



**Blount County Veterans Affairs**  
**QUARTERLY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
January 7, 2026

Veterans Committee Meeting called to order at 4:30 pm.

**Roll Call:**

Steve Mikels (Blount County Commissioner)	Absent
Larry Grant (American Legion)	Present
Cye Miles (Veterans of Foreign Wars 10855)	Present
Frank Kusiowski, Jr. (AMVETS Post 22)	Present
Robin Ferschke (Gold Star Mother)	Excused
Ed Shore (Military Order of the Purple Heart)	Present
Lloyd Hansen (VFW Post 5154)	Present
Denise Weston (At-Large)	Present
Jene Thompson (DAV Chapter 76)	Excused

Blount County VSOs Nathan Weinbaum and Jennifer Holmes attended the meeting. Julie Coulter was excused.

VSO Nathan Weinbaum presented the minutes from the October 8, 2025 quarterly Veterans Committee Meeting. Ed Shore made a motion to approve. Second by Denise Weston. Motion Passed.

**Highlights:**

- United Veterans of Blount County Veterans Day programs and Veterans programs at local schools
- VA cost of living increase
- Vietnam Veterans reunion meeting with Counselor Melaine Hickman
- Walking sticks, canes, and plaques for Veterans

**Old Business:**

- **Special called meeting regarding designation of the Army National Guard Armory as the William O. Gregory National Guard Armory** – Nathan Weinbaum reported that he contacted Representative Tom Stinnett by email requesting an update. His Legislative Assistant, Dustin Malone, emailed that they are putting the motion on notice during the second week of session.

**New Business:**

- **Veterans Committee members reappointment dates and requirements** – Nathan Weinbaum reported that the four-year terms for the following members will expire in 2026.

- Samuel Shore – Expires 5/19/2026
- Robin Ferschke – Expires 5/19/2026
- Denise Weston – Expires 5/19/2026
- Jene Thompson – Expires June 2026
- Cye Miles – Expires 6/16/2026
- Lloyd Hansen -Expires 6/16/2026
- Steve Mikels – Expires 9/15/2026

The following members at the Veterans Committee meeting verbally requested to stay on the Veterans Committee for another four-year term.

- Samuel Shore – Expires 5/19/2026
- Denise Weston – Expires 5/19/2026
- Cye Miles – Expires 6/16/2026
- Lloyd Hansen -Expires 6/16/2026

- **New Blount County VSOs and office accomplishments in 2025** – Nathan Weinbaum reported that 2025 was very successful. Two new VSOs, Julie Coulter and Jennifer Holmes, both worked hard to obtain accreditation and have been serving Veterans and dependents. Our office continues to work hard each and every day to get better.
- **VA Outpatient Clinic coming to Maryville in 2027** – Nathan Weinbaum reported that he is getting updates from the TDVA regarding the new outpatient clinic in Maryville. As of right now, the VA is looking for a location for the Outpatient Clinic. It is expected to open in 2027. The clinic is expected to have 4 VA doctors at the location.
- **Notice of increase in fraudulent mailings and phone calls to Veterans** – Nathan Weinbaum reported that the Veterans Affairs office has received more calls about unusual mailings and phones calls about VA benefits and requesting their personal information. Many calls were regarding a post card that offered additional VA benefits if they called the number. The number has been reported across the country as spam.
- **HonorAir Knoxville Flight #38** – Nathan Weinbaum reported that HonorAir Knoxville Flight #38 will take place on April 8<sup>th</sup>. They are still trying to fill the flight with WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam Veterans.

**Announcements and Statements:**

- Denise Weston reported that she has been serving free soup, rolls, fruit and cookies to individuals and families staying in local motels. Her project is called “The Ladle Project”. She is not looking for any publicity but just wanted the committee to know she is helping Veterans in need who reside at motels. Denise said she usually offers chicken noodle soup, vegetable soup, and vegetable beef soup.

No further business.

Meeting adjourned at 5:18 pm