



HARFORD COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Meeting Minutes January 4, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Brown at 6:30PM via MS Teams.

Attending: Bob Brown, Hayden Anthony, Lisa Brown, Art Kaff, Dennis Miller, Denise Perry, Jennifer Button, Bill Montgomery, Mike Ray, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Pam Silcox, Colonel Druell, Scott Kearby, and Janice Cassady

Excused: Councilman Andre Johnson (liaison), Robert Appleby

Guests: Chris Buser-VAMHCS, Bart Kennedy-Senator Van Hollen's Office, CSM Drewitt-APG, LTC Philapavage, Simon Ballard.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice-Chairman Anthony. Prayer was led by Deacon Vic Petrosino.

Welcome & Opening Comments:

Chairman Brown – presented the HCCOVA Mission and Vision statements.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Minutes from the November 5th meeting, in advance, were approved. Scott Kearby making the motion and Jennifer Button second.

GUEST SPEAKER: Chris Buser, Chief of Social Work, VA Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS) provided a Homeless Veteran support presentation. He discussed the Point in Time count and methodology, and explained how support is provided. He added that the VAMHCS is beginning distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The 10 November Grab and Go breakfast for Harford County employee Veterans, sponsored by Harford County executive Barry Glassman, was attended by several Commission members. Colonel Druell was the guest speaker.
- Chairman Brown attended the Sgt. Alfred B. Hilton Virtual Memorial celebration on November 7th.
- The second quarterly Maryland Joint Veterans Commission meeting was held virtually on December 17th. The meeting included a presentation by the National Association of Black Veterans (NABVETS). The speaker stated that Denise Perry, HCCOVA Member, is a member of NABVETS. Dana Burl, MD VA Program Director, Outreach and Advocacy Programs, provided an overview of the Military Family Research Institute site (<https://measuringcommunities.org/>). The site contains a wealth of data about Veterans and Military members, broken down by county. Chairman Brown demonstrated the site for the HCCOVA and described how each member could get access.

NEW BUSINESS

- A reminder was made that Veterans can still obtain free flu shots:
https://www.maryland.va.gov/Free_Flu_Shots_for_Veterans.asp
- Pam Silcox reported on the assistance to the County's Point in Time Count through the donations of items. Pam described the actions she is taking and how to donate the items requested. Simon Ballard supplied a "Street Card" that has valuable information for homeless veterans, which will be distributed in the 24 goodie bags Pam is helping to compile. Scott Kearby will be providing the Wawa gift cards.
- Information was presented that DD214 support from the National Archives will be limited to emergency cases only due to COVID-19.
- Legislative Issues. Mr. Kennedy stated that the FY 21 Appropriations Bill was signed. He asked members for any issues he could take forward. Art Kaff asked for continued support for the Post-911 GI Bill. Mr. Kennedy added his email address if anyone had any items members wanted to send to him.
- Programs and Outreach
 - During the past month the HCCOVA received several requests for claims assistance, homeless veteran support, and support to veterans' families. Chairman Brown thanked members for their help, helping veterans.
 - Chairman Brown provided a brief overview of the Susquehanna MOAA Chapter request for HCCOVA help with a School Kids Poster Contest. Information about this project was sent to members before the meeting. During discussion, some members were concerned that this was really a project that should be taken on by the National MOAA office. A motion was made by Lisa Brown to help MOAA after finding out more information. Jennifer Button seconded the motion. The motion passed. Chairman Brown said he would contact the MOAA President for more information.
- Public Events and Recognition.
 - None were presented.

MEMBER UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Hayden Anthony thanked all for the support of the Virtual Veterans Appreciation Wall, especially Cindy Mumby and her office: Harford County Governmental & Community Relations. There were 89 submissions. Responding to a question raised in November, Hayden stated that the HCCOVA meetings will remain virtual for now.
- Jennifer Button thanked Vice Chairman Anthony for his work checking all the entries on the Virtual Veterans Appreciation Wall.
- Denise Perry shared that she was appointed to the Maryland State Veterans Commission.
- Lisa Brown discussed the Wreaths Across America project, stating that Bel Air Memorial Gardens laid approximately 500 wreaths and Havre de Grace had about 700 for their two cemeteries.
- Art Kaff added that he posted pictures on the HCCOVA Facebook page of the wreath laying. He has also posted several pieces of information about jobs. He was contacted by the State Attorney's office to help find legal assistance for a veteran.

- Pam Silcox informed members that veterans can register on the www.VA.Gov site to receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it is available.
- Mike Ray informed the Commission that the 2021 Military Appreciation Luncheon will probably be an unofficial family event at Hopkins Farm in May. More details will be forthcoming.
- Colonel Druell gave an update of Aberdeen Proving Ground events. APG has started the COVID-19 vaccine clinic Phase 1 Tier 1. This was explained on a Facebook live event, and, the Baltimore Sun covered the event. The challenge is providing enough vaccines for all in other categories. Retirees are Phase II, which may be the May-June timeframe. Maryland National Guard will be providing vaccinations for their members. Colonel Druell will be reaching out to the VA to coordinate efforts. If there is anything that the HCCOVA group wants to distribute across APG using the Senior Commander's voice, send it to Colonel Druell and will review and send it out. APG participated in the Wreaths Across America, laying wreaths at cemeteries at APG North and South.
- LTC Philipavage provided information to members on the Selective Service registration and on the AF Academy admission. He is a point of contact for both and distributed his contact information.
- Simon Ballard discussed the County's support to Homeless Veterans and gave point of contact information.

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2021 and will be held via MS Teams.
- Meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the month unless otherwise announced.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:24pm.

Full link to Teams Meeting:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MWY2Y2VhY2QtMzFmNi00MmQ5LThhMjktMjQ2MWQ3OWVjY2Yx%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22756eb95a-68e1-4b7a-9607-685e1277368e%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22c088a1ce-0105-43a7-bfc1-824daeffaf53%22%7d