

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER TIMELINE

- April 29, 2021. HTC VSO Amber Russell emailed Mayor Chambers asking that her office be allowed to go to appointment only due to a decrease in the number of veterans using her office. She attributed the decrease to the opening of a new VA facility in Gallatin. Before the pandemic, she would physically see 2 veterans or their families in person along with necessary research for active cases during an average week. However, no veteran has visited the office since April 9th. (Pages 1 & 2 of email chain).
- May 3, 2021 at 4:08pm. Mayor Chambers returned VSO Russell's email and granted her request to go to appointment only beginning on Thursday, May 6th.
- May 3, 2021 at 4:19pm. Mayor Chambers sent an email to the entire County Commission announcing that "due to a low number of veterans visiting or contacting" the VSO during April, the office hours would be by appointment only beginning Thursday, May 6th.
- May 6, May 19, 2021. VSO Russell's time sheet show a total of 13 hours, with approximately 3-3.5 hours were spent assisting veterans either in person or via phone.
- May 20-June 2, 2021. VSO Russell's time sheet show a total of 2.15 hours, with approximately 1.5-2 hours were spent assisting veterans either in person or via phone. All hours were during the week of May 20th, no hours were listed for the period of May 27th to June 2nd.
- June 3-16th, 2021. VSO Russell did not turn in a time sheet as she had no time to turn in for those two weeks. (Email dated June 24, 2021).
- June 15, 2021. VSO Russell gave Mayor Chambers her two-week notice, and Mayor Chambers informed her that her last day would be June 28th.
- June 25, 2021. Mayor Chambers met with TN Dept. of Veterans Services Asst. Comm. Travis Murphy. Mr. Murphy suggested that, due to the low number of veterans using the HTC VSO, HTC look at the possibility of entering into an agreement with a surrounding county for VSO services. This arrangement is used by several small counties, including Clay and Jackson Counties.
- June 28, 2021. VSO Russell turned in any County property and left employment with HTC.
- June 17-June 30, 2021. VSO Russell did not turn in a time sheet as she had no time to turn in for those two weeks.
- May 6-June 30, 2021. Out of a total of 16 workdays, using 8 hours per day which was her office hours before May 6th, there was a total of 128 possible work hours. Of the 128 possible work hours, VSO Russell's time sheets total 15.15 hours worked. This is 11.8%.

- August 5, 2021. Mayor Chambers spoke to the VFW and American Legion Post Commanders about the VSO and Ass. Comm. Murphy's suggestion after the ribbon cutting of the Fallen Soldier exhibit to the Trousdale County Fair. Both Commanders asked to be included in discussions.
- August 13, 2021. Mayor Chambers met with Ass. Comm. Murphy and Sumner County VSO Director Rebecca Gallion at his office. This was an introductory meeting and general ideas about an intergovernmental agreement were discussed. It was decided to have further discussions with representatives of the VFW and American Legion.
- August 23, 2021. All parties agreed to meet on September 16th at the VFW Hall.
- September 16, 2021. A meeting to discuss the possibility of a agreement between Sumner County and HTC for VSO services was held with the VFW Post Commander, the American Legion Post Commander and another member, Ass. Comm. Murphy and Sumner VSO Director Gallion. It was agreed that the Sumner County VSO would provide services two days per month in Trousdale County, with one day being reserved for office visits at the Administration Building, and the second day being reserved for outreach activities.
- September 16-October 28, 2021. Sumner County and HTC staff and attorneys draft the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- October 28, 2021. Sumner County Mayor Holt signed the MOU.
- October 29, 2021. Mayor Holt delivers the signed MOU to Mayor Chambers.



Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

VSO position

5 messages

Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>
To: Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Thu, Apr 29, 2021 at 9:43 AM

The volume of veterans coming to the Veteran Affairs office is so low that I wanted to know if the office time could be cut down to one day a week or by appointment only? With the newly built VA facility in Gallatin, TN, the veterans and their families are able to go there for all their needs including doctor's appointments. It has really decreased the amount of people I have seen.

On Fri, Apr 16, 2021, 2:13 PM Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Attached you will find the amended Personnel Policy that we have been working on for some time now. In order to recognize easier, the changes are in red type.

Please review the changes and let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

I am requesting all feedback by Friday, April 30th.

Stephen Chambers

Mayor

Hartsville/Trousdale County Government

328 Broadway

Hartsville, TN 37074

615-374-2461

Stephen.Chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov

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Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>
To: Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Thu, Apr 29, 2021 at 4:56 PM

Can you give me the number of people you were seeing versus how many you are seeing now?

Stephen Chambers

Mayor

Hartsville/Trousdale County Government

328 Broadway

Hartsville, TN 37074

615-374-2461

Stephen.Chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov

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Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Sun, May 2, 2021 at 8:31 PM



Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Veterans Service Office

3 messages

Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Mon, May 3, 2021 at 4:19 PM

To: Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Amy Thomas <Amy.Thomas@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Beverly Atwood <beverly.atwood@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Bill Fergusson <william.fergusson@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Commission <Commission@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Coy Dickey <coy.dickey@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Coy Dickey <coydickey@ymail.com>, David Nollner <david.nollner@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Dwight Jewell <dwight.jewell@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Gary Claridy <garyclaridy@gmail.com>, Gary Walsh <gary.walsh@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Jerry Ford <jerryford1943@gmail.com>, Ken Buckmaster <ken.buckmaster@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Landon Gulley <landon.gulley@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Linda Sue Johnson <lsjohnson@realtracs.com>, Lonnie Taylor <lonnie.taylor@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Mary Ann Baker <maryann.baker@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Rachel Jones <oldjack1231@gmail.com>, Richard Harsh <harshr@realtracs.com>, Shane Burton <shane.burton@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Terry Gregory <terry.gregory@trousdalecountytn.gov>
Cc: Amy Thomas <Amy.Thomas@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Rita Crowder <rita.crowder@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Vickie Howard <vickie.howard@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Good afternoon,

Due to a low number of veterans visiting or contacting the Veterans Service Office during the month of April, the office will be open by appointment only beginning Thursday, May 6th. We will re-evaluate this arrangement on Monday, May 31st and decide how we recommend to proceed.

Thank you.

Stephen Chambers

Mayor

Hartsville/Trousdale County Government

328 Broadway

Hartsville, TN 37074

615-374-2461

Stephen.Chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov

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Rita Crowder <rita.crowder@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Mon, May 3, 2021 at 4:26 PM

To: Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>
Cc: Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Amy Thomas <Amy.Thomas@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Beverly Atwood <beverly.atwood@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Bill Fergusson <william.fergusson@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Commission <Commission@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Coy Dickey <coy.dickey@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Coy Dickey <coydickey@ymail.com>, David Nollner <david.nollner@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Dwight Jewell <dwight.jewell@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Gary Claridy <garyclaridy@gmail.com>, Gary Walsh <gary.walsh@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Jerry Ford <jerryford1943@gmail.com>, Ken Buckmaster <ken.buckmaster@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Landon Gulley <landon.gulley@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Linda Sue Johnson <lsjohnson@realtracs.com>, Lonnie Taylor <lonnie.taylor@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Mary Ann Baker <maryann.baker@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Rachel Jones <oldjack1231@gmail.com>, Richard Harsh <harshr@realtracs.com>, Shane Burton <shane.burton@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Terry Gregory <terry.gregory@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Vickie Howard <vickie.howard@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Thank you for letting us know.

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Dwight Jewell <dwight.jewell@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Mon, May 3, 2021 at 5:52 PM

To: Rita Crowder <rita.crowder@trousdalecountytn.gov>
Cc: Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Amy Thomas <Amy.Thomas@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Beverly Atwood <beverly.atwood@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Bill Fergusson <william.fergusson@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Commission <Commission@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Coy Dickey <coy.dickey@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Coy Dickey <coydickey@ymail.com>,

To: Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

On an average week's time, before the pandemic, I would physically see three veterans or veteran's families, either in my office or a livingroom visit in their home. I would also be involved in either taking a veteran to a doctor's visit or fighting a denial of benefits online, once every other week. Including in one week's time was two to three hours of leg work to obtain correct paperwork to file a fully developed claim.

Lately, the Veteran Office has seen a significant decrease of Veterans. Last week I answered two phone calls for the entire time my office was open. The last time I saw a veteran in my office was april the 9th. This was the veteran I received the subpoena for.

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Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Mon, May 3, 2021 at 4:08 PM

To: Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Cc: Amy Thomas <Amy.Thomas@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Dwight Jewell <dwrightjewell@gmail.com>, Vickie Howard <vickie.howard@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Rene Pridemore <carrie.pridemore@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Good afternoon Mrs. Russell,

Beginning Thursday, May 6th, the office may go to appointments only on Monday and Thursday. You will need to indicate on your time sheet the actual time worked on those days. For example, if you assisted two veterans and it took two hours, but you did no other work related to the VSO, you will write those two hours on your timesheet along with a description such as "Assisted 2 veterans in their homes." I would also like any veterans you assist to sign the attached sign-in sheet. Please turn in the sign-in sheet along with your timesheet. The reason for the sign-in sheet is that the auditors like paperwork backing up unusual work arrangements.

We will re-evaluate the number of veterans using the VSO on Monday, May 31st and determine how to proceed. Please keep track of the number of veterans served, whether these were in office visits or not and the number of phone calls received.

