

New Hampshire
STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**BIANNUAL REPORT
NOV 1, 2017**



INTRODUCTION

In accordance with RSA 115-A:8, State Veterans Advisory Committee, this report is issued to the Speaker of the House, Senate President, Governor, Executive Council, Chairs of the Veteran committees and the various veterans' organizations active in the State of New Hampshire. Two reports are issued each year on Nov 1st and May 1st.

HISTORY

RSA 115-A:8 states that a veterans' advisory committee be formed composed of two Senators appointed by the President of the Senate, two Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House and members of various veteran organizations. The members shall elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary from the committee membership.

On July 17, 2002, Mr. Ken Leidner, past chairman of the committee's predecessor, called the organizational meeting to order at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) in Concord, NH. The primary purpose was to elect the officers of the new State Veterans Advisory Committee. The initial veteran organization members present were the American Legion (AMLEGION), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), The Retired Officers Association (TROA) (now the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)), and the Reserve Officers Association (ROA). Elections were held in accordance with the governing RSA. The first officers elected were: Dr. Griffin Dalianis, DAV, Chairman, LCDR David Kenney, USNR, Vice - Chairman, and Mr. Edward Granger, TREA, Secretary. Since 2002 the committee has generally met on a monthly basis except for a two-month summer recess period. The committee adopted bylaws as of June 8, 2004 to govern management and operation. These bylaws were most recently updated in October of 2014.

During the 2007 Legislative session the Governor signed an amendment to RSA 115-A:8 increasing the voting membership of the SVAC from ten to fourteen veterans' organizations in the state of New Hampshire. In 2008 the authorized number of voting organizations was reached and SB 15, introduced in the 2009 session, was adopted to increase the membership to a maximum of 20 organizations (plus the two legislative members from both the Senate and from the House).

This report contains a summary of the meeting highlights, committee composition, legislative initiatives, and successes the State Veterans Advisory Committee accomplished during this reporting period.

-IN MEMORIAM -

MR. KEN LEIDNER

MAY 19, 1951 – DECEMBER 17, 2017



We dedicate this report to one of the founders of SVAC who recently passed away. Ken was active in veteran's issues for many years prior to reconstituting the SVAC in 2002. He knew much about the process of NH Legislation, history, and spoke plainly about the issues he was involved in, which we many. His keen wit and his love of life were always evident when you met him. We owe you a debt of gratitude for having the faith and resolve to help cobble together a small band of veterans groups and cultivate it's growth to the 19 member organizations and forum for veterans issues it is today. Our sincerest condolences to his family, and especially his wife Deborah who gave hime some of the happiest days of his life.

R.I.P.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The officers, legislative members and seventeen member organizations are shown below. Each legislative member and organization has one vote.

Chairman – David Kenney – *Reserve Officers Association of NH*

Vice Chairman – Peter Burdett – *MOAA/Diane Domenicis – Rolling Thunder (6/2107)*

Secretary – Patti Fowler – *Military Order of the Purple Heart*

Temp Secretary – Mike Horne – *NH National Guard Association*

Chairman Emeritus – Bobby Broneske – *Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association*

Sage Emeritus – Barry Conway

Chaplain – Joseph DiChiaro Jr.

Legislative Members:

- Senator Regina Birdsell
- Senator Bob Guida
- Representative Al Baldasaro
- Representative Robert L. Theberge

Voting Organization Members (as of the date of this report):

