



# **JAMES V. “CAPT’N JIM” MCMAHAN COMMISSION ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**From**

**June 2, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Robert Brown at 6:30 PM.

**Attending:** Bob Brown, Hayden Anthony, Simon Ballard, COL Casiano (APG Garrison Commander), Councilman Johnson, Art Kaff, Dennis Miller, Bill Montgomery, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Jennifer Button, Mike Ray

**Excused:** Lisa Brown, Denise Perry, Scott Kearby, Pam Silcox

**Guests:** Melissa Huber (VAMC CEPC), Quinten (APG PAO), Gilcrest

**Pledge of Allegiance** lead by Robert Brown

**Opening Prayer** lead 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 May 5, 2022, meeting were approved. Hayden Anthony made motion to approve, Bill Montgomery seconded the motion. Ryan Koch will post the minutes and agenda to the website.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** Gilcrest Hospice (Rick Sullivan, Gail Blackburn, Lori Rheubottom, Diane Sancilio, and Wayman Scott) provided information on the services & programs they provide beyond hospice care. This includes Bob Hooper House; children’s programs & hospice; geriatric medicine; in-home primary care; palliative care; counseling & support groups; grief counseling; and navigation support to assist people with understanding the various services available & choosing the one(s) most appropriate for them. They also partner with the VA task force in the We Honor Veterans Program – always honoring veterans through programs & outreach initiatives.

Gilcrest representatives also discussed employment opportunities, as well as a need for volunteers.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- APG Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) Report: Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 9am-12pm
  - Held at the APG Rec Center; organized & sponsored by APG Retiree Council
  - 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
- Col Casiano was the guest speaker
- Bob & Lisa Brown and Art Kaff distributed resource information & *Save the Date* flyers for the Veterans Resource Fair at the veterans commission table
- Memorial Day at Bel Air Shamrock City Park May 30<sup>th</sup> Report
  - Dennis and Hayden presented wreath, county executive was present
  - *Save the Date* flyers for resource fair were handed out
- Monthly state commission meeting
  - MD assistive technologies program
    - Will accept and distribute medical equipment
  - Veterans' readiness and employment
    - Will support veterans as they seek employment
    - Eligibility requirements for program include 10% or more disability rating and rating must be current
  - MD VA
    - Vaccine boosters are available
  - Fisher House at Perry Point
    - Construction has begun but will take several years to complete
    - Other housing is available at Perry Point
  - VA Claims
    - Backlog is going down
  - CRC – Community Resource Center
    - Offers clothes, food, showers, laundry, and counseling
- Trauma Reboot / Combat Reboot
  - Faith-based program for service members to address trauma
  - Looking for a combat veteran to run program
- Aetna and CVS
  - Workforce development program
    - Pharmacy techs, free programs and training
    - Offering training for other entry level jobs

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Legislative Issues
  - House bill to reduce taxes
    - No tax break if income is equal or greater to \$100,000
- Legal Updates
  - None
- Programs and Outreach
  - Project Opportunity
    - Entrepreneurship program
      - In need of sponsors - Bob will provide a list of possible sponsors
- Assistance requests received during the past month
  - Request from 100% disabled veteran, wheelchair bound:
    - Assistance in replacing his deck

- Another request in working with VA but did not hear back:
      - Found a social worker to help with paperwork
- Information for the County Executive and/or County Council
  - None
- Public Events and Recognition
  - July 4<sup>th</sup> Bel Air Parade – Monday, July 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM
    - Theme: *Supporting Educators*
    - Bob will submit the application for veterans commission
    - Anybody can march - headcount needed by June 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Veterans Resource Fair – Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 1 pm
    - Gather requirements for use of facility – Bel Air Armory
    - Committee meeting in early August
  - County Memorial Day Events
  - 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> – virtual meeting
    - Denise is participating - send list of specific questions to ask panel
  - Veterans Alliance Claims Clinic September 7<sup>th</sup>
    - Location: Harford Community College
    - VA, VBA and federal come together for health and claims clinic
    - Turnkey, they setup everything
    - Looking for volunteers to welcome and direct
    - Classes & training will be offered during session

### **MEMBER UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Councilman Andre Johnson- Committee Liaison/ Commission Coordinator
  - Gave gratitude to the commission members for their service to veterans
  - Wants to reenergize discussion for a Veterans Court & is in conversations with Judge Curtain. Discussion among commission members included benefits of program as well as challenges of getting program in place for Harford County. Previous judicial feedback included concerns over cost, resources & lack of demand for this type of program in Harford County.
- Simon Ballard
  - Will distribute information about the next Veterans' Collaborative, scheduled for July 12<sup>th</sup>
    - Next topic will be employment & will include resume writing
    - Working with Department of Labor
- Jennifer Button
  - Attended Chamber of Commerce military appreciated luncheon - held in person
- Arthur Kaff
  - Posted Memorial Day pictures, other events, and job opportunities on Facebook page
- William Montgomery
  - Went to Memorial Day ceremony at Aberdeen - approximately 50 people in attendance; assisted with handing out water & masks
  - Attended quarterly Solider For Life TAP (Transition Assistance Program)
- Dennis Miller
  - Will attend Reveille muster in Baltimore on June 7<sup>th</sup>

- Vic Petrosino (Chaplain)
  - Has had positive interactions with Gilcrest
  - Special unit of chaplains who are veterans at Upper Chesapeake Hospital
  - Met with a South Vietnamese Army veteran, who shared his story and is writing book
  - New set seminarians are scheduled to arrive in September
- Colonel Johnny Casiano –Aberdeen Proving Ground Garrison Commander
  - Quarterly APG Community Exchange last Thursday of this month at Top of the Bay, with plan to livestream to maximize attendance & participation
  - His replacement is about a year away; more information to follow closer to transition date
- Barbra Travers – Harford County Community College Representative
  - New representative to help with veteran education resources
- Melissa Huber (VAMC CEPC)
  - July 16<sup>th</sup>: 988 crisis line goes live, with specific option for veterans
  - 2 grants are available for programs that support veteran mental health initiatives
- Quinten Johnson (APG Garrison PAO)
  - Offered to help with Facebook administration and county web page

**FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Next meeting is scheduled for August 4, 2022 at 6:30 PM. 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 7:52 pm.