

## **Minutes for the Howard County Commission on Veterans and Military Families**

Thursday, 2 May 2019: Patuxent Woods Drive, Room 337  
Columbia, Maryland 21046

ATTENDANCE: (Members) Jonathan K. Branch, Howard Mooney, Robert Lowell, Bob Moore, Michael Blum, Craig Porterfield, Reginald Avery, Lisa Terry. (Guests) - Chris Yates, Bill Barth, Tom Glenn, John Church (AACo), Dan Tootle(AACo) , Yale Stenzler, Lou Reyman , Nathan Jones, Bob Berlett, Vance Blakely (American Legion Post: 156), John Way, Deb Jung (District 4 Council member)

Howard called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Howard recognized the guests who were at the meeting. Deb Jung, District 4 county council member addressed the commission. Steve Bolen also addressed the commission as the newest commission member appointed by the county executive. Guests, Bill Barth and Lou Reyman introduced themselves to the commission. John Church (from Anne Arundel County) and Dan Tootle also addressed the commission.

The minutes from the March 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved. Corrections were that Mike Blum is the new adjutant for American Legion Post 156, not the VFW. Chris Yates name was corrected (Chris instead of Craig), and Yale was in attendance at the March meeting. The motion to approve the minutes was approved by Jonathan, seconded by Bob Lowell. We take our summer break in July and August. Meetings resume on September 6, then October 3.

Howard asked for feedback regarding the Veterans Resource Fair (8 April 19). Most of the feedback was positive. It was concluded that the time would be changed from 4pm to 7pm instead of 8pm and that Howard Community College was a good location for next year as well.

Howard discussed the update on commission vacancies. Howard talked about his feelings regarding how commission members are assigned. In the past, a commission subcommittee would vet the nominee. The latest nominee was appointed by the county executive outside of this process. There are two vacancies to fill on the commission. Three terms are coming to an end. Note: all appointments are made by the county executive.

Craig is working on the Veterans Small Business Certification mentor program.

Memorial Day activities include a flag raising ceremony at the Harriet Tubman School. Deb Jung suggested that we have a Memorial Day Parade. Lisa noted that the Veterans Day Parade committee is planning a possible Memorial Day Parade for next year. There was also a brief discussion about the Veteran Friendly Business Program.

Howard discussed activities involving the Joint Military Council. He stated there was some "heartburn" with that terminology, so it was suggested that the name be changed to the Joint Military Coordinating Committee. The main goal was to coordinate the calendars of the various military committees, and they would be automatically uploaded to Lisa's calendar. Vance also spoke for the JMC.

First planning committee for the Veterans Day Parade was held on April 25. The parade is planned for Sunday, November 10 at 0900. The route is being planned.

Details for Honor Flight Maryland Delaware, scheduled for May 11 were shared.

The flag retirement program was also discussed. Over 1000 flags have been collected. Because of high winds, the last flag remnants were disposed of by the Howard County Fire Department. Also the Veterans Friendly Business initiatives is picking up.

Root Studio is looking for a veteran artist familiar with painting flowers. Mission BBQ is honoring veterans the week of 13- 18 May 2019. Each day is set aside for a branch of service.

There is a final planning meeting for the monument on 16 May at the George Howard Building. Lisa stated that there is a ground breaking planned for June 29. A recommendation to name the neighborhood square, where the monument would be, will be named for WWII veteran Vivian Bailey.

Bob Lowell gave an update regarding the Veterans Court. It was stated that there may not be a great need for a veteran's treatment court in Howard County. There was a discussion.

Howard asked if there was any state legislation pending concerning veterans. The governor's proposal to full military pension exemption was stopped in committee. On the federal level, a proposal to stop the survivor benefit program and a proposal to divorce your military retirement from your disability payments are worth watching.

The commission recognition program is in place and has been approved by the law office. To date awards have been given to Mission Barbecue and Oakland Mills JROTC for their support.

Lisa discussed the program to recognize centennial for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. A discussion followed. The centennial is in 2021.

Lisa stated that veterans who move to Howard County are encouraged to register with the MDVA. They will send them a Welcome Packet.

Nathan reminded the commission that June 27 is National PTSD Awareness Day ([www.PTSD.VA.gov](http://www.PTSD.VA.gov))

John Way stated that he had openings for the Mental Health First Aid Course on May 14 and May 16. Mental Health first aid recognizes signs of PTSD. The course is \$60.00 per person.

John Church talked about activities going on for veterans in Anne Arundel County.

Yale announced that two high school bands have been slated for the parade and two HS JROTC programs.

Deb Jung thanked the commission for the information to attend the meeting. Steve Bolen stated that he hopes that he will be a commission member at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by Howard at 8:30pm

Submitted by Jonathan K. Branch