



**Government Office Building  
9830 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia, MD 21046**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, 07 November 2019**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Members Present:** Mr. Jonathan K. Branch, Ms. Jennifer Anthony, Mr. Michael Blum, Mr. Steven M. Bolen, and Mr. Bob Moore.

**Members Excused:** Mr. J. Greg Jolissaint, Mr. Reginald Avery, Mr. Robert Gillette, and Mr. Robert Lowell.

**Howard County Government Officials in Attendance:** Ms. Lisa Terry (Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families, Ms. Katie DiSalvo-Thronson (Community Education and Engagement Manager, Howard County Library System), Ms. Rohini Gupta (Howard County Library System), and Ms. Kelly Kesler (Director, Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition, Howard County Health Department).

**Special Guest(s):** Ms. Katie DiSalvo-Thronson (Community Education and Engagement Manager, Howard County Library System)

**Others in Attendance:** Mr. Ed A. Hall (Chair, Howard County Joint Military Council), Mr. Lou Schott (American Legion Post 156), Mr. Robert C. M. Pelletier (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars SAMS), Mr. Paul Rivers (Guest), Mr. Tom Glenn (American Legion Post 156), Mr. Keith McGuire (Guest), Mr. Chris Yates (U.S. Navy, retired), and Mr. Joseph S. Griffin (U.S. Army).

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

1900 hrs Mr. Jonathan K. Branch, Co-Chair, Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families (HCCVMF), presiding, opened the meeting.

- I. The Role was called: Five Commission members being in attendance, Mr. Branch declared the Commission was in quorum and brought the meeting to order.



- II. Mr. Branch acknowledged the attendance of key Commission personnel: Ms. Lisa Terry, Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families and Mr. Ed A. Hall, Chair, Howard County Joint Military Council (JMC).

**SPECIAL GUEST(S):**

Mr. Branch acknowledged the attendance of special guest(s): Ms. Katie DiSalvo-Thronson, Manager, Community Education and Engagement, Howard County Library System (HCLS).

Ms. Disalvo-Thronson briefed the Commission on the HCLS Project, "Together We Soar: Community Conversations." The library system offers over 300 courses to community residents in areas such as Designing Effective Websites, Creating a Successful Business Plan, and Small Business Marketing on a Shoestring, etc. HCLS is taking feedback from the community to enhance the workshop, classes, and events that they offer to the public.

Specific to veterans, the HCLS has finished a seven-week writing workshop for veterans as part of their year-long initiative "Veterans' Word: Honor, Remember & Reflect." Part four of this initiative, the Veterans Book Club, will start Sunday, 05 January 2020, and run once a month from 1300 - 1500 hours at the Central Branch Library through May 2020. Next year, the library system will also offer a songwriting workshop for veterans and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) classes for children and adults that military families can participate in. HCLS also offers online streaming content - eBooks, eAudio, and free, on-demand, self-directed educational materials to library cardholders.

Ms. Disalvo-Thronson passed out a feedback sheet for Commissioners and guests to provide feedback on library services. Numerous ideas were provided including offering programs that addressed veterans' mental health, wellness, and family support groups, etc.

Mr. Rivers asked how the library was getting the word out about their veteran's programs. Ms. Disalvo-Thronson replied that they have their marketing channels. Ms. Terry stated that she also includes library events and special activities in the Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families "Resources for Veterans and Military Families, E-Bulletin."

For Ms. Disalvo-Thronson's briefing see Attachment A.

**1. Consideration of the 03 October Meeting Minutes**

- a. Mr. Branch entered the 03 OCT 2019 Commission minutes onto the table and opened the table for discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the



minutes. A motion and second to the motion were made. Mr. Branch called for a vote and the minutes were approved by voice vote. Subsequently, Mr. Branch directed that the 03 OCT 2019 Commission minutes be entered into the official record and it was so done.

