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Executive Director

State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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Governor

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Jimmy Patronis
Chief Financial Officer

Nikki Fried
Commissioner of Agriculture

September 13, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Ron DeSantis
Honorable Ashley Moody
Honorable Jimmy Patronis
Honorable Nikki Fried

FROM: Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
Danny Burgess, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Agenda – Cabinet Meeting of September 24, 2019

The next public meeting of the Governor and Cabinet to transact the business of the Department of Veterans' Affairs will be at 9:00 a.m. (EDT), September 24, 2019 in Tallahassee, Florida.

The Agenda and all required back-up materials are attached for your review.

If you have any questions, please call my Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director, Allison Sitte, at (850) 487-1533 x7723.

cc: Beau Beaubien, Director of Cabinet Affairs
Executive Office of the Governor

Chris Spencer
Governor's Office of Policy and Budget

Attachments

AGENDA
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Meeting materials for the following items are available on the web at:
<http://floridavets.org/about-us/public-notice/>

MEMBERS
Governor Ron DeSantis
Attorney General Ashley Moody
Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis
Commissioner Nikki Fried

September 24, 2019
9:00 A.M. (EDT)
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida

Contact: Allison Sitte, Director of Legislative & Cabinet Affairs
(850) 487-1533

ITEM	SUBJECT	RECOMMENDATION
1.	Respectfully request approval of the minutes of the December 4, 2018 meeting. (ATTACHMENT 1)	RECOMMEND APPROVAL
2.	Respectfully request approval of the minutes of the January 11, 2019 meeting. (ATTACHMENT 2)	RECOMMEND APPROVAL
3.	Respectfully submit nominees for the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Class of 2019. (ATTACHMENT 3)	RECOMMEND APPROVAL

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STATE OF FLORIDA

IN RE: MEETING OF THE GOVERNOR AND
CABINET

CABINET MEMBERS: GOVERNOR RICK SCOTT
ATTORNEY GENERAL PAM BONDI
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER JIMMY
PATRONIS
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE
ADAM PUTNAM

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2018

LOCATION: CABINET MEETING ROOM
LOWER LEVEL, THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

REPORTED BY: NANCY S. METZKE, RPR, FPR
COURT REPORTER

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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3 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Now we get to recognize the
4 Medal of Merit honoree. Glen Sutphin with the
5 Department of Veterans Affairs.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: Thank you very
7 much, sir.

8 The Department of Veterans Affairs has two
9 agenda items today, sir. The first one --
10 certainly good afternoon now, Governor, and
11 Attorney General Bondi, and CFO Patronis, and
12 Commissioner Putnam.

13 The Item Number 1 is the minutes from the
14 August 14, 2018, Cabinet meeting. Respectfully
15 request approval.

16 COMMISSIONER PUTNAM: So move.

17 GOVERNOR SCOTT: All right. Is there a
18 second?

19 CFO PATRONIS: Second.

20 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Comments or objections?

21 (NO RESPONSE).

22 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Hearing none, the motion
23 carries.

24 Hall of Fame.

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: The second item,

1 sir, is the list of nominees for the Florida
2 Veterans Hall of Fame Class of --

3 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Okay. Great list.

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: Yes, sir,
5 absolutely. And it will get better and better
6 every year as we make sure we find them.

7 Subject to your questions or comments,
8 respectfully request approval.

9 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Is there a motion?

10 CFO PATRONIS: So move.

11 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Second?

12 COMMISSIONER PUTNAM: Second.

13 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Comments or objections?

14 (NO RESPONSE).

15 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Hearing none, the motion
16 carries.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: Before we start
18 this, sir, the Department of Veterans Affairs and
19 our veterans want to thank you all, the honor it
20 has been to work with you. Everyone of you have
21 done something that's unique and special for our
22 veterans, our returning troops, and our families.

23 Governor Scott, you've always stood strong
24 with us and the Department of Military Affairs on
25 budgets, things that we needed to take care of it,

1 being able to get veterans homes built, being able
2 to get programs out there and helping us get ahold
3 of the VA --

4 GOVERNOR SCOTT: The number one state for
5 veterans.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: Absolutely, sir.
7 We're number one veterans and military.

