

# Calvert County Veterans Affairs Commission

## Minutes

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

**Present:** **Matthew Blackwelder**, District 1 Rep; **Patricia McCoy**, American Legion Post 206 Rep; **Wilson Parran**, American Legion Post 220 Rep; **Michael Richardson**, American Legion Post 274 Rep; **Robert Sprecher**, American Legion Post 85 Rep; **Michael Sweeney**, District 2 Rep; **Dr. Brandon Temple**, Educator/Educational Admin Rep; **Michael Wood**, District 3 Rep.

**VIA TEAMS:** **Melanie Woodson**, BOCC Rep.

**Excused:** **Jeff King**, Local Business Owner/Operator; District 1 Rep.

**CCG Liaison:** Lorraine Joyner, CCG Liaison; Lisa Tolomei, Community Resources Specialist.

Michael Wood called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

### 1. REGULAR BUSINESS

**A. Determination of a Quorum:** We have a quorum.

**B. Approval of Agenda:** **McCoy** motioned, **Sweeney** seconded to approve January Agenda as submitted, all in favor.

**C. Approval of December meeting minutes:** **Parran** motioned, **Temple** seconded to approve December meeting minutes as corrected, all in favor.

#### **D. Strategic Goals**

- a. Need to look at 1, 3, 5-year plans, keeping in mind WIIFM (What's In It For Me)? How do we advertise that the VAC exists?
- b. We need to develop a communications strategy. Mike Wood, in researching a veteran-related topic, observed that there wasn't much information provided from the Calvert County level? Is there someone on a county level that can manage a web presence? Current county pages (under Volunteer Boards and our page). CCG Liaison and CRS can help with this.
- c. Mike Richardson, while working at the ARC during snow event, noticed communication was lacking. If your power is out, you can't check the news. He researched opt-in text messages applications with the option to specify the number of texts you want to receive. Would the county play a part in that? CCG staff will research if this can be done through the CCG website "Notify Me—Subscribe to stay informed" feature?
- d. Can we do a drop-in calendar on the CCG website specifically for Veterans events? What other plugins are possible? Pat reported that their Legion has set up a calendar.
- e. Rotating slide show on Channel 6 and Facebook. Can we add a slide either a general announcement or something specific to the survey? Example first slide: "Hey did you know that Calvert County has a VAC? Email us at... Take our survey."
- f. Boosted FB ad for the survey.
- g. Request/send out CCG Social Media policy and develop a Social Media strategy.

- What are the limits on what we can and cannot put on Facebook?
- Can we get a report on the demographics of who subscribes?
- b. If we want to print out 1000 copies of a brochure, who needs to approve, who designs, who prints, who pays for it?
- c. CR Department head will talk to County Administrator about establishing a budget.

**E. Secretary Owings –Update from Wilson Parran**

- a. See attached summary.
- b. Members noted that there is a significant backlog.
- c. Carroll County Alternative – Invite Phil Munley and someone involved directly with Carroll County program to participate at the March meeting.

**Sweeney** motioned, **McCoy** seconded to invite Carroll County reps to March meeting. Decision about whether it's via TEAMS or in person tbd.

- If this is a route we want to take, we have homework we need to do. Can we borrow their presentations? Wilson will ask Carroll County if they will share their presentation materials.
- Wilson stated that he believes the Commissioners will see the value of supporting veteran-related efforts.

**F. Tactical Activities**

- a. **Business Cards** – were distributed
- b. **Social Media Activities** (See above)
- c. **Veterans Email** – has been established. Lisa and Lorraine both have access to the inbox.
- d. **Veterans Survey** – Launch tomorrow, close date March 31<sup>st</sup>. Ask for extension if needed.

Take the next week and a half to develop a standard post. The Calvert County Veterans Affairs Commission wants to know:

- Members/CCG Staff will post on personal Facebook pages
- Promote through all means possible?
- Ask Commissioner Gadway to mention it during his Commissioner report

**e. Holiday Observances**

- Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> Vietnam's Vet Recognition Day – County has never done anything with this. Perhaps a proclamation?
- Memorial Day – 4 American Legion posts always collaborate on a ceremony at the Court House.

**G. Information Sharing**

- a. Maryland Department of Labor rep, George Hawley, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program/Local Vets Employment Representative, is at the Calvert Library on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month, from 10 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Pat distributed a flyer. Brandon will email George to ask for details and perhaps get a one-pager on what services are offered. Can he possibly do evening hours?
- b. Melwood has veteran's program with a 108 acre camp that offers horseback riding, and many other amenities. Might be a good location for a special event. Mike Wood has a contact in Annapolis.
- c. Parks & Rec Job Fair, to promote openings within their Department. February 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 to 2:00. Can we have Veteran participation? Need to reach veterans to tell them about it. Lisa will work with Mike Richardson to facilitate veteran involvement.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m., all in favor. **Temple** motioned and **McCoy** seconded.

The next meeting is Wednesday, February 9, 2022.

Adopted on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of February 2022 – minutes transcribed by Lorraine Joyner

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: February 9, 2022.

**Discussion with Secretary George Owings III**  
*Attachment to January 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes*

Discussed how veterans are served in the State and in Calvert County:

1. All the Federally Chartered Service Organizations (FCSO) (American Legion, DAV, VFW, etc.) can assist veterans that are members of the organization. They can have up to 2 certified service officers. They are volunteers.
2. You do not need to belong to a Federally Chartered Service Organization to receive services
3. If a veteran initiates a claim through a FCSO, they must be released by that organization before the MDVA can assist with that claim
4. MDVA is co-located with the MVA locations around the state
5. Carroll County Alternative – Secretary Owings suggested that I talked to Phil Munley.  
Conversation with Phil Munley – MDVA regarding the Carroll County approach:
  - a. Carroll County hired and pays for three Accredited Service Officers
  - b. Employed by the county, in the County’s budget
  - c. Accredited through MDVA – Certified through the VA
  - d. MOU between the County and the MDVA – provision of training, follows MDVA direction
  - e. Can initiate claims, have access to the claims tracking system, have a VA ID Badge
  - f. MDVA acts as a clearinghouse if a claim is denied
  - g. Has been in place for 6 or 7 years
    - Got the County Commissioners involved
    - Explained the benefits of the request
    - Budget hearing - some resistance to spending the money, why the County should pay
    - County Commissioners – approved with a vote of 5-0
6. There are Service Office Providers in some states however not on the east coast (Secretary)