## 2. Old Business

- a. Update on Commission Vacancies: Ms. Terry stated there are five Commissioner vacancies. The following Howard County Council Resolutions have been introduced by the Chairperson at the request of the County Executive to fill the vacancies:
  - CR103-2019 A RESOLUTION confirming the reappointment of Michal Blum to the Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families.
  - CR137-2019 A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Kelly Kesler to the Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families.
  - CR138-2019 A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Keith McGuire to the Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families.
  - CR139-2019 A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Paul Rivers to the Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families.
  - CR140-2019 A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Michael Griggs to the Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families.
- b. Update on the Veterans Day Parade: Mr. Hall stated that this year's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Howard County Veterans Day Parade will be the largest in the County's history. Mr. Alton "Andy" Clark (U.S. Army, retired) of Clarks Ace Hardware in Ellicott City will serve as the parade's Grand Marshall. The Commission will march in the parade, which will step-off at 0930 hours from Merriweather Post Pavilion. The rally time to join the formation will be 0845 hours. (THANK YOU, ED, FOR YOUR HARD WORK HELPING TO ORGANIZE THIS EVENT!)
- c. Update on Veterans Day Lakefront Ceremony: Ms. Terry stated that the lakefront ceremony will take place at 1100 hours following the parade near the site of the future Neighborhood Square and Veterans Monument on Lake Kittamaquondi in downtown Columbia. Speakers will include Howard County Executive, Dr. Calvin Ball, III, Grand Marshall, Mr. Andy Clark, and President/CEO, Columbia Association, Mr. Milton Matthews. Ms. Terry also stated that Howard County Executive Dr. Calvin



Ball, III and Maryland State Senator Clarence Lam (D), District 13, will present citations of recognition to the Howard County Veterans Foundation.

- d. Update on HCPSS Veterans Day Presentation Programs: Mr. Moore stated that he, Mr. Jolissaint, Ms. Terry, and Mr. Rivers would participate in a special veteran's day recognition with 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies students at Harpers Choice Middle School on 11 November. They will present a slideshow with a timeline of various conflicts and discuss with the students the meaning of Veterans Day.

Ms. Terry stated that she and Mr.'s Hall and Schott will participate in a special veteran's day recognition at Longfellow Elementary School to honor veterans and active-duty military parents on 11 November.

- e. Update on the 6888<sup>th</sup> Central Postal Director Battalion Letters of Support: Ms. Terry stated that the Chair, HCCVMF, Mr. Jolissaint, signed letters of support on behalf of the Commission and that Howard County Executive, Dr. Calvin Ball, III signed letters of support for the County. The letters were sent to U.S. Representative Ms. Gwen Moore (D - WI 4<sup>th</sup>) sponsoring H.R. 3138 and U.S. Senator Mr. Jerry Moran (R - KS 1<sup>st</sup>) sponsoring S. 633.

### **3. New Business**

- a. Summary of the October meeting of the Veterans Administration Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS) Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) and Congressional Stateholder's (CS) Meeting in Baltimore: See Attachment C.
- b. Veterans Resource Fair: Ms. Terry stated that the fair will be held at the Howard County Community College (HCCC) Galleria on 21 April from 1600 - 1900 hours. It will feature vendors, local and state governments, and non-profits that serve veterans and their families. She is also looking into providing VA disability evaluations in separate break-out rooms. Ms. Terry stated that the theme of the fair will be celebratory to honor our veterans, military, and their families. Ms. Terry is looking for volunteers to help set up and staff the fair.
- c. Howard County Joint Military Council (JMC) Significant Items: Mr. Hall briefed the Commission on the following:
  - 1) There were over 30 veterans that attended the funeral for Mr. Gordon M. MacPhee, former USMC Captain and Vietnam Veteran who passed away in September.