- 1 American Legion (AMLEGION) (*P –Mike Lopez, A – Robert Blais, A-Daniel Beliveau*)
- 2 Disabled American Veterans (DAV) (*P-Ernest Sulloway A –Bob Guldner*)
- 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) (*P – Joe Clark, A – Paul Lloyd, A-Bill Ryan*)
- 4 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) (*P – Raymond Goulet, Jr., A –Alan Grant*)
- 5 Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH) (*P — Patti Fowler*)
- 6 Reserve Officers Association (ROA) (*P – Dave Kenney, A – Mike Horne, A – John Pappas*)
- 7 Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) (*P – Peter Burdett, A – Joe DiChiaro, A – Warren Coulter*)
- 8 Air Force Association (AFA) (*P – Steve Rogers, A – Kevin Grady*)
- 9 National Guard Association of New Hampshire (*P –Peter Duffy, A – LTC Roy Hunter, A – Mike Horne, A-Diane Baxter*)
- 10 Rolling Thunder (*P – Diane Domenicis, A – John Domenicis*)
- 11 Marine Corps League (MCL) (*P – Gary A. Gahan, A – Mark Lindsley*)
- 12 Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) (*P – Bob Heichlinger, A – Ray Hayes*)
- 13 New Hampshire Army Retiree Council (*P – Frank Musmanno, A – Mike Rice*)
- 14 Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (*P- Bobby Broneske A – Ray Schwendeman*)

- 15 Catholic War Veterans (*P – Denise DeBlois, A – Russell Bilodeau*)
- 16 Korea War Veterans Association (*P – Conrad Perreault, A – Robert Desmond, A – Richard Moushegian*)
- 17 NHNG Enlisted Association (*P – William Bates, A – Michael Rice, A – Jack Howley*)
- 18 AUSA (*P – Greg d’Arbonne, A- Ron Corsetti, A-BG(Ret.)Ed Harrington*)
- 19 NHVA (*P – Kelly Dobens, A- Doug Crooker, A-Mike Young*)

Committee Advisors (Non-voting):

Leadership from various state agencies routinely provide advice to the Committee, including:

- Warren M. Perry, Col., USA (Ret), *Deputy Adjutant General*
- Bill Gaudreau, Director, *Office of Veterans Services*
- Peggy LaBrecque, Commandant, *NH Veterans Home*
- Barry Conway, *Sage Emeritus*
- Michael Horne, Director, *NH State Veterans Cemetery*
- Dr. William Busby, *Regional Manager Northeast Region, Vet Centers*
- Jo A. Moncher, *NH Dept of Health and Human Service, Bureau Chief, Community Based Military Programs*
- Danielle Ocker/Al Montoya & Stella Lareau – *Manchester Veterans Medical Center*
- Al Montoya – *Veterans Medical Center, White River Jct., VT*
- Peter Burdett – *Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army*
- Howie Howe – *Help on the Homefront, VA Liaison to SVAC*

Governor’s Representatives:

Jane Hirsch

Representatives of the NH Congressional Delegation

Representatives attend all meetings for information and coordination purposes. Attendees during the reporting period included the following:

Chris Scott, Connor Jennings (Senator Shaheen)
Seth Cooper, William Bateson (Senator Hassan)
Corey Garry, Bobby Graham (Representative McLane-Kuster)
Elise Britton, Patrick Carroll (Representative Carol Shea-Porter)

REGULAR ATTENDEES DURING THE PERIOD OF THIS REPORT:

Jim Adams, State Veterans Council
Ben Kaler, VA Veterans Experience Office
Janet Dineen, Office of Veterans Services

Dan Marcek, VetFlix
John Reed, Martins Point Health Care
LTC Roy Hunter, NHNG Director of Service Member and Family Services
Lisa A. Aldridge, NH Transition Assistance Advisor, (NHTAA)
Larry Ward, VVA 992
Bancroft McKittrick, Care Coord. Program

Al Peel, VeteransRelief.org
Wilfred Gagne, VAMC Manchester
Stella Lareau, VAMC Manchester
Bob Baker, AMVETS Commander, Post 1, Rochester
Andrea Chrisstoffels, Easter Seals Military & Vet Service
Stephanie Higgs, Easter Seals Military & Vet Services
Bill Luti, US Navy (Ret)
Peter Biello, NH Public Radio

OTHER SPEAKERS AND GUESTS DURING THE PERIOD OF THIS REPORT:

- Jay Lucas, Children of Fallen Patriots
- Sarah Dorner, UNH Master of Public Admin program.
- Commissioner George Copadis, Dept. of Employment Security
- Jason Marsh, VAWRJ Transportation Service Chief
- Al Montoya, Temp Director VAMC Manchester
- Dr. Michael Mayo-Smith, VISN1 Director
- Dan Weeks, ReVision Energy Source

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES THIS PERIOD

The committee continues to be actively involved in providing guidance and testimony on legislation put forth on behalf of veterans.