8 (APPLAUSE).

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: And we can prove
10 that. That isn't just a bunch of words out there.

11 The other thing is, General Bondi, you made it
12 available to us so that we received -- oh, she's
13 gone?

14 GOVERNOR SCOTT: She'll be back.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: Okay. Well, CFO
16 Patronis, you made it in such a way that your
17 military returning could apply to the fire schools
18 and to other programs that they had not been able
19 to get into. That's been a big job thing for our
20 veterans in rehabbing them.

21 Commissioner Putnam, you've done all kind of
22 things to make sure our veterans are safe.
23 Number 2, you've made sure that there is hunting
24 and fishing and things that those who have suffered
25 so greatly can now go back and have some semblance

1 of reality of life.

2 No other state does these type of things.
3 Everybody brags they did this, Texas did that and
4 everything. In reality, this has been a wonderful,
5 wonderful time.

6 Your support -- in the military our word is
7 our bond. Your bond is above and beyond, and it
8 shows in the greatest of military traditions; and I
9 thank you from the bottom of our heart.

10 (APPLAUSE).

11 GOVERNOR SCOTT: So, Glen, how are you going
12 to do this?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUTPHIN: Steve will come
14 over and read the names, sir. I'll come up there
15 with our chairman of the veterans, and then we'll
16 bring the veterans up, sir -- I mean the
17 nominees -- as they receive their award; and then
18 we'll take a picture with their family, sir.

19 (WHEREUPON, THERE WAS THE PRESENTATION OF THE
20 VETERANS HALL OF FAME NOMINEES AFTER WHICH THE
21 MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITH PRESENTATIONS BY THE
22 RETIRING THREE CABINET MEMBERS).

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STATE OF FLORIDA

IN RE: MEETING OF THE GOVERNOR AND CABINET

CABINET MEMBERS: GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS
ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHLEY MOODY
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER JIMMY PATRONIS
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE NIKKI FRIED

DATE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2019

LOCATION: CABINET MEETING ROOM
LOWER LEVEL, THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

REPORTED BY: LISA SNYDER
COURT REPORTER

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS VOTE

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4 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Danny Burgess, is he here?

5 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Governor, may I interject for
6 a second?

7 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Sure.

8 COMMISSIONER FRIED: While I look forward to
9 working with everybody this year, and-- I would like to
10 remind everybody that we are a collegial body, and
11 these agency heads, including those of FDLE, serve at
12 the pleasure of the entire Cabinet.

13 Their application process, interviews, selection
14 of appointments deserve the full measure of
15 transparency under the Sunshine Laws.

16 The people of Florida expect it, and it's the law.

17 The candidates here today were brought forth
18 without a proper and transparent process, in the
19 darkness and not in the light.

20 I ask that we move the agency head discussions and
21 procedures until which time that we actually have an
22 agreement about this Cabinet of moving forward with the
23 process, and to make sure that we are affirming our
24 commitment to make these choices.

25 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Well, for the Veterans

1 Affairs, the Statute require the Governor-- it's a
2 Governor appointment. It's not a Cabinet appointment.
3 So, I am going to go ahead and have Danny be
4 interviewed. I think that that's appropriate.

5 I do think we do need to discuss the Cabinet
6 appointments, that are not Governor appointments, and
7 arrive at the best way to be able to do that.

8 So, Danny-- is Danny here today? Oh, there you
9 are.

10 He is a captain of the Judge Advocate General
11 Corps of the United States Army Reserves. He has been
12 a tireless advocate for veterans during his time in the
13 legislature, and a respected public servant for many
14 years.

15 I believe Danny has had the chance to meet with
16 each of you individually, and I would now like to
17 appoint him to serve as the Executive Director of the
18 Department of Veterans Affairs.

19 Will you approach the podium, Danny, so we can
20 conduct your interview.

21 And, I will open it up to whoever wants to get it
22 started.

23 CFO PATRONIS: I'll start, Governor.

24 Danny, thank you-- Representative, thank you for
25 coming by and making an appointment with my office,

1 meeting with me, answering my questions.

2 I feel like this is more ceremonial now, because
3 you took the time out to meet on my officials calendar,
4 to meet with me in my official timeline, and as I
5 understand, as you told me, you were meeting with all
6 members of the Cabinet.