- 2) The JMC will launch a new program, “The Tattered Flag Program” where someone can report a U.S. flag that is in poor condition and get it exchanged for a proper one.
  - 3) VFW Post #7472 will hold a Gala on 10 November. All veterans are welcomed to attend. The Gala will feature Voices of Vets, a non-profit performing group that travels the U.S. providing live music to veteran homes.
- d. Other Veterans Day Activities of Note: Ms. Terry entered the following into the minutes:
- 1) 10 November - Veterans day Parade/Ceremony in downtown Columbia, 9:30 am, parade step-off followed by ceremony on the lakefront.
  - 2) 10 November - Veterans Day Gala at VFW, 5:30p.
  - 3) 10 November - Veterans Day Concert with Columbia Jazz Band, Free Code VET2019.
  - 4) 11 November - Longfellow E.S. Veteran Parent Recognition Breakfast, Col. Lou Schott to speak.
  - 5) 11 November - Vet-in-School Program at Harper’s Choice M.S.
  - 6) 11 November - Support John Way at the Changemaker Challenge Finals. Tickets are free but must register.
  - 7) 11 November - Saluted to Veterans free concert with code. MD Veterans Museum in Flier attached. Your code is VETSFREE13. That code takes \$35 off the ticket price so cost will be zero.
  - 8) 11 November - HoCo Chamber Veterans Day Luncheon; future of downtown Columbia, 11:00 am to 1:30 pm, Ten Oaks Ballroom.
  - 9) Ms. Terry also added that the Howard County Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly will hold a Bond Initiative Hearing on 19 November in the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House, Ellicott City, MD 21043 regarding Ho. Co. 10-20 (Howard County Veterans Monument).



- e. Other: Ms. Terry stated that, per Chairman Jolissaint's request in the October meeting, Ms. Marquita Mitchell, Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC)/Military Corps Career Connect (MC<sup>3</sup>), has provided the Commission with metrics regarding the program's success rate in training and placing service members into jobs. See attachment B.

#### **4. Next Commission Meeting Date(s)**

- a) Mr. Branch announced that the next meeting of the Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families will be held on Thursday, 5 December starting at 1900 hours in the Meeting Room at Mission BBQ (Ellicott City) located at 3410 Plumtree Dr., Ellicott City, MD 21042.

The Meeting Room has been reserved for Commission use from 1830 - 2100 hours. Commissioners, their families, and guests are welcomed to pick up dinner through the restaurant's service line and dine-in during the meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

2015 hrs Mr. Branch called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion and second to the motion were made. Subsequent to the motions for adjournment, Mr. Branch closed the meeting and directed the Commission to stand in adjournment until 05 December 2019.

Minutes were drafted by: Mr. Steven M. Bolen

Jonathan K. Branch  
Co-Chair



**Notes:**

None.

**Attachments:**

- A) Howard County Library System (HCLS), "Together We Soar: Community Conversations" Project Briefing.
- B) AAWDC/MC<sup>3</sup> Program Metrics.
- C) Meeting Notes: 16 October 2019 VAMHCS VSO & CS Stakeholders Meeting.



**ATTACHMENT A**

Howard County Library System (HCLS)  
"Together We Soar: Community Conversations"  
Project Briefing



# Together We Soar: Community Conversations

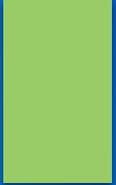
#TogetherWeSoar

[hclibrary.org/together-we-soar](https://hclibrary.org/together-we-soar)

