

Minutes

Wednesday, April 12, 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; **Michael Wood**, District 3.

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: **Nicole DeRamus**, UMGC (TEAMS); **Meg Faller**, Calvert Library; **Christian Zimmermann**, College of Southern Maryland (CSM).

ABSENT/EXCUSED: **Melanie Woodson**, BOCC.

GUESTS: Shawn Kingston, Director, Housing Authority of Calvert County; **JC Hooker** (via TEAMS); Craig Jones, Citizen.

CCG STAFF: **Lorraine Joyner**, CCG Admin Support; **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:** **Wood** motioned, **McCoy** seconded, to approve the April 2023 agenda as submitted, all in favor.
- C. **Approval of meeting minutes:** **Wood** motioned, **McCoy** seconded, to approve March 2023 meeting minutes as submitted, all in favor.

2. PRESENTATIONS

- A. **April 2023 Presentation** – Shawn Kingston, Director, Housing Authority of Calvert County – Veteran House Project
 - a. Calvert Affordable Housing Alliance (CAHA) is a local non-profit formed to promote development of affordable housing in Calvert County. CAHA and Housing Authority are separate, but related entities.
 - b. In Calvert County the Housing Authority is “its own government.” They could start their own police force if they wanted. The Housing Authority:
 - Owns 75 single-family homes--72 are Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) homes with “project-based vouchers.” Assistance is tied to the home—when a family leaves, assistance ends. CAHA is the landlord. The remaining 3 are rented by Housing Choice Voucher participants.
 - Administers 35 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for the Southern Maryland area. This is a federal program specifically targeted to disabled homeless veterans. The Housing Authority works closely with the Veteran Administration (VA) Medical Centers on this program. A VA referral is required. These applicants bypass the waiting list.

- Owns 4 senior apartment complexes—10% reserved for individuals with disabilities (not necessarily seniors). Three are self-managed, Southern Pines II, managed by Habitat, is a US Treasury Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) complex. Plan is to convert Southern Pines II to Housing Authority management.
 - Manages about 500 vouchers (which includes Section 8). With Housing Choice vouchers, clients take the voucher and shop for housing.
 - Maintains waiting lists for various programs—for senior apartments approximately 300 per housing complex. Waiting lists for Housing Choice Vouchers is closed. There is an online application process for the waiting lists, anyone, regardless of where they live currently, can apply when the list is open.
 - There is local preference for affordable non-LIHTC housing properties and some of the vouchers. Average wait is 5 years.
- c. Veteran House Project - Housing Authority owns land and planned to build a house for one of their VASH voucher holders. The land failed to perc. That parcel will be conveyed back to the county. They are searching for an alternate site.
- Will invest approximately \$250,000 in the home; sell it to the Veteran for \$100,000, put the remaining \$150,000 in a “soft second mortgage.” There is no payment on the second mortgage, but it prevents the homeowner from “flipping” the house while allowing them to build equity. This will free up a VASH voucher.
 - Want to finance as little as possible. More robust fundraising efforts would be a help.
- d. Have invested over \$1 million in improvements to Calvert Pines--\$500,000 for elevators; \$300,000 for a new roof; new flooring in the common areas.
- e. Housing Authorities are funded on a calendar year—Breakdown for Calvert’s Housing Authority is about 90% federal, 10% state, a small amount from the county.
- f. Additional information was provided on Adjusted Median Income (AMI) requirements and the application/waiting list processes.
- g. The Commonwealth Companies, a national developer, is considering building a 48-unit townhome complex behind the funeral home in Lusby. This is a LIHTC project funded by the US Treasury--NOT a HUD project. It therefore comes with fewer requirements and restrictions. HUD involvement in LIHTC properties is generally limited to FHA insurance.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING/TACTICAL ACTIVITIES

A. Membership

- a. Nine (9) ex-officio recruitment letters will be mailed/emailed by the end of the week.
- b. Chair revisited concerns about having too many members.

B. Regional Collaborations:

- a. Veterans Regional Advisory Committee (**CCG Admin Support**)
 - Opening slide featured a picture of our VAC at the Calvert County BOCC Veteran-Owned Small Business Week observance.
 - Dana Burl provided an early update on issues at Charlotte Hall Veterans home.

- The Southern Maryland Tri-County region has the largest population of veterans per capita compared to other jurisdictions in Maryland. We were encouraged to highlight this in our messaging, especially when we are advocating for additional resources (i.e., a visiting VSO).
- Asked this question: “Does our VAC membership represent the population we have been appointed to serve—military connectedness, age, gender, race, organizational diversity (gov’t, for profit, no-profit)?
- \$34 million is earmarked for new Prince George’s County CBOC-54.000 usable square feet, 16 primary care teams, diagnostic imaging, mammography, eye clinic with ophthalmologists, expanded specialty care, mental health services. Will replace Camp Springs facility—location to be determined.
- Provided detailed information on PACT Act claims process and contacts which has been added to our Veterans Resource Guide.