The SVAC Chairman provides a letter/email to every legislator early in each legislative session to promote awareness of SVAC activities and to encourage early engagement with the SVAC on proposed legislation.

A legislative committee, now chaired by Kevin Grady, monitors legislative activities, drafts proposed testimony, coordinates and leads SVAC testimony and activities with Legislative Committee members Diane Domenicis and Patti Fowler. Bill recommendations are made after discussions and voting involving the full SVAC.

Positions on the various bills are determined by majority vote of the full Committee. The Committee position on a bill does not prohibit any member organization from presenting their organizations position to the General Court.

During this period the SVAC took formal positions on 8 bills and followed an additional 6 bills for the 2017. The decision to follow a bill means the SVAC believes the issue in

question is is not primarily a veteran’s issue but could evolve into an something that does impact veterans, The status of the bills for which SVAC supported, opposed, or followed during this session is shown in Table 1 and Table 2 below:

Table 1

Bill	Title
BILLS IN THE 2017 SESSION <u>SUPPORTED</u> BY THE SVAC	
HB 221	relative to the National Guard Scholarship Fund and the New Hampshire National Guard Education Assistance Act
HB 88	relative to the motor vehicle registration fees for disabled veterans
HB 435	relative to scholarships for members of the National Guard
HB 508	naming the New Hampshire National Guard Regional Training Institute and Barracks facility in Pembroke after Colonel Edward Cross
HB 513	authorizing the State Veterans Advisory Committee to accept gifts and donations to use for the committee's costs
HB 652	establishing a veterans track within the court system and relative to annulment of a sentence imposed by a mental health court (new title)
SB 80	relative to the implementation of the all veterans tax credit and relative to applications for recovery from the FRM victims' contribution recovery fund. (New Title)
SB 204	relative to Purple Heart number plates

Table 2

Bill	THE SVAC <u>CONSIDERED</u> THE FOLLOWING BILLS IN THE 2017 SESSION ELECTED TO FOLLOW ONLY
HB 81	establishing a committee to study gold star number plates
HB 388	relative to special number plates for veterans and armed forces members
HB 408	relative to the State Guard
HB 538	requiring occupational boards and commissions to post reciprocity information (new title)
HB 636	establishing a department of veterans affairs
SB 168	relative to increasing the amount of the optional veterans tax credit

As of May 2017, two new member organizations have become voting members of SVAC. The New Hampshire Veterans Association and the Col. Cross Chapter of the Association of U.S. Army were unanimously voted in as member 18 and member 19 of 20 voting associations. The growth of our committee continues to raise the profile of our work around New Hampshire.

The Committee extends appreciation to all the legislative members who sponsored, co-sponsored and supported the various veteran-related bills put forward. We recognize that in times of fiscal restraint it is not always easy to support legislation that may increase State expenditures, no matter how worthy the purpose. We thank them for their dedication and hard work in support of New Hampshire veterans.

The Committee works closely with legislative committee members to ensure initiatives on behalf of veterans are focused and relevant. It serves as a conduit for communications in support of veterans' interests within the State of New Hampshire.

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

Mutual communications is a vital function of this committee. We interpret this function broadly. Meetings are posted on the legislative calendar. Primarily, email is used to distribute agendas, meeting minutes, and other pertinent information to ensure timely delivery to committee members and other interested parties. In addition, press releases and news items of interest are also delivered to the email distribution list as well as posted on the SVAC Facebook page. When SVAC press releases are generated they are sent to all major news outlets in NH.

