



Minutes

HCCVMF Commission Meeting held 2 February 2023

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

Others in Attendance: Bob Pelletier (V); Bob Berlett (P); George Delaney (P); Danielle Bracco, Mike Eastman and Jon Miller - ETS Sponsorship (V); Yolanda Rayford (V); Robert Whitney; Jeff Bonner and Charles Jay - Baltimore County Veterans Commission (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 Minutes

November 2022 and January 2023 minutes were approved individually.

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

The Chair thanked those Commissioners who attended recent events including the Quarterly VSO flag retirement ceremony in which over 700 flags were retired.

4. Recurring Business

- a. There were no new Veterans Peer Support Group updates.
- b. VA Mental Health Council meeting held on 01/04/2023. Commissioner Rivers will provide an update when minutes from the meeting are received. Chairman Jolissaint expressed interest in hearing any new information presented about Veterans with TBI, especially when TBI coexists with PTSD, as it is presented to the Council.
- c. 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 and landing page has been completed.

- d. No new updates on the Veterans Treatment Court Initiative were provided.
- e. Honor Cord Update for enlisting graduates will continue to be readdressed in the 2022-2023 Academic Year. Commissioner Avery spoke with Dr. Martirano and further discussions will be held regarding clarification over the purpose of the cords, how the cords will be funded if they are approved, and the eligibility criteria for students receiving the cords.
- f. Simulated Congressional Hearings will be held in HCPSS Elementary Schools between March – May 2023. Commissioners are asked to volunteer and participation is strongly encouraged. Commissioner Avery will be sending additional information.

Commissioners are invited to participate in additional volunteer activities in partnership with the schools (Frontiers in History; Mock Interviews)

- g. 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. Following a review of an Annual Report Draft by Commissioners, and the submission of photos for the report to Lisa, a Commission Final Draft Annual Report was submitted by Lisa.
- b. Howard County Joint Military Council Items of Interest
 - 1) Mr. Pelletier thanked the Commission for support of the Flag Retirement ceremony held for the past quarter.
 - 2) The next VSO Flag Retirement Ceremony will be Saturday April 22nd
- c. General (ret.) Mike Eastman and Danielle Bracco presented information regarding ETS Sponsorship.
- d. George Delany was planning to present detailed information regarding AL Post 300, but due to time constraints, the Chair asked him to postpone the presentation until the March Commission Meeting (the Chair will make this presentation an Agenda item).
- e. New Business from Commissioners:
 - 737 total US flags were retired in the Fire Department incinerator.



- Michael Griggs will provide the Commission the date for the HCC Veteran Graduation Ceremony
- Paul Rivers attended the Unclaimed Veteran burial last Friday. It was a short but respectful ceremony
- Honor Flight information will be coming out soon
- Terri Taylor shared that Flags will be placed on Veterans headstones May 26th for Memorial Day

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

- 1) National Salute to Veteran Patients Week February 13-17
- 2) March is Brain Injury Awareness Month
- 3) March 6 is the Anniversary of the Star-Spangled Banner

6. Next Commission Meeting Dates

- Next meetings: March 2, April 6

7. Having no further business to conduct, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:05pm.