C. Veterans/Military Events/Observances

- a. Month of the Military Child/Gold Star Spouses proclamation on April 4th – went well.
- b. CMR posted the picture and a two-line description a week later. Check with CMR to see if there is any way these posts can be expedited.
- c. Memorial Day Events – Stars & Stripes at Chesapeake Beach, Brandon is speaking. Need a speaker for the Court House event.
- d. Send out list of Veteran/Military holidays/observances to members after the meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Veterans Tax Credit (Temple)

- a. Brandon fleshed out the draft ordinance and received feedback from Cynthia Harris in the County Treasurer’s office. Need an ordinance for each of the four tiers. Using 75-90% tier as proof of concept.
- b. Cynthia Harris promised to provide a draft application by the end of the week.
- c. Jennifer reached out to Sharon Strand and Beth Richmond to ask if we should include a cap on the dollar amount of the tax credit. There is a cap on property tax credits for disabled EMS and law enforcement.

B. Calvert Library Benefits Workshop – (Faller)

- a. Benefits Presentation -- 12 participants. Biggest take away—folks are looking for ways to be more informed. Several of the participants said they do NOT use social media or spend time on the Internet—preferred newspaper, radio promotions. They indicated email notices/newsletters would be an acceptable alternative.
- b. Attendees present saw it in the County Times or Southern Maryland News events calendar or heard about it from a family member.
- c. Attendees expressed interest in supports/workshops specifically targeted for caregivers.
- d. Begin having sign-in sheet at events to develop a distribution list. Library does have

email address from folks who pre-registered for the events held thus far. CCG Admin Support will contact CMR about using the “Notify Me” feature on the county’s website.

C. Certificates of Appreciation

- a. Bulrushes & SJ Johnson presented on April 11th. Went well, BOCC Commissioner President Hance and County Administrator Mark Willis attended.
- b. SJ Johnson will be funding the breakfast once a month. Bulrushes is looking for additional sponsors. Information on other sponsors will be provided as they are recruited.
- c. Skills Barber Shop –Sweeney is coordinating presentation with Rod ‘N’ Reel management to be held during one of their management meetings.

D. Strategic Objectives

- a. Work on Veteran Tax Credits is moving forward.
- b. Claims clinic scheduled for August 24th, next planning meeting April 26th. Clinic will be 4 hours, with 40 slots open to Tri-County. Phil Munley, Baltimore VSO, is coordinating. Munley is experienced organizing this type of event.
 - On the initial intake, they enter your Social Security number and can tell your current rating to use as a starting point.
 - Phil did reach out to local CBOCs to see if they can set up a tables to enroll attendees in VA Health Care and provide information on filing PACT Act claims.
 - County Administrator approved request to provide box lunches for the claims clinic staff—approximately 10.
- c. Reflect on these topics over the next month and bring ideas to May meeting.
 - Veteran Homelessness
 - Veteran Unemployment
 - Caregiver support
 - Communication/outreach/information sharing
 - Opportunities to help veterans with specific issues—partnerships with other agencies.
- d. Brandon would like an opportunity to provide input to CMR about their social media policy.
- e. Blackwelder noted that it’s extremely important to identify a means to quantify results. Satisfaction surveys, attendance records, etc.
 - Can we pull the data on how many times the QR code for Veterans Resource Guide has been used? (Emailed Eryn Lowe 4/20/23)
- f. Meg will email information about Veterans events to Shawn because he works with a lot of veterans.
- g. Ideas for ways to get out in the community, meet veterans and learn about their needs.
- h. Let the group know if you feel passionate about one of these arears and would like to take the lead.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Annual Retreat – King believes this is a good opportunity to flesh out the big picture

objectives. Context, challenge, actions we seek to take, this is the result we hope to get. King will take the ideas and prioritize them—white board activities for next month.

- B. Can we place another shirt order? Need sizes for John Gray, Meg Faller, Nicole DeRamus, and Christian Zimmerman.

6. INFORMATION SHARING

- A. 2-part focus group hosted by Blue Star Families scheduled for May 23rd. Faller will provide a social media post that we can share on our personal pages.
- B. Social Media Report – 28 posts; 26,721 “Impressions.” Number of “shares” is still low. We need to be more consistent about sharing Library events. Perhaps an email to spur CCG Admin into action.
- C. Knowledgeable veteran who works in the Aging Services field completed an comprehensive review of the Veterans Resource Guide. Her edits will be incorporated.
- D. County has identified a location for the flag disposal box at the Community Resources Building. Bob Sprecher has boxes on hand at his post. Check with County Administrator to see if they want to plan a ceremony?
- E. There is a placeholder on the August 29 BOCC agenda to present the second annual report.
- F. Find out how we get information on the US VA.gov site, “Outreach and Events tab. Online caregiver chat happening right now.
- G. One of the visitors to the VAC table at Community Resource Day talked a lot about transportation to out-of-the area Veterans facilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

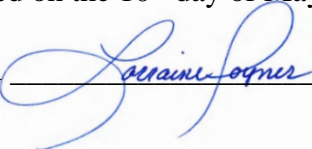
- A. None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday, May 10 2023.

Adopted on the 10th day of May, 2023 – minutes transcribed by Lorraine Joyner

Signed  _____

Date: May 10, 2023.