



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

Meeting Minutes

From

October 6, 2022

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

Attending: Bob Brown, Hayden Anthony, Simon Ballard, Lisa Brown, Jennifer Button, Art Kaff, Dennis Miller, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Pam Silcox, Ryan Koch (representative for Councilman Johnson), Barbara Travers,

Excused: Scott Kearby, Bill Montgomery, Denise Perry, Mike Ray, Colonel Casiano (APG Garrison Cdr)

Guests: Mary Kay Herrick, Quinten Johnson (APG PAO), Cynthia Cavalieri

Pledge of Allegiance led by Robert Brown

Opening Prayer led 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 September 1, 2022, meeting was approved. Jennifer Button made motion to approve, Pam Silcox seconded the motion. Ryan Koch will post the minutes and agenda to the website.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Mary Kay Herrick: Elkton Vet Center

- Vet Center, community-based outstation.
 - She explained eligibility requirements that have been expanded & now include veteran spouses under some circumstances.
 - Connect veterans to services
 - Includes virtual and in-person services
 - Finds ways to connect to veterans through group activities
 - Counseling services are available
 - Veterans don't have to be enrolled into the system to be seen or use services

Cynthia Cavalieri: Director Federal Executive Board (FEB)

- Focus:
 - Emergency preparedness: employee safety and security

- Workforce and development & support for federal government employment
 - Interagency collaboration & partnerships
- Federal Veterans Employment Initiative
 - Assists transitioning military service members find employment through non-competitive placement in jobs, if qualified

OLD BUSINESS:

- Veterans Resource Fair, November 12, 2022 – Bel Air Armory from 10 am – 1 pm
 - Permits and requests have been submitted
 - Vendor update: 20 confirmed, 4 awaiting
 - Armory schematic sent out for review
 - Lunch: Buffet style, with water, chips, and cookies
 - Mission BBQ - main course & sides; negotiations ongoing for pricing
 - Reached out to VSOs to cover costs of water, chips & cookies
 - Setup time: 0800; vendors arrive: 0900; starts at 1000
 - MOAA Veterans Day essay and poster contest
 - Theme: Sacrifice of military service members, veterans & their families
 - Categories: students in K through 12+ (HCPS. Private, homeschool)
 - Awards presented as part of Resource Fair Opening Ceremony
- Resource Guide and Discount Guide
 - Latest edition of Resource Guide is posted on the Harford County Government website
 - Discount Guide (local businesses that offer discounts to active duty, veterans &/or family members) – follow-up required to approximately 20 contacts that have not responded. Commission members will assist with reaching out to vendors.
- Veterans Claims Clinic, September 7, 2022 - Harford Community College
 - Local, state & federal agencies working together to assist with the claims process, from start to decision
 - Registration filled within 3 days of announcement
 - Over 100 veterans/family members met with counselors/completed process
 - 2nd county in Maryland to host clinic; will schedule another one next year
- Operation Green Light November 7th-13th
 - National Association of Counties initiative
 - County buildings, businesses, and homes to display green lights in support of veterans
 - Working to publicize throughout Harford County. Press Release to follow.
- Veterans Collaborative
 - Most recent collaborative: September 14th with focus on education

NEW BUSINESS

- Legislative Issues
 - PACT Act. New legislation expands presumptive disabilities, VA care, and benefits to Veterans suffering from more than 23 toxic exposure-related conditions. Learn more by visiting [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) or calling [1-800-MyVA411](tel:1-800-MyVA411).
- Legal Updates
 - None
- Programs and Outreach

- VAMHCS VSO Congressional Stakeholder Information. (Email with attachments sent 22 September)
- Several assistance requests received during the past month
- Information for the County Executive and/or County Council
 - Operation Green Light Proclamation – read at Veterans Resource Fair
 - Resource Fair Invitations. Ryan Koch to contact HC Council members; Cindy Mumby: other county representatives & military personnel
- Public Events and Recognition
 - Central Maryland Veterans Collaboratives
 - Housing and Shelter, October 12th
 - Legal Assistance topic, November 9th (Hosted by Harford County)
 - Art Kaff is representative for commission
 - Facebook posting on legal services and concerns
 - Havre de Grace Veterans Day Parade, November 11th, 2:00 pm.

MEMBER UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Councilman Andre Johnson- Committee Liaison/ Commission Coordinator
 - Tax Bill regarding expansion of property tax discount for military retirees over the age of 65, veterans with service-connected disabilities
 - public hearing this Tuesday, October 11th at 6:30 PM, vote scheduled for next week, October 18th
 - estimated an additional 2,600 people could be newly eligible for discount
- Simon Ballard
 - Trauma conference next week
 - Will blanket county with *Ask the Question* card, suicide prevention
 - Prescription drugs take back day Oct 29, 10 am – 2 pm, various locations
- Arthur Kaff
 - Attended Helping Veterans in Crisis event
 - Facebook: Posting about UK Queen Elizabeth’s military service during WWII
- Vic Petrosino (Chaplain)
 - Chaplain team continues to serve patients at Upper Chesapeake & Harford Memorial Hospitals
- Lisa Brown (Secretary)
 - Next school year (2023-24) proposed calendar released in September, early dismissal for Veterans Day
 - Available for public comment until November
- Pam Silcox
 - Army missed yearly recruiting goals by over 20,000 – largest gap since inception of the draft
- Barbara Travers – Harford County Community College Representative
 - Attended Helping Veterans in Crisis event
 - Looking to restart programs at college, including Student Veterans of America
 - Planning a social/pizza event during the week of Veterans Day
 - Will talk to HCC representatives about Operation Green Light display at HCC

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next meeting is scheduled for November 3, 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 8:00 pm.