



Minutes
HCCVMF Commission Meeting held 5 January 2023

Role Call of Commissioners: (P) – Present (XX) – Excused (V) – Present Virtually

Greg Jolissaint, Chair (P)	Michael Griggs (XX)
Jonathan Branch, Co-Chair (P)	Cherron “Lula” Blakely (P)
Jerry Wykoff (P)	Terri Taylor (P)
Kelly Kesler (P)	Paul Rivers (P)
Mike Blum (V)	Reg Avery (P)
Keith McGuire (V)	Nafrettifi Griffin (XX)
Vernon Parks (V)	

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

Special Guest(s): Wanda Riddle – Honor Flight Network (P),

Others in Attendance: Bob Pelletier (V); Bob Berlett (P); Vikki Garcia – Congressmen Sarbanes Office (P); Jason Marshall – Serving Together (V); John Sheldon – VSO (V); Robert Whitney – Soldiers for Life Program (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 November 2022 Meeting Minutes will be given in February 2023.

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

- a. The Chair thanked those Commissioners who attended recent events including the November Veterans Day events and Commission holiday event.

4. Reoccurring Business

- a. Veterans Peer Support Group update was provided by Commissioner Rivers and discussion around participation was held.
- b. VA Mental Health Council meeting held on 01/04/2023. Commissioner Rivers provided an update. Community Outreach programs to be held over the coming months were discussed.
- c. Update on Veterans Day Presentations in HCPSS was provided by Commissioner Avery. Eight volunteers from the Commission participated in events in 12 different schools throughout the county. All requests for speakers were met. Commissioner



Blakely shared her attendance in the University of Maryland Global Campus Veterans Day event.

- d. Update on HoCo Fallen Heroes Tribute page <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/fallen-heroes> was provided. An update to changes made to the user searchability interface on the existing site was provided by Lisa Terry in response to the November 2022 discussion in the Commission meeting and progress with working through the County to update.
- e. Update on Veterans Treatment Court Initiative provided. Lisa Terry shared that she has spoken with Lonnie Robbins with the County to gather data around how many veterans are being processed through the system. It is speculated that if employed in Howard County the program may have different needs and be implemented differently. Commissioner Wykoff shared his experience as a mentor in Baltimore County.
- f. Honor Cord Update for enlisting graduates will be readdressed in the 2022-2023 Academic Year. Commissioner Avery spoke with Dr. Martirano and further discussions will be held regarding clarification over purpose of the cords.
- g. Simulated Congressional Hearings will be held in HCPSS Elementary Schools between March – May 2023. Commissioners are asked to volunteer and participation is strongly encouraged.
- h. Local Health Improvement Coalition has added Veteran's Resources on www.hclhic.org website. Jessica LaFave from the VA will be presenting at the January HCLHIC meeting. Lisa Terry sent out information to Commissioners on 01/04/2023.
- i. 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.

5. New Business

- a. Wanda Riddle, on behalf of the Howard County Veterans Foundation, presented the Commission with a recognition for its continued support of the Veterans in Howard County and the Veterans Day events held in November 2022.
- b. Commissioner Taylor shared Wreaths Across America outcomes and lessons learned. 670 Wreaths were laid at 29/30 cemeteries across the County in December 2022. Estimated cost is \$10,500 annually at that pace. Sponsorship for future as being considered. Lisa Terry requested information that can be shared broadly. Chair Jolissaint suggested this be revisited after July.
- c. Howard County Joint Military Council Items of Interest – No new items currently.



- d. Consolidated list of organizations such as Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park's adaptive programs, were discussed.
- e. Summaries and photos for the Commission's Annual Report were requested from Commissioners.
- f. Jason Marshall with Serving Together introduced himself and provided a brief overview of the resources that they provide to Veterans and military families.
- g. Robert Whitney with the Soldiers for Life Program introduced himself as the Health and Wellness staff person.
- h. Additional Dates of Significance: The Chair reminded meeting attendees of the following dates and their military significance:
 - 1) January 17, 1991 Operation Desert Storm Air Campaign began. The Air Campaign continued through February 23rd until the 100 – hr Ground Campaign began on the February 24th, 1991.
 - 2) VFW Flag Retirement Ceremony January 28th
 - 3) February 4 Veterans Resource and Expungement Fair – hosted by Columbia Community Cares

6. Next Commission Meeting Dates

- Next meeting: 2 February; March 2

7. Having no further business to conduct, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.