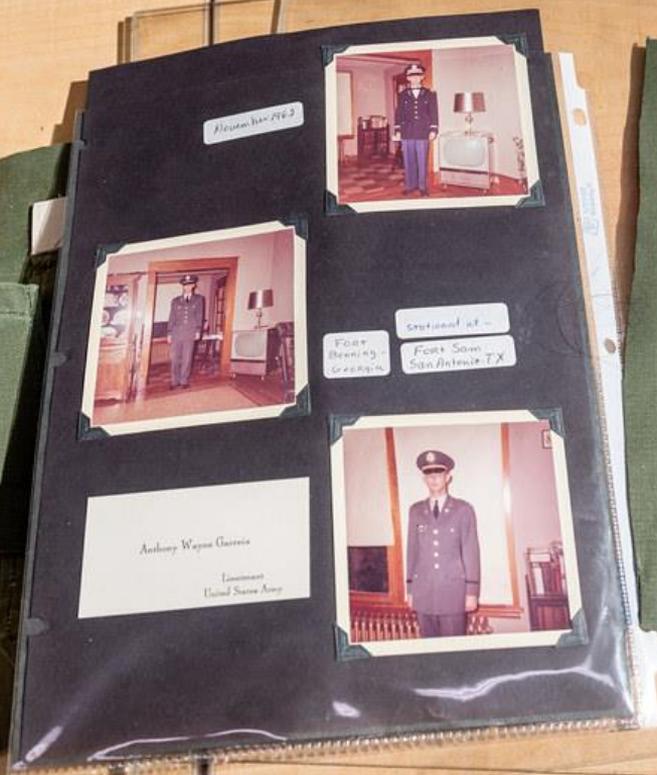












Houston, TX 1962



Port Beering, Georgia

Fort Sam, San Antonio, TX



Anthony Wayne Garris  
Lieutenant  
United States Army



U.S. ARMY









# hclibrary.org/HCLSnow



## STREAM

- Music, Movies, TV, eAudio



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- eMagazines
- eNewspapers



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- Research Tools



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**COURSES**  
GATE

Employment Law Fundamentals

Creating a Successful Business Plan

Designing Effective Websites

GOOD DESIGN IS GOOD BUSINESS

Project Management Fundamentals

Small Business Marketing on a Shoestring

Introduction to SQL

Intermediate QuickBooks 2018

Helping Elderly Parents



En



# WHAT NEXT?

**First step: listening to your  
priorities!**



# Project Overview

- Sept: Longest Table kick-off
- Oct-Dec: Community Conversations (in branches and out)
- Jan: Survey
- June: Name HCLS strategic priorities
- Then: Use community assets (including yours!) to make progress on what's most important



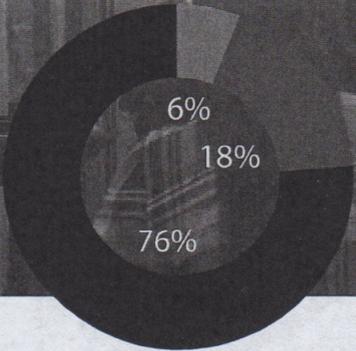
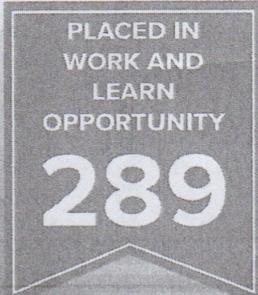


**ATTACHMENT B**

AAWDC/MC<sup>3</sup> Program Metrics

# IMPACT

JAN 2017 - SEPT 2019



- Transitioning Service Members
- Active Duty Military Spouses
- Seperated Veterans

## OVERVIEW OF C3

Military Corps Career Connect, better known as C3, is a Maryland-wide initiative lead by Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation that aims to reduce the unemployment rate of veterans and active duty military spouses in Maryland. C3 takes a demand-driven approach to building career success for transitioning active duty service members, active duty spouses, and recently separated veterans while also connecting Maryland businesses with qualified candidates. Veteran Navigators work one-on-one with candidates to prepare for career transition and connect them to employment opportunities. Veteran Navigators assess military or work experience, skills, and certifications of candidates then supplement those attributes with appropriate training that will match business's needs.

C3 targets services around Maryland's major military installations including Fort George G. Meade, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Joint Base Andrews, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Fort Detrick, and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

## BUILDING SUCCESS

**Russell** was retiring from military service in a year and knew he needed to obtain more skills on job seeking and interviewing along with completing his resume and cover letter. Russell connected with C3, took a course on resume writing, and received one-on-one career coaching from a Veteran Navigator. The Veteran Navigator adapted to Russell's non-traditional field and helped him translate his experience into selling points. Five months before retirement Russell was hired starting at \$10,000 more than he asked for, and in a job that he was excited to transition into.



*“We’ve enjoyed working with Military Corps Career Connect (C3) to train and hire veterans in technical skills that prepare them for various roles across AWS.”*

- Nick Curry, Amazon Web Services

**For more information please contact [veterans@aawdc.org](mailto:veterans@aawdc.org)  
or visit [www.MilitaryC3.org](http://www.MilitaryC3.org)**

MILITARY CORPS CAREER CONNECT IS FUNDED BY A \$4.2 MILLION NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKERS GRANT FROM US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



## ATTACHMENT C

### Veterans Service Organization (VSO) & Congressional Stakeholder (CS) Meeting

VA Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS)  
Baltimore VA Medical Center  
Multipurpose Room, 3A-300  
10 North Greene Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

16 October 2019

**1100 hrs Dr. Adam M. Robison, Director VAMHCS, presiding, brought the meeting to order.**

#### VAMHCS Updates

- 1) Veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Maryland Health Care System can get free flu shots at VA walk-in flu shot clinics. No appointment necessary.