Members of the Committee often participate in the public dialogue on veterans' issues, either as the representatives of their veterans' organization or as individuals. Committee member organizations further the reach of Committee communications through publication of relevant items in their own newsletters, websites and other media. The committee strives to quickly disseminate information on events and matters of interest to

veterans. Matters brought to the attention of the SVAC can be distributed more expeditiously via the email and newsletters of member organizations, reaching the approximately 101,000 members of the New Hampshire veteran community, as well as family members and various veteran outreach groups.

The Committee regularly invites speakers and visitors representing a number of organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to present information to help the SVAC in learning about the broad spectrum of services of importance to veterans. Legislators and their constituents are invited to present their views to inform the SVAC of their perspective on a particular issue or issues.

The Committee encourages and invites all legislators, especially prime sponsors of veteran related legislation, to more frequently participate and exchange views with the members of the SVAC in developing positions on matters important to the veterans of New Hampshire.

The Committee continues to work routinely with the VA, both VAMC's (Manchester and White River Junction) and many of the state agencies who provide some measure of support for the NH veteran population. In addition, we have representation on the PTSD/TBI commission and the Military Leadership Team. We believe it's critical to stay engaged with the various agencies and leaders in the state to obtain an accurate picture of New Hampshire's services to veterans.

During this reporting period, the Chairman was contacted by Dr. Michael Mayo-Smith and the Sec. of VA's office to Co-Chair the Task Force 2025 committee charged with providing improvement recommendations for the VAMC Manchester facility. The Task Force work covers both face-to-face and telecomm meetings over the course of several months. The Co-Chairs will then brief the VA Special Medical Advisory Group and the Secretary of the VA, currently planned for February 2018.

The Chairman was selected by the Governor to Chair the pre-selection committee for the state's next Adjutant General. The Chairman also attended the retirement ceremony of the outgoing Adjutant General, MG William Reddel, and formally presented him with the 2017 SVAC Champion Award at his ceremony.

As part of developing a spirit of team work, our Committee held a successful summer outing/social on August 8th at the Sweeney Post in Manchester.

The Chairman worked with Jim Adams and the Dept. of Safety to develop a plan for issuing service and medal stickers for the new alternate Veterans license plate in NH.

The Chairman has been working over the last several months with a subcommittee including Jo Moncher, Wendi Aultman, Bill Gaudreau and William Sherry (United Way) to improve the access to veteran resources via Servicelink website for the state. We are developing a better means of searching for veteran services through expanded provider database and specialized search criteria to present more veteran-centric results.

The Committee, at the request of the Governor, provided a feedback report on the prospect of changing the direction of how military and veteran related services are

managed and delivered in New Hampshire. Through much debate, discussion and exchange of emails, a report was crafted from the various perspectives and presented to the Governor in a meeting on October 16, 2017. Report is herein submitted as Addendum-A

Our September meeting was held at the new Col Cross Regional Training Center in Pembroke. It was voted to make this location our new primary meeting space as it affords single level access and larger meeting space. We are grateful to the NH National Guard Adjutant General for his continued support of SVAC in our routine use of NH National Guard facilities.

In light of a new law allowing the SVAC committee to accept and expend donated funds to support the administration of the committee, we are exploring the possibility of creating a treasurer position to manage funds donated to SVAC. A subcommittee has been formed to investigate and make recommendations.

In October, several members of the Committee went to support the set up and tear down of the Vietnam Moving Wall at SNHU campus in Hooksett.

A subcommittee has also been formed to create a more formalized criteria for our annual SVAC Champion Award. This is our 3rd year of the award, and with the intent of continuing this special form of recognition to an individual who goes above and beyond in supporting veterans, the Committee felt it was time to formalize the criteria for the selection process. The committee is also exploring the option to add a Treasurer position to manage the donated funds to the committee now authorized under RSA 115-A:8.

