



# **HARFORD COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

## **Meeting Minutes From September 2, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Robert Brown at 6:00PM via MS Teams.

**Attending:** Bob Brown, Art Kaff, Jennifer Button, Bill Montgomery, Pam Silcox, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Denise Perry, Scott Kearby, and Dennis Miller.

**Excused:** Mike Ray, Councilman Johnson, Robert Appleby, and Lisa Brown

**Guests:** Maryland Senator Cassilly and Angela O'Connor (DAR)

**Pledge of Allegiance** given by Robert Brown

**Opening Prayer** given by Deacon Vic Petrosino

### **Welcome & Opening Comments:**

Chairman Brown – presented the HCCOVA Mission and Vision statements and welcomed members and guests.

Maryland Senator Cassilly provided remarks regarding GWOT veterans and remarking that these times can be particularly tough on some; we need to be more cognizant of depression and other mental health issues. He added that doing buddy checks is important during these times.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Minutes from the August 5, 2021, meeting were approved. William Montgomery made the motion to approve and Scott Kearby second. Ryan Koch added that he has been able to post the minutes and agendas to the website.

### **GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Angela O'Connor, Regent for the Governor William Paca Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) spoke on the Wreaths Across America project. There will be an exhibit for Wreaths Across America in the parking lot in front of Macy's at the Harford Mall. This exhibit will be on Wednesday, November 10 from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. It's free and open to all. DAR may share some information about veteran organizations but are very limited in what they are allowed to do. The Veterans Commission will not be able to set up an information table as original thought. Ms. O'Connor will be contacting Chairperson Brown in the future to discuss how the Veterans Commission can help.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- MOAA Community Project Update. Jennifer Button reported that they have finalized all the internal documents. MOAA is working to get all the information up on their website. The working group will be meeting next week to confirm the panels of judges. They will be promoting the contest once the kids have gotten back into school. Winners will be announced at the November Veterans Resource Fair.
- Jennifer Button reported that there are 45 local businesses that have asked to be included in the Discount Guide. They may be offering discounts for either veterans, active duty, or family members. Jenn is working on standardizing the information and verifying that all the website information is correct. She is working with Cindy Mumby's office to determine how the document will be published and made available, as well as distribution.
- REBOOT Combat Recovery Program. Report and update postponed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Legislative Issues. None.
- Legal Issues. None.
- Programs and Outreach
  - Hayden Anthony reported that Cindy Smith, VSO, contacted him. Cindy is a former member of the Commission and a fellow veteran as well as a VSO. October 3rd at the Abington VFW Post she will be presenting a workshop on survivor benefits. Hayden distributed a flyer, and it was posted on Facebook.
- Information for the County Executive and/or County Council. None.
- Assistance Requests.
  - A request was received to donate used medical equipment. Jennifer Button is looking into any of her contacts.
- Public Events and Recognition.
  - Bill Montgomery stated that APG is planning on the Retiree Appreciation Day in May 2022, but that it is dependent on the COVID status.
  - There is a "Spirit of Thanks" event at Hopkins Brewery on October 5<sup>th</sup>. The purpose is to bring together military women and men with community leaders.
  - Pam Silcox reported on the status of the November 13<sup>th</sup> Veterans Resource Fair planning. The Resource Fair is currently scheduled in person from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Bel Air Armory. There is a working group meeting tonight with Cindy Mumby to discuss the way forward. The Commission members were reminded that in the past there were multiple door prizes, but that may change this year due to COVID restrictions.
  - The Veterans Virtual Wall of Honor will be used again this year. The same form will be used for submissions.
  - There will be a virtual Maryland Veterans Collaborative event Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 -2:30 pm. This is an opportunity for veterans and family members to hear a panel of experts talk briefly about Veteran Mental Health issues, and then the panel is available for audience questions and discussion. A flyer will be distributed. This is co-sponsored by Harford County Community Affairs, Serving Together, and the Veterans Commission.

## **MEMBER UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Ryan Koch (for Councilman Johnson). The Aberdeen train station will be adding 80 accessible parking spaces. This is good news for all, including disabled veterans who may need to travel to Baltimore or DC.
- Art Kaff mentioned that he posted several items on Facebook with resources to help veterans during these trying times.
- Bill Montgomery was thanked for his continued support setting up the Teams meeting.
- Denise Perry reported that the Women's Military Service of America is having a 911 relay to honor six women from Maryland, and two of them are from Harford County, Amy Dirksen and Jennifer Parcel.
- Deacon Vic said they are going to have two more seminarians at Upper Chesapeake hospital, and they will be seeing veterans

**Meeting in Person.** The Commission discussed meeting in person for the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Hayden Anthony said it is our decision whether to meet or not. The commission then voted to begin meeting in person again beginning October 7<sup>th</sup>. Bill Montgomery said he would check with Hayden to see if there could be some sort of hybrid arrangement. The meeting will be open to the public, and all COVID regulations will be followed.

## **FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Next meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2021. Information will be presented with the agenda on any specific meeting requirements.
- Meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the month unless otherwise announced.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:11pm.