7 I really feel comfortable and confident that you
8 are the-- capable to do the job.

9 As I monitored you, your service over through the
10 legislature for the last few years, I know you have a
11 servant's heart. But, more importantly I know that
12 your love for country and service, and taking care of
13 your fellow man, and ensuring that all veterans that
14 have served this country, and those that have served
15 our state, are being taken care of.

16 So, Governor, good nomination. I support your
17 pick.

18 REPRESENTATIVE BURGESS: Thank you, Mr. CFO.

19 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Attorney General?

20 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Thank you, Governor, for
21 giving us the opportunity to speak with Representative
22 Burgess.

23 What struck me is your experience in the law, and
24 your service to our state and our country.

25 And, as the top legal officer in the state, I

1 have, and as a judge, I often saw veterans that are
2 residents of this state intersect with our criminal
3 justice system.

4 There are mental health issues that are issues
5 that have affected them because of their service, and I
6 was very excited to see that our Governor nominated
7 someone that has experience with our legal system, so
8 that we might work together to improve the lives of our
9 veterans in Florida.

10 Have you given that thought, and what might be
11 some of your ideas for doing that?

12 REPRESENTATIVE BURGESS: Thank you, General
13 Bondi-- or, General Moody. I'm so sorry.

14 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: (Laughter) It's not the
15 first time it's happened.

16 CFO PATRONIS: You want to invite Mr. Zingale up
17 now, because I think--

18 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: Usually it comes from the
19 media.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BURGESS: Strike that. (Laughter)

21 So, it was great meeting with you yesterday. It
22 was great meeting all of you yesterday.

23 Governor, thank you so much for your confidence,
24 and your nomination here.

25 I couldn't be more passionate when it comes to

1 serving our veterans.

2 As a person that's in the military myself right
3 now, I think that there are a number of things that we
4 need to continue to build upon, and a lot of those
5 revolve around transitional services.

6 We have the largest number of post-911 veterans
7 coming to the State of Florida, and moving to the State
8 of Florida, than the entire country. And we need to be
9 there for them, as they are just starting their lives.
10 They are just transitioning out of the military. We
11 need to be there for them, and all of our service
12 members, when it comes to helping them overcome-- our
13 combat veterans overcome post traumatic stress,
14 traumatic brain injury, helping reduce the suicide rate
15 that is just a state of emergency among our veterans.

16 Ways we can do that is through transitional
17 services, through occupational licensing, streamlining
18 all of that, to help them find good solid careers here
19 in the State of Florida, and not have to reinvent the
20 entire wheel when they are highly trained, highly
21 skilled operators over there, overseas, in very intense
22 environments. They can come and do that here in
23 Florida, and we want that. We want to attract that.

24 Veterans Court; we had a great discussion on
25 Veterans Court. I think there should be a Veterans

1 Court in every circuit in the State of Florida. What
2 an awesome, awesome opportunity. I know you have
3 presided over those, and that is something that I would
4 love to work on, going forward, and seeing how we can
5 take that state-wide.

6 And, I just believe fully that we also need to
7 work on veteran homelessness. We do have a large
8 number of homeless veterans in the state. Too many.
9 One is too many. And, so there are things that we can
10 do there to help do-- to help mitigate what I think is
11 just a dire problem. We need to be there for them.
12 They served us, we should serve them in every way we
13 can. They were there for us in our darkest hour, and
14 this is how we can be there for them in theirs.

15 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Governor, if I may.

16 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Sure.

17 COMMISSIONER FRIED: Danny, you and I also had--
18 Representative Burgess-- a fantastic conversation as
19 well yesterday. I respect a lot of the experience and
20 expertise that you bring to this position, and to this
21 role.

22 We had a very in depth conversation about being
23 able to deal with mental health issues, and PTSD, and
24 giving our veterans an opportunity to have access to
25 medical marijuana, and alternative relief.

1 So, I do think that you are highly qualified.
2 Know that I will have to vote no today, just based on
3 the process and procedure, but that I do think that we
4 need to have transparency in this process. But, know
5 that I have the utmost respect for what you have done
6 for our country, for our state, and do look forward to
7 working with you in the future.