Our committee meetings have also been attended and recorded by NH Public Radio as part of their veterans feature.

The committee continues to explore new options for better communications outreach. We are currently developing a website and host a Facebook page to broaden our reach. Our email distribution list also continues to evolve as part of our routine communications to agencies, advisors, VSO's and interested parties.

CONCLUSION

The SVAC is currently comprised of 19 member organizations. The committee encourages any NH Veteran Service Organization (VSO) to attend our meetings.

A significant number of advisors, guests and representatives from our Congressional Delegation participate in the meetings in recognition of the mutual value of shared communications and collaboration on veteran issues.

We continue to work with members of the NH House and Senate to develop our support and testimony agenda for legislative actions on behalf of veterans. This committee can and will help to develop new legislation for veterans. Legislators are encouraged to review bill language with the committee prior to or during the filing period to ensure the

SVAC understands the intent of the legislation. We can help avoid unintended consequences and clarify technical jargon.

The Committee is focused on our mission of providing a common voice for New Hampshire's veterans and their families. Our meetings provide a forum for announcing legislative or policy changes, veteran healthcare updates, and scheduled events that benefit veterans.

Questions, comments or recommendations are always welcome. The committee chairman can be contacted by calling: 603-232-4210 or email at nhsvac.chair@gmail.com, the committee Vice Chair email nhsvac.vicechair@gmail.com or our Secretary at svacsecretary@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,



David J. Kenney
Chairman, NH State Veterans Advisory Committee



<https://www.facebook.com/NHSVAC/>



NH State Veterans Advisory Committee

January 8, 2018

**Office of the Governor
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301**

Dear Governor Sununu;

Per your request for input from SVAC on the path forward for veteran's services in New Hampshire, the enclosed summary report is provided based on the responses I'd received from both SVAC voting members and some of the regular attending advisors. The enclosed Addendum includes summaries from each responding organization or advisor to get a broad picture of where the responding group's perspectives are on this matter.

The responses were based on the basic framework that came from the Military Leadership Team proposal of 3 distinctive ideas on the structure of a new Military and Veterans department. That document is also enclosed as Addendum 2. We discussed the 3 options at our first SVAC meeting in September and the feedback was mixed. Some strong opinions for both a Commissioner model and for a Commission model. To avoid an endless debate, I opted for a feedback by email option to give members the time to contemplate their answers. Some of the feedback was brief and some of it was more elaborate and detailed.

Table-1: Response percentages

ADDENDUM - A

	Commissioner	Commission	Uncommitted
Voting Members	25%	58%	16%
All Responses	18%	64%	18%

Based on the inputs received, what stands out is; (1) most don't want a commissioner but would prefer a commission. (2) Regardless of solution on leadership, immediate focus must be on adding personnel and resources to the Office of Veterans Services to meet the required tasks they are responsible for each day. Additional Veteran Resource Officers would be created to increase abilities to collaborate with civilian agencies, develop grant applications for other funding sources and increase communication efficiency through web, print and social media.

We have made some progress in improving veteran access to services. I am currently collaborating with Servicelink personnel and Jo Moncher to make improvements to the Servicelink website search engine. Search results will soon identify veteran-specific resources. We'd like to build on this idea to perhaps link this database into a Veteran portal. We've also begun the process of cross-educating Office of Veterans Services, 2-1-1 and Servicelink personnel so they can obtain a better understanding of the referral resources each provides. This should increase the efficiency in which a veteran can get to the right service quickly.

While the VA may provide a significant portion of medical care, it won't be the only answer for New Hampshire. The recent issues at VAMC Manchester are under review and a Task Force has been assigned by Secretary Shulkin to develop a plan forward. Implementation of Task Force recommendations will take time, so collaborative efforts with local hospitals and civilian providers will fill in the gaps. Partnerships with hospitals, such as the one established by your Executive Order with Catholic Medical Center, should be considered for a

ADDENDUM - A

permanent status. Medical core competencies among the VAMC and New Hampshire hospitals can be leveraged to provide a broader range of services to our veteran population and drastically reduce the need to send them out of state.