Respectfully,

Stephen Chambers

Mayor

Hartsville/Trousdale County Government

328 Broadway

Hartsville, TN 37074

615-374-2461

Stephen.Chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov

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 **Sign In Sheet.pdf**
15K

Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Mon, May 3, 2021 at 10:02 PM

To: Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

That sounds very fair. Thank you

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David Nollner <david.nollner@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Gary Claridy <garyclaridy@gmail.com>, Gary Walsh <gary.walsh@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Jerry Ford <jerryford1943@gmail.com>, Ken Buckmaster <ken.buckmaster@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Landon Gulley <landon.gulley@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Linda Sue Johnson <lsjohnson@realtracs.com>, Lonnie Taylor <lonnie.taylor@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Mary Ann Baker <maryann.baker@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Rachel Jones <oldjack1231@gmail.com>, Richard Harsh <harshr@realtracs.com>, Shane Burton <shane.burton@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Terry Gregory <terry.gregory@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Vickie Howard <vickie.howard@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Thank you for the information. How this helps.

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--

Dwight A. Jewell

**Hartsville/Trousdale County
Commission Chairman**

7th District Commissioner

328 Broadway

Hartsville, TN 37074

Fax 615-374-0077

Office 615-374-2461

Cell 615-374-9412

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Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

VSO

3 messages

Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>
To: Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Tue, Jun 15, 2021 at 10:19 AM

With my ever-growing family and busy schedules, I no longer have the time to give towards the Veteran Service Office position. I regrettably am turning in my two weeks notice. Please keep in mind when going forward that all counties in Tennessee have a Veteran Service Office, so please keep it open. Also, I was grossly underpaid as even Macon County paid me \$18 an hour when I was their interim VSO. Thank you for the opportunity to serve my fellow veterans.

Amber Russell

Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>
To: Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>
Cc: Amy Thomas <Amy.Thomas@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Vickie Howard <vickie.howard@trousdalecountytn.gov>, Dwight Jewell <dwrightjewell@gmail.com>, Rene Pridemore <Rene.Pridemore@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Tue, Jun 15, 2021 at 11:54 AM

Good morning,

Thank you for giving me notice and serving in this position. Please turn in the keys to the Courthouse and office, your County issued cell phone, laptop and any other equipment you have in your possession by 4:00pm on Monday, June 28th. I wish you and your family my best.

Respectfully,

Stephen Chambers

Mayor
Hartsville/Trousdale County Government
328 Broadway
Hartsville, TN 37074
615-374-2461
Stephen.Chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov

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Amber Russell <VeteranServices@trousdalecountytn.gov>
To: Stephen Chambers <stephen.chambers@trousdalecountytn.gov>

Tue, Jun 15, 2021 at 12:23 PM

Thank you. With this baby that was born being in NICU, my daughter will need more help and it's time I slowed down some of my responsibilities to help her.

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FY20 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF VA EXPENDITURES (GDX)

FY20 Summary of Expenditures by State Expenditures in \$000s

County/ Congressional District	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Construction	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Loan Guaranty#	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	Unique Patients**
TROUSDALE	534	\$ 5,527	\$ 2,788	\$ -	\$ 129	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3	\$ 2,607	204
TENNESSEE (Totals)	456,196	\$ 5,372,977	\$ 2,829,472	\$ 17,277	\$ 264,989	\$ -	\$ 76,508	\$ 24,486	\$ 2,160,246	154,526
CONG. DIST (06)	54,627	\$ 574,318	\$ 309,268	\$ 3	\$ 26,156	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,170	\$ 236,721	18,146
TENNESSEE (Totals)	456,196	\$ 5,372,977	\$ 2,829,472	\$ 17,277	\$ 264,989	\$ -	\$ 76,508	\$ 24,486	\$ 2,160,246	154,526

Notes:
* Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2020, are produced by the VA Predictive Analytics and Actuary Service (VelPop 2018).

Prior to FY 08, "Loan Guaranty" expenditures were included in the Education & Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (E&VRE) programs. Currently, all "Loan Guaranty" expenditures are attributed to Travis County, TX, where all Loan Guaranty payments are processed. VA will continue to improve data collection for future GDX reports to better distribute loan expenditures at the state, county and congressional district levels.

** Unique patients are patients who received treatment at a VA health care facility. Data are provided by the Allocation Resource Center (ARC).

Expenditure data sources: USASpending.gov for Compensation & Pension (C&P) and Education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (E&VRE) Benefits; Veterans Benefits Administration Insurance Center for the Insurance costs; the VA Financial Management System (FMS) for Construction, Medical Research, General Operating Expenses, and certain C&P and Readjustment data; and the Allocation Resource Center (ARC) for Medical Care costs.

1. Expenditures are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. For example, \$500 to \$1,000 are rounded to \$1, \$0 to \$499 are rounded to \$0, and "\$-" = 0 or no expenditures.
2. The Compensation & Pension expenditures include dollars for the following programs: veterans' compensation for service-connected disabilities; dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected deaths; veterans' pension for non-service-connected disabilities; and burial and other benefits to veterans and their survivors.
3. Medical Care expenditures include dollars for medical services, medical administration, facility maintenance, educational support, research support, and other overhead items. Medical Care expenditures do not include dollars for construction or other non-medical support.
4. Medical Care expenditures are allocated to the patient's home location, not the site of care.