



# **JAMES V. "CAPT'N JIM" MCMAHAN COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

## **Meeting Minutes from May 5, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Robert Brown at 6:34 PM

**Attending:** Bob Brown, Simon Ballard, Lisa Brown, Scott Kearby, Dennis Miller, Bill Montgomery, Denise Perry, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Ryan Koch (representative for Councilman Johnson)

**Excused:** Hayden Anthony, Jennifer Button, Art Kaff, Mike Ray, Pam Silcox, COL Casiano (APG Garrison Commander)

**Guests:** Melissa Huber (VA Maryland Health Care System), Quentin Johnson (APG PAO)

**Pledge of Allegiance** lead by Robert Brown

**OPENING PRAYER** given by Deacon Vic Petrosino

### **Welcome & Opening Comments:**

Chairman Brown – presented the HCCOVA Mission and Vision statements and welcomed members.

**Mission:** *To advocate for our veterans and their families and connect them to resources through outreach and education.*

**Vision:** *A Harford County community that is responsive to the needs of Veterans and their families.*

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Minutes from the April 7, 2022, meeting were approved. Scott Kearby made the motion to approve, Bill Montgomery seconded the motion. Ryan Koch will post the minutes and agenda to the website.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** None.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Donations for Homeless Project. Community Action Agency (CAA)
  - Pam Silcox is leading this effort
  - CAA currently has enough basic toiletries & other essential items
  - Requested items include McDonald's & similar food gift cards
- Women Veterans Day panel discussion: Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 12pm.
  - Virtual meeting
  - Denise will represent veterans' commission; Bob will send additional information
- APG Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD): Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 9am-12pm
  - Organized & sponsored by APG Retiree Council
  - Location: APG Rec Center

- Local & federal resources and services, VSO's, claims information tables
- Panel Discussion to address retiree/families' questions & address concerns, with specific focus on medical care with Kirk Army Clinic closing
- Commission will have a table with Save the Date flyer for Veterans Resource Fair
- Bob & Lisa will represent veterans' commission at event
- Event will be publicized on Facebook, website & other on-post marketing venues
- Fallen Heroes website tribute project
  - Other counties, including Montgomery & Howard County have setup this project
  - Without volunteer to lead project, we will not pursue at this time; will revisit in future
- Memorial Day Ceremony: Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at Bel Air Shamrock City Park
  - Commission members participate in wreath presentation/placement & distribute Save the Date flyers for Veterans Resource Fair
  - In the past commission members set-up pop-up table with refreshments
  - Dennis and Hayden will represent commission; contacted the POC awaiting reply
  - Ceremony starts at 10am and ends at 12pm
- Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)
  - Located in Havre de Grace
  - Broad range of support to veterans, retirees, reservists, spouses & those transitioning from active-duty members
  - Lots of information & resources, including Susquehanna Work Force
  - Business incubator for small startups
- Veterans Collaborative, April 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Simon presented information:
    - Shelter housing was the main topic
    - Brian Wainwright, tied in with resources will help if tapped
    - Attendance issue, most attending are providers, not veterans
    - HCPL & VSO's will advertise future sessions to expand number of attendees
    - Next one is July 12th

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Legislative Issues
  - VA Maryland State and Federal Update
    - Discussion on upgrading Dory Miller's award to Medal of Honor
      - Denise will speak to committee on updates of legislation
- Legal Updates
  - None
- Programs and Outreach
  - Harford County VSO Congressional Stakeholder Information
    - VA MD Healthcare Baltimore VA parking garage will be under construction
      - Will be closed but shuttles are available from alternative parking area
    - Monthly report
      - Information on 2<sup>nd</sup> booster

- Discussion on back claims and current claims: Baltimore Office: 220 back claims; average wait time = 144 days
  - NCA report, federal cemeteries are open
  - Rideshare for homeless veterans
  - Discussion on free cell phones for homeless veterans
  - June 17<sup>th</sup>, free legal assistance at the University of Baltimore
    - Critical legal issues for veterans: conference & training – NOT a claims clinic
  - Food pantry and clothing closet – Baltimore Annex (M-F 8:30 am – 3 pm)
    - Free shuttle available from Perry Point to Baltimore
- Maryland VA Outreach Toolkits
  - Draft was presented and reviewed
  - will be digitally published with links and handouts
- CVS-Aetna Workforce Training
  - Subsidiary of CVS
  - Looking to expand to Harford County, asking how they can help
    - free job training programs for variety of positions, primary focus of pharmacy technicians
      - spouses, veterans, transitioning military
      - willing to accommodate disable veterans
    - Looking to reach out to the college to promote program
- Veterans Alliance Claims Clinic
  - Not a resource fair, centered around setting up VA claims and registering veterans for VA health care
  - VA needs to have a partner to setup – HCCOVA to serve in that role
  - VSO representatives will be present to assist with claims & work with veteran throughout the claims process
  - Looking at doing in September at the Harford Community College (HCC)
    - College will setup tables and IT support
    - Asking commission to help advertise, to include Cecil County
    - Attendees must pre-register
    - Attendees can use Harford County Link for transportation with stop at HCC – makes it more accessible for veterans in Joppatowne & Edgewood areas.
- VA program money
  - Grant money will be available for organizations that support veterans
  - Melissa will get more information about this program to the commission
- Combat Reboot Trauma recovery program
  - May 16<sup>th</sup>: graduation ceremony
  - Bob will represent commission at ceremony

- Assistance requests received during the past month
  - Several assistance request to include housing, employment, and benefits
- Information for the County Executive and/or County Council
  - Bob provided information on VA report concerning Perry Point and CBOC
- Public Events, Announcements, and Recognition
  - Veterans Resource Fair: Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> from 10am-1pm Bel Air Armory
  - County Memorial Day Events
    - Denise - VFW 6054 Post goes to African American church cemeteries to honor fallen veterans & place flags on graves
    - Chesapeake House Memorial Day Program – Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup> 11am-2pm  
*Remembering Our Women Veterans*
  - Women Veterans/Inclusion Program ([MDVA Women Veterans/Inclusion Program](#)) and survey. Open to all Veterans June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Online.
    - Denise has a flyer on wreath laying
  - Veterans Alliance Resource Event

#### **MEMBER'S UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Councilman Andre Johnson- Committee Liaison/ Commission Coordinator  
Gilchrist Representative has been invited to speak at next month's meeting
- Hayden Anthony (Vice Chair)  
Working on new business cards
- Simon Ballard  
FEMA program for funeral assistance for those died as a result COVID – up to \$6500
- William Montgomery  
Participated in pre-retirement Soldier for Life/TAP program on May 4<sup>th</sup>
- Vic Petrosino (Chaplain)  
April 27<sup>th</sup> was last day for 6 seminarians at Upper Chesapeake Hospital
- Vacant – Harford County Community College Representative  
No one named yet, will contact again

#### **FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Next meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2022. Information will be presented with the agenda on any specific meeting requirements.
- Meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the month unless otherwise announced. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm.