



Minutes
HCCVMF Commission Meeting held 3 November 2022

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

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

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 (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 October 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

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

- a. The Chair thanked those Commissioners who attended recent events including the *Quarterly Flag Retirement Ceremony conducted on Saturday October 22nd at 11am, St. John’s Episcopal Church, Ellicott City.

4. Reoccurring Business

- a. Veterans Peer Support Group update was provided by Commissioner Rivers and discussion around participation was held. Commissioner Blum suggested consideration of possible evaluation to gain feedback from participants. Commissioner Rivers said he would discuss with group facilitators.
- b. VA Mental Health Council meeting held on 11/2/2022. Commissioner Rivers was unable to attend due to service as an early voting representative.



- c. Update on Veterans Day Presentations in HCPSS was provided by Commissioner Avery. Volunteer needs were discussed. Additional volunteers are needed. All Commissioners are asked to participate. Opportunity is also available for VFW members and other veterans as well.
- d. Update on HoCo Fallen Heroes Tribute page <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/fallen-heroes> was provided. Commissioner Taylor shared that the group is working to discuss recommendations for working with the County to change the user searchability interface on the existing site and for proposed criteria for inclusion on the site. An update is requested for January 2023.
- e. Update on Veterans Treatment Court Initiative provided. Jennifer Jones shared that veteran status was added to the tracking process for offenders to gather data around how many veterans are being processed through the system.
- f. Honor Cord Update for enlisting graduates will be readdressed in the 2022-2023 Academic Year. An update is requested for January 2023.
- g. Simulated Congressional Hearings will be readdressed after January 2023.
- h. Local Health Improvement Coalition agreed to add a Veteran's Resources on www.hclhic.org website. Lisa Terry provided resources to the Coalition to be added.
- 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. Election Day 2022, November 8th (all day). Early voting through Nov. 3.
- b. Veterans Day Celebration being held by VFW at Sunrise Assisted Living in Columbia, November 8th, 2pm.
- c. Howard Community College Veterans Day Celebration November 10th (Michael Griggs, CJ Parks, Jerry Wycoff, Greg Jolissain, and Paul Rivers will attend). Veterans Lounge and Food Pantry collection being held.
- d. Veterans Day Parade and Lakefront Ceremony Sunday November 13.
 - Topaz Nazaro was selected as the Parade Grand Marshall. Grand Marshall Theme: Honor Through Service; four nominations were received.
 - Yard Signs and promotional cards advertising parade and events were made available for Commission members to disseminate.



- Veterans Day Parade and Lakefront Ceremony. Sunday November 13. Commissioners are asked to block their calendars for participation.
- Commission decided not to have a “vendor” table at the end of the parade route.

e. Howard County Joint Military Council Items of Interest

- 1) American Legion Post 156 hosting a joint Marine Corps Gala/Veterans Day event – Friday November 11th at 17:30 hrs in Sykesville at the Sykesville Station Restaurant. \$40 per person.
 - 2) Supporting Wreathes Across America in HoCo -Terri Taylor will be collecting money for wreaths through Civil Air Patrol; VFW also participating in the program and may want volunteers.
 - 3) BWI Honor Flights – Wanda Riddle shared information about the program goals. Information regarding the calendar tracking and volunteer registration, parking and gate access process was reviewed. Lisa Terry has been added to the regular communication of the monthly schedules that will be provided by Randy Bohn (pinnochle@aol.com). The Honor Flight Maryland Bus tour was also discussed and another one is being planned for local veterans. Additional information to be provided. Volunteers to support events and/or to volunteer to be a guardian can be found at www.veteransflight.com.
- f. Disabled Veteran License plate letter of support will be provided requested to support change in eligibility from 100% to 50% rating to be eligible for disabled parking.
- g. Operation Green Light will be done this November in support of Veteran Resources Awareness.
- h. Additional Dates of Significance: The Chair reminded meeting attendees of the following dates and their military significance:
- 1) US Marine Corps Birthday, November 10, 1775
 - 2) Veterans Day, November 11, 2022
 - 3) Veterans and Military Families Month (November)
 - 4) Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941
 - 5) National Guard Birthday, December 13, 1636
 - 6) National Wreathes Across America Day, December 17th
 - 7) VFW Flag Retirement Ceremony January 28th

6. Next Commission Meeting Dates

- Next meeting: 1 December; 5 January
- The Chair encouraged in-person meeting participation.

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