterans of Foreign Wars**

- I hope everyone had an enjoyable Veterans Day yesterday, I know we did. Thank you.

### **Douglas Craig, Catholic War Veterans**

- I really do not have anything to say except I am not supposed to be here. My term ran out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, and I spoke with Mike Rang and said according to this it is supposed to be for 3 years. He said forget it, nobody else out there to take my place. If I get reinstated, I will be here until I croak. Benjamin Mastridge replied, there is no actual reinstatement, you stay on until you are relieved. Other than that, that is all I got. The Marine Corps League on Saturday went well, Monday was Marine Corps birthday we celebrated, and yesterday was Veterans Day and I was on the road. Now I am here. Happy Veterans Day, I am glad you are here and I hope to see you next year.

### **Leonard M. Johnson, Disabled American Veterans**

- I appreciate the Commandant and your team and their work.
- My chapter, DAV chapter 15, my American Legion post we continue to do activities here to support our heroes.
- I attended VETCON last year and this year. We got very good information on suicide prevention, and it is a shame that we have to deal with that. I think there are, I am not going to say enough, but there are parameters in place to take care of our mental health veterans. I got information on fraud abuse. I would say my generation from the 70's on is probably the worst that are affected. There is a magazine that is being put out, my chapter is subscribing to that magazine, so we can stay tuned to what is happening and fraudulent stuff going on. It will let everyone know what they can do to protect themselves. There is a TV show on where they are finally catching some of these people, they go to their house and arrest them. It is the greatest thing I have ever seen. Thank everyone for being here and Happy Veterans Day.

### **John Schwartz, American Legion**



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- I apologize for my casual wear, and I have been dealing with this hip brace since September.
- I am reaching out to the Montgomery and Bucks County District Commanders out there, I want to find out how many Legionnaires or volunteers, and to get donations. Same thing with the 5<sup>th</sup> district. I know it is easy for me to drop off a check; to mail them in who is the point of contact? Margo Coleman replied, you can send them to my attention or Veronica attention. John asked do you need volunteer legion hours for your reports or do Bill McGoldrick keep track of that. Margo replied that McGoldrick take care of that.
- We had at least three or four legion posts participate in the trunk or treat.
- We are going to Parks casino.
- I have Marine Corps League stickers for the back of the cars, if you know any other Marine Corps, please give them out to your friends and your family.
- Thanksgiving is coming up, and we will be hitting the district for as many volunteers as possible. Just let us know if we are coming with too many volunteers. Last year there were 162 troops here. Christmas is coming up, we have been busy, let us know anything we can do.
- I have a district meeting tonight and I will be sharing all this information.

### **Claudette Campbell, Military Officers Assoc. Of America**

- I like your study plan that is a great evaluation tool that you handled right away.
- I am always impressed with the way you recognize your employees, that is so important, because they do work.
- I am kind of in the same boat as Doug Craig, I have been here for 3 years, I had a great opportunity to see good care delivery. I am not sure what the Military Officers Association of America is planning. They told me the 3 years was up. It is just so much to keep on top and anticipate issues throughout all your homes, that is to be commended. In private sector everybody must meet the same regulatory promise. It is very good to know the veterans are getting good quality care and you recognize your employees for the work they put forth.
- I do not know what they are going to do because it is a long process, I told them I am willing to continue, you will see me. Benjamin Mastridge replied saying you will be missed, your professionalism is unbelievable.

### **Benjamin Mastridge, Veterans of Foreign Wars, President Advisory Council**

- I was approached by the Military Order of The Purple Heart with questions on how to participate in the council and is their organization accredited to do that. Does anybody know or could give me some type of template or send it to me in an email to initiate that? Barbara Raymond replied, a lot of our homes have military Order of The Purple Heart on their council. I know there are some changes in the War Council. Is Military Order staying in the War Council? Travis Davis replied, "this is something we can bring to the call we are having next week. One of our team members is really in tune with what the War Council is doing, he is our direct liaison between them, and he will be on the call. Benjamin Mastridge replied, "I belong to Military Order of the Purple Heart, I am very excited about that group of people. They are active and I think they would be a great addition.
- You mentioned mental health, what do you provide for mental health for the residents here? Rinisha Thomas replied, the Psychiatrist come monthly and the Nurse practitioner will be here every week.



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Margo Coleman added, Del Val has a licensed clinical Social Worker, so she has the ability and skills to recognize who needs mental health services. She can work with the team to refer out anything extra.

- You are to be commended for the 305 fixtures being replaced. Resident Bobby Malone said the Commandant did a phenomenal job handling the fire we are talking about. It was handled very professionally.
- Happy Birthday to all the Marines.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business: None**

**Good of the Counsel: None**

**Adjourned: 11:02 AM (James Ritchie & John Schwartz)**

**Next Meeting: February 11, 2026**