Veterans can also receive a flu shot at a local Walgreens with a VA ID card and another photo ID. Walgreens will automatically update your VA Electronic Health Record to indicate that you received a flu vaccination.

- 2) The VA has reached a significant milestone in curing more than 100,000 Veterans of chronic hepatitis C virus infection (HCV), establishing the VA as a global leader in the diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

In early 2014, highly effective, less toxic, all-oral, direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) became available for HCV treatment. These new drugs have few and less severe side effects and can be given as one pill a day for as little as eight weeks, revolutionizing HCV treatment.

- 3) The VA Baltimore library is closed. An online virtual library will open soon to take its place. The space will be used to make room for the "Empower Veteran's Program."

#### VAMHCS Clinical Updates

- 4) The inpatient psychiatric care unit is undergoing renovation to expand its service to accommodate 24 single-occupancy bed spaces (up from 18 semi-private spaces) and will add a conference room and a "sensory de-stimulation" quiet area. The unit will also



begin to deliver complex, integrated care so that veterans can get both psychiatric treatment and medical care in the same location.

#### Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) Update

- 5) The VA has processed approximately 1.4 million benefits claims year-to-date with about 367 thousand claims still pending. It currently takes about 91.7 days to complete a disability-related claim.

#### National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Update

- 6) The NCA is working with the Federation of Garden Clubs to place Blue Star Family memorial markers at all of the national cemeteries.

The Blue Star Family memorial markers' program is a living tribute to the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces. What began as an idea in 1944 in New Jersey, grew in the 1980s into a flowering tribute in public parks, civic, and historical grounds. In 1996, the Blue Star designation was extended to the hallowed grounds of the VA's National Cemetery Administration.

- 7) The Army is proposing new rules on who can be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. The biggest change proposed under the new criteria is that veterans who retired from active duty and who were eligible for retirement pay would no longer be automatically eligible for in-ground burial. They would, however, be eligible for above-ground "inurnment" of cremated remains.

If no changes are made, the cemetery is on course to run out of space for new interments by the mid 2050s, including for Medal of Honor recipients.

More than 400,000 people are buried in the Cemetery, and only 95,000 burial spaces remain, though a planned expansion will add 37 acres of burial space and more than 10 years of life to the cemetery under the existing rules

#### MyVA

- 8) The Chesapeake Veterans Alliance is planning to hold three benefit claims clinics and resource fairs in late March or early April next year. Dates and locations are TBD.



### Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) Veteran Program Overview

- 9) This year, the LGBT Coordinator participated in 40 outreach and educational briefings to various organizations and participated in the Baltimore Pride Parade. Dr. Robinson reminded us that the LGBT Veteran Program was established to serve all veterans and to help protect the rights of all veterans. The LGBT coordinator position was created in July 2016 to meet the needs of the LGBT veteran's community.

### Inpatient Voter Assistance Program

- 10) The 2020 elections are coming up next year and the VA is working to make sure that all veterans get a chance to participate in our democracy and are able to vote.

In particular, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) will work to make sure that inpatients and residents, particularly hospital inpatients and those residents of VHA Community Living Centers and Domiciliaries with limited access to voter registration and information resources, will be provided with information regarding voter registration, and with assistance in registering to vote and voting. **NOTE:** *Assistance provided by state and local election officials and nonpartisan groups.*

### Care in the Community/Mission Act

- 11) Tricare open season is November 11 to December 9, 2019.

### Homeless & Veteran Court Update

- 12) Anne Arundel County District Court will hold a recognition ceremony for veterans completing the "Veterans Docket" program on November 5 at the District Courthouse in Glen Bernie at 11:00 am.
- 13) Baltimore City District Court will hold a recognition ceremony for veterans completing the "Veterans Treatment Court" program on November 12 at the Eastside District Courthouse at 11:00 am.

Next meeting: 20 November, 1100 hrs, VAMHCS, Baltimore VA Medical Center, Rm. 3A-300.

**1225 hrs Dr. Adam M. Robison adjourned the meeting.**

Notes taken by: Mr. Steven M. Bolen