8 REPRESENTATIVE BURGESS: Thank you, Commissioner.

9 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Anymore questions for
10 Mr. Burgess?

11 CFO PATRONIS: I got one.

12 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Sure.

13 CFO PATRONIS: Thank you, Governor.

14 Representative, one of the missions of the
15 Department of Veterans Affairs that you will monitor
16 and carry through, I think it's important for the
17 audience to know, and that's with our VA liaisons.

18 Can you-- because I think this is almost like a
19 secret. I don't think people realize that you will
20 have the opportunity to manage a team of experts,
21 service personnel, that will essentially save the State
22 of Florida money. Could you explain how that program
23 works?

24 REPRESENTATIVE BURGESS: Sure. Thank you very
25 much for the question. Great question. Great point.

1 The return on investment from the-- from our
2 expert benefits and claims analyst within the Florida
3 Department of Veterans Affairs, I believe-- and the
4 team may know better than I-- but, I believe it's close
5 to a \$90 return investment to every one dollar. And,
6 so we save the State money by the service we provide
7 veterans. And, whether it's in our nursing homes, or
8 through the claims and helping soldiers realize what
9 they are eligible for. Some soldiers just-- they don't
10 want to ask, or they don't know. They don't know what
11 they are eligible for. There has been situations, just
12 in my short reserve service, where I didn't know what I
13 was eligible for.

14 So, we need to improve upon our ability to
15 disseminate that information so all our veterans know
16 that we have services here for them.

17 And, we also cover now-- the great thing about the
18 FDVA is that we work hand in hand with Federal VA, and
19 we do help assist those people who may have fallen
20 through the cracks, through no fault of anyone
21 necessarily, and help get them the benefits that they
22 deserve.

23 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: Anymore questions?

24 ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY: I have no other
25 questions. I think you are imminently qualified,

1 Representative Burgess.

2 I would like to thank Governor DeSantis for
3 placing this on the agenda in advance, giving us time
4 to interview him, getting to know Representative
5 Burgess, what he has to offer our great state. Thank
6 you very much, Governor.

7 GOVERNOR DESANTIS: And, I just appreciate, Danny,
8 your, you know, your passion. It comes through. Your
9 energy. And, I think that, you know, to get a young
10 guy like you out there helping our veterans community I
11 think will do a lot of really good things, and I think
12 you have the passion for it, and, you know, really--
13 that's important. So, we appreciate you coming to
14 conduct this interview. Obviously, we will like to
15 have a vote at a later time, but I thank you for your
16 willingness to serve.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BURGESS: Thank you, Governor.
18 It's an honor to be able to even be considered for this
19 post, and it's awesome to see a fellow JAG in the
20 Governor's seat.

21 Thank you all very much.

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Daniel W. "Danny" Burgess, Jr.
Executive Director

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Nikki Fried
Commissioner of Agriculture

August 26, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Ron DeSantis
Honorable Ashley Moody
Honorable Jimmy Patronis
Honorable Nikki Fried

FROM: Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
Danny Burgess, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame – Class of 2019

The agency is pleased to recommend the following 16 veterans for induction into the 2019 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame:

- John Brinkley, Sgt, USAF
- Edward Copeland III, MAJ, USAR
- Donald Courtney, CW4, USA
- Raymond "Ray" Cralle, PFC, USMCR
- Michael Flynt, COL, USAF (*deceased*)
- Matt Franz, CPT, USA
- Irving Friedman, PO3, USNR
- Ali Frohlich, LT COL, USAF
- Kathryn Gates-Skipper, SSGT, USMC
- Dale Leslie, Capt, USMC (*deceased*)
- Norman Olson, Captain, USN
- Robert Phillips, Capt, USAFR
- Juan Santiago-Seda, SFC, USA
- Michael Waldrop, CPT, USAR
- William Webb, BG, USAF
- Albert Zant, CPT, USAR

If you have any questions, please call my Cabinet and Legislative Affairs Director, Allison Sitte, at (850) 487-1533 ext. 7723.

cc: Beau Beaubien, Director of Cabinet Affairs
Executive Office of the Governor

Cynthia Kelly, Director
Governor's Office of Policy and Budget