



**Howard County Department of Community Resources and Service
9830 Patuxent Woods Drive / Columbia, MD 21046**

**MINUTES
07 April 2022**

Meeting Opened: 1915 hours *delayed due to technical difficulties
 Meeting Closed: 2003 hours
 Meeting Location: Hybrid – In-Person and Virtual (WebEx); due to COVID-19 pandemic

MEETING SUMMARY:

J. Greg Jolissaint, Chair, presiding, brought the meeting to order at 1915 hrs.

1. Roll Call of Commission Members to Establish a Quorum

The roll was taken; twelve commission members were present. The Chair declared the Commission was in a quorum.

Commissioner	Present	Excused	Absent
J. Greg Jolissaint (Chair)	✓		
Jonathan Branch (Co-Chair)	✓		
Reginald Avery	✓		
Cherron Blakely	✓		
Michael Blum	✓		
Steven M. Bolen	✓		
Nafrettifi Griffin	✓		
Michael Griggs	✓		
Kelly Kesler	✓		
Robert Lowell	✓		
Keith McGuire	✓		
Paul Rivers	✓		
Jerry Wykoff	✓		

2. Acknowledgement of Howard County Government Officials in Attendance: Lisa Terry (Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families), Jennifer Jones (Deputy Chief of Staff, County Executive).

3. **Special Guest(s):** N/A
4. **Others in Attendance:** Robert Pelletier (A.L. Post 156/VFW Post 7472), and Vikki Garcia (Community Outreach for U.S. Representative John Sarbanes).
5. **Welcome by the Commission Chair: Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence**
 - The Chair led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.
6. **Reminders of Virtual Meeting Etiquette**
 - The Chair stated the meeting rules of etiquette.
7. **Guest Speaker(s):**
8. **Consideration of the March 2022 Meeting Minutes**
 - Commissioner Kesler noted a correction needed to the spelling of her name.
 - Commissioner Branch moved to approve the March meeting minutes without amendments; Commissioner Wykoff seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
9. **Opening Comments by Commission Chair**
 - The Chair thanked those who were able to participate in the HoCo Veterans Collaborative on March 8.
 - The Chair thanked those who were able to recognize National Vietnam Veterans Day on March 29th.
 - The Chair thanked those who supported the Adaptive Hike in Patapsco Valley State Park on March 12th.
10. **Old or Reoccurring Business**
 - a. Veterans Peer Support Group Update (Commissioner Rivers):
 - The group is considering going back to in person meetings within the next two-three months.
 - Commissioner Rivers stated that they are trying get posters with a QR code to post so that people can scan and register right from their phones for the upcoming meetings.
 - For more information and to register for the group: <https://namihowardcounty.org/support-and-education/veteran-support-group/>, <https://namihowardcounty.org/support-and-education/support-groups/>.
 - b. Howard County Veterans Foundation Update (Commissioner Gillett):
 - Lisa Terry shared that an update may be available to be provided next month.
 - c. Honor Cords for Graduating Seniors Enlisting in the Military Post-Graduation (Commissioner Kesler):
 - Commissioner Kesler stated she would follow-up with HCPSS contacts regarding discussion with the Graduation Committee and consideration of giving cords to graduating students enlisting in the military.
 - d. Highlights of March VA Mental Health Care System VSO and Congressional Stakeholder Meeting (Commissioner Bolen):
 - This item was not discussed and will be addressed in May.
 - e. Update on VA Mental Health Council and Potential Members (Commissioner Blakely, Commissioner Rivers):

- Commissioner Blakely has continued to attend meetings.
 - Commissioner Rivers has submitted his information and is waiting to hear back regarding being read in to the Council.
- f. Update on “No Struggle No Success - Recidivism, Entrepreneurship” – Guest Speakers, Mentors, etc. (Commissioner Wykoff/Lisa Terry):
- Commission discussed presentation from March 2022 and agreed that this appeared to be fitting activity and requested that information regarding next steps be provided.
 - Staff will follow-up with County government offices to ascertain if any legislation is required.
- g. Update on HoCo Public Schools Simulated Congressional Hearings (May 6-Jun 9) (Commissioner Avery):
- Commissioner Avery requested that Commissioners consider participating as judges for SCH.
 - Commissioners were encouraged to participate in at least one site if not more and to share the opportunity with colleagues or other community leaders.
 - For more information and to sign up: <http://sch.hcpss.org/>.
- h. Update on Veterans Day Presentations in HCPSS and Identifying which schools will want speakers for in-person events (Commissioner Avery):
- HCPSS schools will be in session on Veterans Day and they are anticipating in-person presentations.
 - Planning will begin after completion of the current academic year.
 - Commissioner Avery will work with HCPSS to determine a list of schools that will want a Veterans Day presentation.
- i. Feedback on Blue Star Families and virtual MHFA March 25th (Lisa Terry):
- No update.
- j. Attendees for HCC Veteran Graduation Thursday May 12 (Commissioner Griggs/Lisa Terry):
- Commissioners have been asked to be present for the Cording event on May 12th and 1000hrs at Howard Community College.
- k. Update on HoCo Veterans Website (Lisa Terry):
- Page is being worked on and draft expected by early May.
- l. Update on Health Improvement Coalition website (Veterans Resource Center – Commissioner Kesler):
- HCLHIC is mocking up a resource area on their site. Feedback will be requested once a draft is available. Mocked up version will be sent to Lisa Terry and feedback requested as project moves forward.
- f. Veterans Day Committee Planning Meeting (Commissioner Jolissaint/Lisa Terry):
- The Committee has started planning for the veteran’s day events.

11. New Business

- a. Budget Reallocation for Blue Star Families Week in October 2022 (Commissioner Jolissaint /Lisa Terry):
- Commissioner Jolissaint shared request from Lisa Terry to reallocate \$400 that had been approved for the spring resource fair to supporting the Blue Star Families Week being held on October 1, 2022 from 1000hrs – 1500hrs.

- Commission concurred and funds will be shifted to support this event. A vote had been held electronically prior to the meeting.
- Jennifer Jones shared that another request has also been placed for an additional \$3K to support the event from the County.

e. Howard County Joint Military Council (JMC):

- Michael Jackson will be transitioning into the role of Chair of the Joint Military Council.
- Bob Pelletier will be taking over the role as Vice Chair of the Joint Military Council.
- Flag Retirement Ceremony will be held on 23 April.
- American Legion is raising support for vetted organizations providing financial support for displaced persons in or refugees from the Ukraine

f. Dates of Significance:

- Saturday May 28th, 1pm, Ellicott City Courthouse Memorial Day Ceremony and Wreath Laying (VFW has the lead)
- Sunday May 29th, Saint John's Episcopal Church, Ellicott City (American Legion has the lead)
- Monday May 30th, 8:30 am, Harriet Tubman High School (Marine Corps League)
- July 4th Clarksville Parade
- August Howard County Fair
- Veterans Day Parade and Lakefront Ceremony

g. Other Business:

- Commission Branded Polo Shirts are being ordered and information was shared.
- Jessica LeFave introduced herself as the Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator for the Baltimore V.A. Her goal is to work closely with communities to support them in developing tailored suicide prevention plans to reduce and end veteran suicide.

12. Next Commission Meeting Dates

- The Commission will meet on 05 May, and 02 June. No Meetings in July or August.

13. Adjournment:

- The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2003 hours.

The Commission stands in adjournment until:
05 May 2022.

Minutes were taken by Kelly L. Kesler.

J. Greg Jolissaint
 Presiding
 Chair, HCCVMF