



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

**Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 2, 2020**

Members Present:

Greg Jolissaint, Chair
Jonathan Branch, Co-Chair
Paul Rivers
Keith McGuire
Bob Moore
Bob Lowell
Mike Blum
Reg Avery

Members Excused: Jen Anthony and Steve Bolen

Unknown Status: Michael Griggs

Howard County Government Officials in Attendance: Lisa Terry, Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families and Cheryl Mattis, Deputy Director, DCRS

Special Guests: Linda Bergofsky, Coordinator, Frederick County's new Veterans Advisory Council

Others in Attendance:

Bob Pelletier, VFW Post 7472
Tom Glenn, American Legion Post 156
John Way, VA Way, Veteran
Liesele Wood, Veteran
Yale Stenzler, Veteran

The monthly meeting of the Howard County Commission on Veterans and Military Families was convened at 7:01pm.

Special Presentation: Linda Bergofsky, Coordinator, Frederick County's Veterans Advisory Council, made a presentation to the HoCo Commission on VMF



- 1) Ms. Bergofsky described the Frederick County Veterans Advisory Council (and its similarities to the HoCo Commission for Veterans and Military Families)
- 2) The Council's priorities include finding county-wide solutions to Veteran homelessness, partnerships and collaborations to ensure Veterans receive timely support services
- 3) Advising the County Council on Veteran issues
- 4) Identifying opportunities for establishing programs and policies designed to enhance Veteran access to benefits in Frederick County
- 5) She also described some of the challenges faced by Frederick County Veterans (e.g. the Martinsburg, WV VA Medical Center is their primary care center for specialty care).
- 6) Howard County Commissioners and meeting guests asked questions and offered suggestions for Ms. Bergofsky

Commission Business Items:

- 1) The November and December Commission Meeting Minutes were both approved without amendments or corrections.
- 2) Old Business.
 - a. Ms. Lisa Terry updated meeting participants on the one remaining commission vacancy. The county is expected to formally recommend a female reservist to the County Council during the February 2020 County Council Meeting.
 - b. There will be a Veterans Day 2019 AAR hosted by the Columbia Association on Thursday January 9th, 3-4:30pm, in the CA HQ Vision Room (Board Room). Mr. Greg Jolissaint, Commission Chair, has requested the CA to invite either the Commission Chair or Co-Chair to participate in this AAR.
 - c. Steve Bolen attended the Maryland legislature Veterans Summit held in Annapolis. A copy of Mr. Bolen's notes from that meeting are attached to these minutes.
- 3) New Business.
 - a. The 2019 Commission Annual Report is being finalized by Lisa Terry and Greg Jolissaint. Commissioners were encouraged to review/validate the report and submit supporting photos for the discussed events.
 - b. An update regarding the 2020 Howard County Veterans Resource Fair was provided by Ms. Lisa Terry. The Fair is scheduled to occur at the Howard County Community College (HCC) Galleria on 21 April from 1600 - 1900 hours (1st



Thursday is April 2nd). Various county, state, and federal agencies have been invited to participate. Entertainment and a keynote speaker are being finalized. Ms. Terry is also identifying food options for the event.

- c. After many months of negotiations with the Reisterstown Vet Center, Ms. Terry was pleased to announce that Vet Center appointments will be available in the HC Offices located on Patuxent Woods in Columbia. The first appointments are scheduled for the afternoons of Jan 3 and Feb 14.
- d. The Loan Closet of Howard County is having a grand opening in its new location on Thursday, January 9, 2020. A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be conducted at 11:30 a.m. with an Open House and Tours occurring from noon to 5:00 p.m. The new location is 7125 Riverwood Drive, Suite D1, in Columbia, MD.

RSVPs are requested for only the ribbon cutting ceremony by January 7 to Mary Becker at 410-313-0363 (voice/relay) or mbecker@howardcountymd.gov

- e. Ms. Terry will be hosting a planning meeting to discuss the potential for a future Veteran Support Group on Jan 14, 9am, in the HoCo Office of Veterans and Military Families. Several Commissioners verbalized their interest in participating.
- f. The HoCo Public School System "State of Schools" Breakfast will occur on January 16, 7:30am-9:30am. Two HoCo VMFM commissioners are planning to RSVP for their attendance via the following link:
<https://brightmindsfoundation.org/event/state-of-the-howard-county-public-schools/>
- g. The HoCo Library System Central Branch will begin hosting a monthly "Veterans Book Group" starting Sunday January 5. The meetings will occur on the first Sunday of the month from 1-3pm. During the January 5, 2020, meeting, selected stories from *O-Dark-Thirty: The Literary Journal of the Veterans Writing Project*, will be discussed.
- h. Although the Chair of the Howard County Joint Military Council (JMC) was not able to attend, he electronically submitted his "significant items" for discussion. The Commission Co-Chair briefly highlighted those items which included the commission's ongoing support for the Veterans Friendly Business Program and the Veterans Parking initiative.



- i. The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is hosting a Joint Veteran Commission Summit on Jan 17 in Crownsville. The HoCo Commission will make a presentation of HoCo Veterans initiatives and programs at this summit (led by the HoCo Commission Co-Chair and Ms. Terry).
 - j. Anne Arundel County is hosting a Veterans Leadership Meeting on 25 January 2020, 10am, at American Legion Post #141, Forest Drive, in Annapolis. Mr. John Way will attend (and will plan to discuss the Mental Health First Aid Program, along with the Narcan opioid rescue program).
- 4) Next Commission Meeting Date(s) - February 6, 2020; March 5, 2020
- 5) The meeting was adjourned at 8pm.

Minutes drafted by Mr. Greg Jolissaint, Commission Chair