In summary, collaboration with agency and individual civilian providers will be a key aspect of a better service delivery model. Improving the efficiency of a web-based resources will help centralize a reliable information resource that can be easily shared. While the Office of Veterans Services primarily provides help with filing VA claims, it shouldn't be their only function. To allow for a broader assistance capacity, more personnel are needed in the Office of Veterans Services.

Respectfully Submitted,



David J. Kenney
CDR, USN-Ret.
Chairman
NH State Veterans Advisory Committee

Voting Members of the State Veterans Advisory Committee:

- Air Force Association of New Hampshire
- Air Force Sergeants Association
- American Legion
- Col Cross Chapter-Assoc. of US Army
- Catholic War Veterans
- Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association
- Disabled American Veterans
- Korea War Veterans Association
- Marine Corps League
- Military Officers Association of America
- Military Order of Purple Heart
- National Guard Assoc of New Hampshire
- NH Veterans Association
- NH Army Retiree Council
- NHNG Enlisted Association Reserve Officers Association
- Rolling Thunder
- Veterans of Foreign War
- Vietnam Veterans of America

ADDENDUM - A

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ADDENDUM – SVAC Feedback Summary

Air Force Association

- Commissioner position would be acceptable if that was preferred by the Governor
- Commissioner should serve a renewable 4 year term. Governor would reappoint as desired.
- HB-636 in present form restricts Commissioner Appointment to a combat veteran. This is too restrictive for pool of qualified candidates who didn't serve in direct combat.
- If the Commission option is preferred, SVAC should have a seat on it.
- A general consensus from all the volunteer organizations and agencies that provide services would be useful. With the new Commissioner or Commission, they will all have to adapt to reporting/coordinating with a new military and veteran authority in the state. But in is crucial.

American Legion

- Expand the Veterans Council to a Board of Commissioners. Would prefer multiple commissioners as opposed to just one.
- Money should go more directly to veteran's services, not a Commissioner.

NH National Guard Enlisted Association

- Continue with deliberation to ensure changes being made will be for the best and cost effective. Don't reinvent what already works well.
- Money should be spent adding additional Veteran Service Officers to the Office of Veterans Services. Believe they are understaffed in this area and could use more help.
- Office of Veterans Services may work best under the Adjutant General. Fewer resources to add, already established network of services. Does not favor a commission.
- Directory/Resource Guides – there are many out there. Maintaining an accurate one and web resources are a full time job, will need someone to do that as part of the OVS solution.

NH Army Retiree Council

- Favors a Commissioner model. Offers best state level interaction without creation of a large entity.

Catholic War Veterans

ADDENDUM - A

- Does not favor a Commissioner. Would rather focus the money on boosting personnel and resources at the Office of Veterans Services level.
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- **NH National Guard Association**
- Prefers the Commission model to offer a diverse set of skillsets and resources for the Office of Veterans Services.
- Increase the number of personnel at the Office of Veterans Services. More boots on the ground access.
- Ensure services/service officers are out in the field more. Relocating the office to a more accessible location.
- Ensure resources are available to keep website & public information channels up to date is key.
- A scheduled evaluation of services provided by the Office of Veterans Services (independent board of veterans, SVAC) to determine effectiveness of services provided.

Reserve Officers Association-Dept. of NH

- Prefer a solution that offers most funding to go to the service level. Leadership could be a small commission, or realign OVS and expanded services under the TAG if Commissioner or Commission not possible.
- Should a commissioner leadership model be chosen, remove requirement for only a combat veteran being eligible for consideration as Commissioner. Too restrictive and perceptively biased.
- Expand Office of Veterans Services by 2-3 additional personnel dedicated to coordinating resources, grant application, and public communications channels via website, social media, etc.
- Planned expansion of Veterans Service Officers to hire one from each county. County positions could be part time depending on access needs. Higher need counties could be provided overlap and back up support from lower need counties.

