

# Minutes

## Wednesday, June 8, 2022



**PRESENT:** **Matthew Blackwelder**, District 1 Rep; **Wilson Parran**, American Legion Post 220 Rep; **Michael Richardson**, American Legion Post 274 Rep; **Michael Sweeney**, District 2 Rep; **Michael Wood**, District 3 Rep; **Melanie Woodson**, BOCC Rep; **Christian Zimmermann**, College of Southern Maryland (CSM) Rep.

**ABSENT/EXCUSED:** **Jeff King**, Local Business Owner/Operator; **Patricia McCoy**, American Legion Post 206 Rep; **Robert Sprecher**, American Legion Post 85 Rep; **Dr. Brandon Temple**, Educator/Educational Admin Rep.

**GUESTS:** **Anthony Newman**, Greenwell Foundation.

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

Michael Wood called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

### **I. REGULAR BUSINESS**

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

**B. Approval of Agenda:** **Sweeney** motioned, **Richardson** seconded to approve the June agenda as submitted, all in favor.

**C. Approval of May meeting minutes-members provided feedback on inaudible portions.** **Parran** motioned, **Sweeney** seconded to approve May meeting minutes as amended, all in favor.

### **D. Strategic Goals/Tactical Activities**

- a. Updated member info sheet will be emailed to group.
- b. Christian Zimmermann introduced himself and provided information about CSM's veterans programming. Veterans benefits are under the Financial Assistance office which he supervises. CSM is currently in the process of hiring a dedicated "Veterans Benefits Advisor," veteran preferred, but not required. Position is still open and it has been advertised electronically through higher ed websites. There is a student led veterans club that operates primarily out of LaPlata. Participation has been down because of COVID, but they plan to reinvigorate that club in the fall.
- c. There is still an opening for the "Director of Stateside Military Operations of University of Maryland Global Campus, or their designee" as an ex officio member. Woodie will check with his contacts at the University of Maryland for help identifying an appropriate representative.

- d. Need rep for the various regional meetings. CCG Liaison was asked to provide detailed information about the three regional meetings to further the goal of identifying a designated CCVAC member to represent Calvert:
- **Veterans Regional Advisory Committee (VRAC)** coordinated by SoMD Tri-County Council-1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the Quarter unless it falls on a holiday, next meeting September 12, 9:00 to 10:30 am; Contact: Sharon Meyer ([smeyer@tccsmd.org](mailto:smeyer@tccsmd.org)) 301-274-1922 ext. 326. This body serves Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties, but also includes state level reps including George Owings, representatives from Cardin and Hoyer's offices, the Director of the Washington VA and representatives from advocacy groups such as Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Three Oaks and others.
  - State Level "**Joint County Veteran Commission,**" next in-person meeting, Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at 11 am, 100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD 21032. Contact: Dana Burl ([dana.burl@maryland.gov](mailto:dana.burl@maryland.gov)). Meetings are NOT held on a specific date and time. All Maryland counties that have an existing commission/council/collaborative are invited. See this page for the complete list: <https://veterans.maryland.gov/local-veteran-commissions-workgroups-and-councils/>.
  - **Joint Southern Maryland Serving Together Collaborative**, next meeting June 21, 2022 at 1 pm. Meets virtually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 1 pm. Contact: Jennifer Watson ([JWatson@every-mind.org](mailto:JWatson@every-mind.org)) to be added to the distribution list. She sends out the "log-in" information 3-5 days prior to the meeting.
- e. Branded Items
- Polo Shirts (XL shirt still unclaimed)
  - Name Tags (Blackwelder, Sweeney, Wood were given their name tags)
- f. "Resource Contacts for Calvert County Veterans"
- Christian advised that if CCVAC provided the corrected electronic version to CSM and they will print and distribute and have them available at the College.
  - CCG Staff Liaison will coordinate with CMR to make the following corrections:
    - Page 2: Add  
US Department of Veterans Affairs  
VA Welcome Kit  
[va.gov/welcome-kit/](http://va.gov/welcome-kit/)
    - Page 7: Change "VA Psychiatrist On-Call 24/7" to "Veterans Crisis Line"  
Add 2<sup>nd</sup> Line: "Confidential crisis support for veterans and their loved ones."
    - Page 8: CSM Entry-Delete Robert Shorter as he is no longer with CSM

- Page 14: Add  
Veterans Affairs Lexington Park CBOC  
45870 E Run Dr., Lexington Park, MD 20653  
240-237-1625  
<https://www.va.gov/washington-dc-health-care/locations/lexington-park-va-clinic/>
- Page 20: Under “Recreation,” add:  
Greenwell Foundation  
Four free adaptive sports programs for veterans: kayaking, therapeutic riding, horse connection, charter boat fishing & Mission BBQ lunch.  
25450 Rosedale Manor Lane, Hollywood, MD 20636  
301-373-9775  
[info@greenwellfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:info@greenwellfoundation@gmail.com)  
<https://greenwellfoundation.org/veteran-programs/>
- Page 20 under “Recreation,” add:  
The Valhalla Sailing Project  
Veterans helping veterans, learn to sail clinics.  
Annapolis, MD  
[VSP@ValhallaSailing.org](mailto:VSP@ValhallaSailing.org)  
<https://www.valhallasailing.org/>

g. Promo Business Card for Resource Guide

- Front: Logo, Email, Telephone Number; Back: QR code and “Calvert County Veterans Resource Guide.”

