

Minutes

Wednesday, March 8, 2023



PRESENT: **Matthew Blackwelder**, District 1 (TEAMS); **John Gray**, American Legion Post 220; **Jeff King**, Local Business Owner/Operator; **Patricia McCoy**, American Legion Post 206; **Michael Richardson**, American Legion Post 274; **Robert Sprecher**, American Legion Post 85; **Michael Sweeney**, District 2; **Dr. Brandon Temple**, Educator/Educational Admin Rep.

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: **Nicole DeRamus**, UMGC (TEAMS); **Melanie Woodson**, BOCC; **Christian Zimmermann**, College of Southern Maryland (CSM).

ABSENT/EXCUSED: **Meg Faller**, Calvert Library; **Michael Wood**, District 3.

GUESTS: Craig Jones, Citizen; Roslyn Jones, MDVA Women Veterans/Inclusion Manager.

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

Dr. Brandon Temple 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 the March 2023 agenda as submitted, all in favor.

C. Introduction/Welcome: **John Gray**. Served in Army National Guard.

D. Approval of February 2023 meeting minutes: **Sweeney** motioned, **McCoy** seconded, to approve February 2023 meeting minutes as submitted, all in favor.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. March 2023 Presentation - Roslyn Jones, MDVA Women Veterans/Inclusion Manager (VA Women's Healthcare handout attached for reference).

- a. Retired Army, left regular Army for the reserves. Worked in admin professions, personnel records clerk, and as a recruiter. Currently implementing a new program launched in 2021 by Governor Hogan.
- b. Instrumental in establishing Maryland observance of Women's Veterans Day annually on June 12.
- c. Many VA health services are geared to male veterans. Roslyn came across data that stated that 44% of women who are eligible for VA healthcare services are NOT registered. Privacy concerns, sexual harassment in clinic setting, poor quality care that exacerbated existing conditions were cited as factors.
- d. Currently many organizations are partnering with VA to expand/improve services to women veterans.
- e. Held annual focus group in February to find out what information veterans need—6 individuals responded to survey on MDVA website (located on the Women Veterans/Inclusion tab).

- f. Currently in planning stage for:
 - Statewide Ambassador Program
 - June 10 observance of Women’s Veterans Recognition Day
 - Six Triple Eight event – All black female postal regiment deployed to France to ensure that over 17 million pieces of mail were sorted and delivered to the troops. Did the job in record time, came home and never talked about it.
- g. What can the VAC do?
 - Help get the word out that the VA Women’s Healthcare services have improved.
 - Help promote the MDVA Newsletter
 - Get the word out about/help recruit volunteers for the statewide ambassador program. Pat will share Ms. Jones’ contact information with the American Legion Chairperson of the Women's Veterans Committee.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING/TACTICAL ACTIVITIES

A. Membership

- a. CCG Liaison will compile surveys and report back.

B. Regional Collaborations:

- a. Four County Initiative (**CCG Liaison**) –
 - Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m.
Next meeting, March 21st.
- b. Joint County Veterans Commission (**Temple**) – Next meeting TBD.
- c. Veterans Regional Advisory Committee (**Blackwelder**)
 - Next virtual meeting, Monday, March 13th, from 9:00 to 10:30
- d. CCG Liaison will send out links to virtual meetings.

C. Veterans/Military Events/Observances

- a. Members have recruited citizen participants to attend the Month of the Military Child and Gold Star Spouses Day.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Veterans Tax Credit (Temple)

- a. Looking at early May for public hearing.
- b. CCG Liaison will draft legal ad for public hearing.

B. Calvert Library Benefits Workshop – (Faller)

- a. Benefits Workshop is still on the schedule for April 11th. Brandon will attend meeting with Dana Burl on March 20th to plan logistics. Brandon will use the opportunity to discuss how to get claims support in Calvert County—how to implement and scale it. The program has been implemented successfully in other counties—need to research successful models.

C. Certificates of Appreciation

- a. Brandon will help with wording. Plan for presentations on a case-by-case basis. Take pictures and post on Facebook. Contact Marty Madden. CCG Liaison will contact CMR to solidify process.

D. Strategic Objectives

- a. Nothing to report.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Look into Open Meetings Act ramifications of holding a retreat. King is a big fan and would be willing to facilitate. Would be a way to continue to articulate to the BOCC where we are going and how we want to get there. Jeff will finance the catering.
- B. Agenda Planning – Ask Housing Authority to present in April.

Sweeney motioned, **McCoy** seconded, to do the Pledge of Allegiance before each meeting.

6. INFORMATION SHARING

- A. Can the VAC set up their tent at CR Day?
- B. Baltimore job fair flyer
- C. Welcome Home Vietnam War Veterans Ceremony – Sunday March 26, 2023, Am Legion Post 238. CCG Liaison scan and send flyers.
- D. Maryland at the state level has proposed legislation to increase deduction from \$5,000 to \$25,000 for veterans over 65 years of age.
- E. Still waiting on Melanie’s slider recipe. She promised to send it.
- F. **Woodson** wants to be sure that VAC has provided feedback on Veteran-related legislation. CCG Liaison advised that Jennifer did loop Brandon in on several veteran related items.
- G. **King** asked a question about legislation to add income level max on Veterans benefits.
- H. **Temple** Richard Starr Act – Currently retired military personnel receive either retirement pension or Disability – one or the other, not both. This act would allow veterans get both.
- I. **McCoy** –provided information on the following:
 - **Women Veterans/Inclusion Program Quarterly Chat Panel Discussion**
March 27, 2023, 12:00pm - 1:30pm
Join the conversation at: <https://meet.google.com/xbz-uhhj-djy?authuser=0&hs=122>

- **Diversity Month Panel Discussion and Resources**
April 19, 2023 9:00am - 12:30 pm
- **Women Veterans Recognition Day**
June 10, 2023, 9:00am - 3:00pm
(registration, a flier and full agenda forthcoming)
- **MDVA Women Veterans Recognition Day & Awards Breakfast**
Hosted by the MDVA on June 10, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
Location: American Legion Post 22, 125 York Road, Towson, MD 21204
Honoring Maryland women who served in military service –8 will be selected
Nominations close on March 28, 2023 and/or after the first 100 nominations are received
Nominations can be made at this link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19yw-XqZlwdQSHHbWscCU6zjdfcyZWAJLoQzms0WvwI0/edit>
- **MDVA Women Veterans/Inclusion 2023 Focus Group**
Survey Link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1HK7UgFuSgu-Qx_Nm-54PrqnL5K7tw_1dh2n8Tw3qDas/edit

J. **McCoy** shared Governor is working on bill to cut taxes on veterans income to keep veterans in Maryland.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

A. None

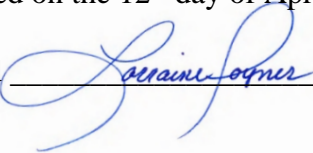
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

Adopted on the 12th day of April, 2023 – minutes transcribed by Lorraine Joyner

Signed _____



Date: April 12, 2023.