



Minutes
HCCVMF Commission Meeting held 6 October 2022

Role Call of Commissioners: (P) – Present (Ex) – Excused (V) – Present Virtually
Greg Jolissaint, Chair (P) Michael Griggs (Ex)
Jonathan Branch, Co-Chair (P) Cherron “Lula” Blakely (P)
Jerry Wykoff (P) Terri Taylor (P)
Kelly Kesler (P) Paul Rivers (V)
Mike Blum (P) Reg Avery (P)
Keith McGuire (Ex) Nafrettifi Griffin (V)
Vernon Parks (P)

Howard County Government Officials in Attendance: Lisa Terry (Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families)

Special Guest(s): Wanda Riddle - Howard County Veterans Foundation (P), Bob Gillette (P) - Howard County Veterans Foundation; Emmett Roberts – Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce (V)

Others in Attendance: Bob Pelletier (V); Bob Berlett (P); Vikki Garcia – Congressmen Sarbanes Office (V); Jessica Clark– Representative Sen. Cardin’s Office (V);

1. Quorum and Pledge of Allegiance

- a. The Chair confirmed a quorum was present for the meeting.
- b. The Chair welcomed all attendees, then led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

2. Consideration of the September 2022 Meeting Minutes

- a. Chair asked whether there were any corrections to the September Commission meeting minutes.
- b. September minutes approved.

3. Opening Comments by Commission Chair and Introduction of Special Guests

- a. The Chair thanked those Commissioners who attended recent events.
- b. The Chair introduced Bob Gillette, President of the Howard County Veterans Foundation. Wanda Riddle with the Howard County Veterans Foundation was introduced. An overview was provided of history and status of the of the monument. Additionally, the forthcoming capital campaign was discussed.
- c. The Chair introduced Emmett Roberts with the Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce who discussed the goals of the Chamber to bring Veteran business owners

together to ensure supports for success; provide training programs for Veteran business owners. Mr. Roberts discussed a March 2023 summit planned for Veteran Businesses with more information to come.

- d. The Chair acknowledged legislative representatives and the newest member of the Commission.

4. Reoccurring Business

- a. Veterans Peer Support Group and VA Mental Health Council updates will be provided at the November meeting.
- b. Update on Veterans Day Presentations in HCPSS was provided by Commissioner Avery. Volunteers will be needed to present on November 9, 11 and 14. Additional information will be distributed. All Commissioners are asked to participate.
- c. Update on HoCo Fallen Heroes Tribute page. <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/fallen-heroes>.

The Chair thanked Commissioners Taylor, Avery and Kesler along with Mr. Berlett for convening a work group to discuss the website. Commissioner Kesler shared that she has stepped off the work group following the first meeting. Commissioners Taylor and Avery presented recommendations made for working with the County to change the user searchability interface on the existing site and for proposed criteria for inclusion on the site. The Chair requested that Commissioners Taylor, Avery and Mr. Berlett continue their discussion to determine proposed searchable categories for the site and to revise recommended wording of the website based upon proposed language provided by Lisa Terry in August 2022.

The chair called for a vote on the acceptance of the following recommendations for inclusion on the website as provided:

- Must be other than a dishonorable discharge
- Individual must die while in the performance of their duties
- Individuals who die later from wounds incurred during the performance of their duties
- Veterans who were POW/MIA and never returned home if they ultimately received an Honorable discharge after they were declared to be deceased.
- Individuals who die as a result of exposure:
 - Radiation exposure if they were part of the military's nuclear testing program
 - Agent Orange exposures in or near Vietnam, Korea, Laos, Cambodia, etc.
 - Particulate matter exposures (i.e. Burn Pits)
 - Vaccinations/immunizations for various diseases and chemoprophylaxis drugs for things like potential nerve agent exposure and malaria

Commissioners unanimously accepted the above recommendations. Commissioner Griffin was not available for vote called and Chair indicated he would follow-up with her.

- d. Update on Veterans Treatment Court Initiative will be provided at the November meeting.
- e. Honor Cord Update for enlisting graduates will be readdressed in the 2022-2023 Academic Year.
- f. Local Health Improvement Coalition agreed to add a Veteran's Resources on www.hclhic.org website.

5. New Business

- a. Veterans Day Parade and Lakefront Ceremony Sunday November 13.
 - Nomination deadline was September 23rd for Parade Grand Marshall. Grand Marshall Theme: Honor Through Service; four nominations were received.
 - American Legion will reconsider establishing a HCPSS Veterans Day Poster and Essay/Speech Contest prior to the 2023 Parade and will not implement for the 2022 events.
 - Yard Signs and promotional cards advertising parade and events were made available for Commission members to disseminate.
- b. Chair discussed request for support of VSO efforts to implement a visitation program to various senior living facilities. Commission indicated support for the concept and further information will follow.
- c. Recommendations are being solicited to fill HCCVMF Veteran Commissioner Avery's impending vacancy. The current commissioner is allowed, by statute, to continue serving until a new Commissioner has been approved by the County Council.
- d. Howard County Joint Military Council Items of Interest
 - 1) Quarterly Flag Retirement Ceremony will be conducted on Saturday October 22nd at 11am, St. John's Episcopal Church, Ellicott City.
 - 2) VFW Bull Roast October 29th, Ellicott City VFW Post, \$50 per person.
 - 3) Veterans Day Parade and Lakefront Ceremony. Sunday November 13. Commissioners are asked to block their calendars for participation.
 - 4) Marine Corps Gala – TBD – joint Veterans Day event in Sykesville has been proposed
 - 5) Supporting Wreathes Across America in HoCo -Terri Taylor will be collecting money for wreathes
 - 6) BWI Honor Flights – May 2023. VFW 7472 has put in a proposal to host the Honor Flights bus for the DMV.
 - 7) Home for Troops Welcome Kickoff for Brandon and Nettie Huff – Sat, Oct 8 at 9:30am at Lisbon Elem. Veterans are asked to attend.
 - 8) Operation Green Light Initiative was explained by Lisa Terry and has asked the County Admin to support it.

e. **Additional Dates of Significance:** The Chair reminded meeting attendees of the following dates and their military significance:

1. US Navy Birthday, October 13, 1775
2. US Marine Corps Birthday, November 10, 1775
3. Veterans Day, November 11, 2022
4. Veterans and Military Families Month (November)

6. Next Commission Meeting Dates

- Next meetings: 3 November; 1 December
- The Chair encouraged in-person meeting participation.

7. Having no further business to conduct, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:55pm.