

Minutes

Minnesota Commanders' Task Force

10 a.m.-noon Sept. 8, 2026

Veterans Hall, Veterans Service Building, St. Paul



Commanders' Task Force Chair Pam Krill called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll call was taken. Present commanders (or designee) were:

Krill of The American Legion

Michael Medhaug, CTF vice chair, of Disabled American Veterans

Jerry Wolters of the Marine Corps League

Chuck Jones of the Military Order of the Purple Heart

Charles Hawkins of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

Shiloh Henderson of the Jewish War Veterans

Tim Valentin of the Paralyzed Veterans of America

Others present were:

Tim Engstrom, CTF secretary, TAL

Janet Lorenzo, TAL

Jason Storm, TAL

Barry Hendricksen, VFW

Ryan Emerson, Warrior Tech Minnesota

Brad Lindsay, Minn. Department of Veterans Affairs

Dave Bellefeuille, MDVA

Jon Kelly, MDVA

Cole Trace, MDVA

Hope Wilson, American Legion Auxiliary

Christie Avant, AL Auxiliary

Rachel Johnson, MDVA

John Baker, Minn. Association of County Veteran Service Officers

Tom Anderson, MACVSO

Trent Dilks, DAV

Butch Whitehead, DAV

Larry Fonder, MACVSO

Brendan Gill Sapienza, VFW Auxiliary

Ben Johnson, MDVA

Ben Krause, United Veterans Leadership Council

Wolters moved to approve the minutes of the Aug. 11 meeting. Hawkins seconded. Motion carried.

MDVA Community Health Director Rachel Johnson oversees the Veteran Suicide Collaborative. She presented on the program. She reminded the CTF that the Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention Summit is at Bloomington American Legion Post 550 & VFW Post 1296 on Sept. 28. Johnson described the event's schedule.

Krill asked for speakers for the public comment section. None replied.

Under **Unfinished Business**, Ryan Emerson, a consultant with Warrior Tech Minnesota, discussed CTF email address and related protocol.

A discussion was had on ensuring compliance with the open meetings and open records law relating to emails and public decision-making, followed by a discussion on everyone getting a copy of the CTF Standing Rules. Cole said he would get it on the website.

Under **New Business**, a discussion on ideas for 2027 legislative priorities ensued, followed by a talk about the timeline to decide. Jones motioned to make the Increasing the Homestead Property Tax Exclusion and resolving an ongoing federal VA dental/DME issue at Minnesota Veterans Homes priorities. Wolters seconded. After discussion, the consensus was to have the preliminary priorities set at the Oct. 13 CTF meeting. Hawkins moved to amend Jones' motion to only be the Homestead one. Jones seconded. Motion carried.

Krill then called for a motion on the Homestead as an official 2027 CTF Legislative Priority. Same commanders moved and seconded. Motion carried.

Whitehead and Hendrickson presented on dates and planning efforts for Veterans Day on the Hill. Various people present let them know springtime holiday and veteran-event dates already set in motion. Whitehead said he would shoot for April 7. (Cole later said an availability conflict exists for April 7.)

Under **Announcements**, Commissioner Lindsay announced veterans appreciation at the Twins games Sept. 12 & 13, Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum grand opening on Sept. 12 & 13, donations to Hastings Veterans Home benefit domiciliaries in Hastings and Minneapolis, event planning is underway for a state Interagency Council on Homelessness anticipated vote on functional-zero homelessness achieved in Ramsey County.

Hendrickson talked about VFW's opposition to TCAVA. Wolters asked about Veterans Day. Lindsay said the official state program will be in Duluth.

Upcoming meetings: Oct. 13, Veterans Service Building; CTF Summit Oct. 28-30, Camp Ripley (training, not a meeting).

Valentin motioned to adjourn. Hawkins seconded. Motion carried.

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