h. Veterans Survey

- At May meeting, transportation was identified as priority. Transportation agreed to add Veterans to the list of existing discounts (youth, senior citizens, Medicare recipients, and persons with disabilities). Question was asked if Veterans had to show ID. CCG Staff Liaison checked with Transportation and in order to receive discounted bus fares, Veterans need only show any acceptable form of military ID.

i. FAQ – Possible Questions:

Questions need to be closed and refined as much as possible.

**Q.** What resources are available for Calvert County veterans?

**A.** Link to Veterans Resource Guide

**Q.** Who can I contact for Veteran-related questions? Can be anything from, “How do I join the local American Legion?” to “Why did the VA come and take half of my benefits?”

**A.** Not sure how you wanted to answer this...

**Q.** As a veteran, can I use the Commissary and PX.

**A.** Yes, you are entitled to PX, Exchange, and Commissary. You need to register with the VA Health Care System and get your VA ID card. Other accesses are facility dependent. Check with your local base pass and ID office. (Provide link to

“Welcome Back Program.” Went into effect January 1, 2020. Step-by-step pdf.)

**Q.** How do I apply for veterans benefits?

**A.** Link to reference guide.

**Q.** How can a Veteran get help when in Crisis.

**A.** Contact the Veteran Crisis Line, See Calvert County Veterans Resource Guide, Page 7

**Q.** How do I contact the Calvert County Veterans Affairs Commission (CCVAC)?

**A.** Email us at [veterans@calvertcountymd.gov](mailto:veterans@calvertcountymd.gov) or call 410-535-1600, ext. 8803.

**Q.** What does the VAC do?

**A.** The vision of the Calvert County Veterans Affairs Commission is:

*“All Calvert County veteran are receiving the benefits and services to which they are entitled.”*

Our mission is:

*“To advocate for all Calvert County veterans and their families while fostering a spirit of fellowship for veterans in our community.”*

j. Outreach Opportunities/Veterans Calendar

- Memorial Day Ceremony debrief - People primarily picked up copies of the resource guide. It was noted that many of the people there were not the end users. Other events might lend themselves to more attendance by veterans.
- Get social calendars from American Legions and DAV to identify additional outreach opportunities.
- Community Resources Day – In February or March,

k. Other outreach opportunities

- Fireman’s Carnival (August 2-6, 2022)
- Veterans Regional Resource Fair, Sat., Sept. 10, 2022 (10 am to 4 pm)  
Melwood Recreation Center, 9035 Ironside Road, Nanjemoy, MD 20662
- County Fair (September 28 – October 2)
- Dunkirk Fire Department Food Truck Fair
- North Beach Fire Department Gun Bash
- Sanders Lake Gun Club moving to Lusby
- NSA Federal Resource Fair at Ft. Meade Ops 2B Cafeteria (to use as a model, not necessarily something we would participate in)
- Sweeney suggested focusing on local events at American Legions. Request social calendars from American Legions for planning purposes.
- Community Resources Day in March 2023, Department’s signature event.

l. Annual Report – On BOCC agenda for August 23<sup>rd</sup>. VAC is coming up on one-year

anniversary—an opportunity to tell BOCC why we need to continue to exist. Sweeney suggested we need to quantify, outreach to how many people. Provide overview of established mission plan to help Calvert Veterans.

- Survey Results
- Highlight Veterans Resource Guide
- Participation in regional boards/commissions
- Accomplishments - discounts for public transportation

Look at more comprehensive survey analysis at July meeting. Woodie proposed a 2 hour meeting in July with 2 agenda items:

**Woodie** moved, **Sweeney** seconded, to extend the July meeting time to two hours with two agenda items: 1) one-half hour on individual priorities from survey; 2) putting together the BOCC presentation.

Parran suggested doing much of the prep work on individualized priorities and BOCC annual report via email prior to the July meeting.

m. Sweeney suggested that we plan for the CCVAC's FY24 budget request.

#### **E. Information Sharing**

- a. Anthony Newman, Greenwell Foundation, has received grant funding for four free adaptive sports programs for veterans: kayaking, therapeutic riding, horse connection, charter boat fishing. Lunch from mission BBQ. Mike Wood discussed possibility of his 501(c)3 Valhalla Sailing Club partnering on events with this organization.
- b. Woodie suggested eventually poll all chairs from all the commissions from all the counties to find out, "Where are you stalling out?" so we have a united front going to the state.

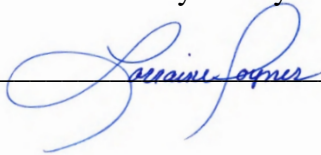
#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday, July 13, 2022.

Adopted on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of July 2022 – minutes transcribed by Lorraine Joyner

Signed



Date: July 13, 2022.