

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia
Minutes
BOARD OF VISITORS MEETING
8 July 2021

A meeting of the VMI Board of Visitors Executive Committee was held in Lexington, Virginia in Smith Hall at VMI beginning at 1405 hours on Thursday, 8 July 2021 pursuant to notice.

Present: Mr. Thomas R. Watjen '76, President
Mrs. Lara T. Chambers '03
Lieutenant General Charles E. Dominy, USA (Ret)
Mr. David L. Miller '70
Mr. Eugene Scott, Jr. '80
Mr. Hugh M. Fain III '80
Mr. Conrad M. Hall '65
Mr. Michael L. Hamlar
Mr. Richard K. Hines V '66
Mr. Scot W. Marsh '81

- 1) Mr. Watjen presided, called the meeting to order, and provided opening remarks. Also present was Mr. Pat O'Leary, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General. A physical quorum of Executive Committee members were in attendance, while LtGen Dominy, Mr. Miller, Mr. Hall, Mr. Hines, and Mr. Hamlar participated via teleconference.
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- 2) Mr. Watjen opened the meeting for Public Comment. Public notice was given which initiated public comment during this session. LTC Ryan welcomed six visitors, whose attendance was facilitated by Ms. Debra A. Hines and whose remarks were led by Ms. Tamara Neo. Public commentary ensued regarding specific concerns with respect to VMI's vaccination policy. Material provided at the meeting was shared electronically with the entire Board of Visitors and is attached to these minutes as Appendix I.
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- 3) Mr. Watjen discussed his intention, as incoming Board President and in recognition of new committee assignments, to engage Committee Chairs more regularly in Executive Committee interactions to ensure optimal communication flow for all Board members, to assist in decision-making, and to aid in coordination efforts amongst ad hoc and regular board meeting activity. Responsive comments noted full support.
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- 4) Mr. Watjen directed members' attention to the updated BOV Committees Assignment listing, noting preceding disclosure to MG Wins and the intentional minimization of movement

amongst committees in support of ongoing efforts and initiatives underway. Also highlighted were new assignments as noted in red (and the rationale thereof), along with the long-term objective of evolving committee membership and chair reassignments for diversity and continuity of board support. MG Wins provided comments from an Institute perspective, also noting the importance of continuity and succession planning. Discussion ensued, inclusive of support for the aforementioned focus on stability of assignments, eagerness to assist newest (and reassigned) members in their assimilation, anticipated timing of upcoming ad hoc meetings, and Mr. Hines' request for board input on renaming Memorial Hall.

- 5) Mr. Watjen presented to attendees the distributed Board of Visitors DE&I Objectives – One VMI, which includes the following overarching principles for the board:
- (1) To create and foster a more diverse VMI.
 - (2) To create and foster a safe, equitable and inclusive environment for all on Post.
 - (3) Assure that we maintain a safe, rigorous process for escalating issues which have even the potential to violate the [Honor and Cadet] Code.

The interrelation and encompassment of Equity Audit recommendations was noted, as was the collective agreement with (and merit of) these guiding tenets, particularly, their strategic and enduring cultural impact as well as their necessity moving forward. MG Wins stated the evident consistency of the objectives with the One Corps – One VMI Unifying Action Plan and full support from the Institute. Mr. Hamlar thanked MG Wins, BG Clark, and the rest of the administrative team for swift and thorough work already undertaken in terms of Equity Audit recommendation review and implementation. *A motion was made by Mr. Watjen and seconded by Mr. Scott to adopt the Board of Visitors DE&I Objectives and to provide the Governor, General Assembly, and State Council of Higher Education for Virginia quarterly reports detailing VMI's progress on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.*

- 6) MG Wins thanked Mr. Watjen and board attendees for the opportunity to address the group and presented the draft Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Review: 30 Day Report (expected public release imminent), including the background, contents, and underlying intention, to include the Institute's formal Equity Audit recommendation assessment, status report, and anticipated way forward in terms of tracking, facilitation, and implementation. The Superintendent noted that, of the forty-two recommendations, eight are considered substantially complete, twenty one are in-progress (or ongoing prior to the Equity Audit Report publication), seven require further study or review, and six can only be implemented by outside organizations (such as the General Assembly or VMI Alumni Agencies). MG Wins referenced numerous engagements between himself and key individuals (e.g. legislative members, SCHEV, etc.) as facilitated by COL Kim Parker, VMI Government Relations. Unanimity was expressed in terms of collective agreement with, support for, and the importance of continued proactive progress.

5) **Entered into Closed Session:** A motion was made by Mr. Watjen and seconded by Mrs. Chambers to enter into a Closed Session. The motion passed unanimously and the Board entered into Closed Session at 1545 hours to discuss: Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (8), and personnel matters related to the employment, assignment, appointment, or performance of specific employees, pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1).

6) **Return to Open Meeting:** A motion was made by Mr. Watjen and seconded by Mr. Scott certifying the Closed Meeting. A roll call vote was taken by the Secretary and the motion was then passed unanimously. The Board returned to open session at 1710.

7) There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1713 hours.



KEVIN A. RYAN
Board Secretary