NH Veterans Association

- Adamantly opposes a Commissioner model.
- Favors adding more resources to the Office of Veterans Services. Ensure office is staffed by veterans only.
- Commission/Council model should have one person from each county. Meetings should be monthly with stipend for mileage.
- Office of Veterans Services should have dedicated resource to update and improve website, social media, all communications.

ADDENDUM - A

Air Force Sergeants Association

- Enhance Office of Veterans Services by providing a veterans service officer for each county in the state.
- Favors a Commission.
- Does not agree with Commissioner being a combat veteran requirement on HB-636
- Would like a comprehensive guide of services in the state, controlled and vetted by the state.
- Ensure services provided by veteran's service officers have some sort of feedback (i.e. a survey) to ensure some form of accountability.

Military Order of Purple Heart

- Does not support a Commissioner's model.
- Would like to see additional resources at Office of Veterans Services and Bureau of Military Programs at DHHS.

MOAA

- Supports a Commissioner model.
- Advocates for aggressive grant pursuit, perhaps with a contractor vice state employee for federal funding to support programs.
- SVAC would be an advisory group to the Commissioner as well.

Disabled American Veterans

- Not in favor of a Commissioner model.
- Prefers funding to go to enhancing the Office of Veterans Services.

Advisor, Veterans Council/Office of Veterans Services

- Prefers a Commission model with addition of personnel to cover down on data collection, analysis, public communication, etc.
- Ability to provide services as of late has been severely impacted by recent budget cuts to the department (i.e. state vehicle restrictions, IT assets are old and need updating, etc.)
- Analysis of data is a crucial function, but in order to provide a truly efficient method of doing it would require an investment into software specifically designed for that purpose (such as MicroPact). This would add about \$500K - \$1 Million to a procurement budget. More rudimentary methods and tools, like Excel spreadsheets, are inefficient.
- Believes Office of Veterans Services could be the central point of access for veteran's services given the proper level of personnel and resources to do so.
- Commission over Commissioner would be more palatable.

ADDENDUM - A

Advisor, NH Help on the Homefront

- Does not support a Commissioner model. Prefers the money projected for this model to go directly to veteran support.
- Enhance the Office of Veterans Services with additional resources. Ensure fair and timely submission of ALL claims presented to the VA via their office.
- Enhance DHHS Military & Veterans services to operate a veteran's hotline and generate the services directory for veterans services in NH.
- Fully staff the Veterans Council (need 3rd member currently) for oversight of Office of Veterans Services, expand their oversight to the DHHS Military and Veteran Services (Military Bureau).
- Homeless Veterans should be a focus. RSA 165:5 requires must support all wartime, honorably discharged veterans and their families when they can no longer support themselves.

Advisor, Former Commandant - NH Veterans Home

- Prefers less bureaucratic solution, add more resources to the Office of Veterans Services.

Advisor, Military & Veterans Services, Easterseals

- No specific opinion on leadership model – wants to ensure the Bureau of Military Programs remains, and remains within DHHS.
- Most effective co-located with DHHS resources.

Advisor, State Veterans Cemetery

- Does not favor a Commissioner model.
- Prefers funding go directly to supporting Office of Veterans Services.
- Prefers the NH State Veterans Home, State Veterans Cemetery, and Bureau of Military Programs at DHHS remain in the report structure they are currently in.
- Recommends the Veterans Council be enhanced in function, similar to the Board of Managers, and that more geographically diverse representation be part of it.
- Better collaboration between the Veterans Council and towns/cities Clerks and Welfare Officers to ensure ALL veterans have access to better information (not all veterans belong to veteran's organizations).