

Carroll County Veterans Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Date: April 15, 2025

Start Time: 2:00 pm

Location: American Legion Post 31 (2 Sycamore Street, Westminster, MD)

Chairperson: Bill Nash

Vice-Chair: Marc Fisher

| Topic | Discussion |
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| Mission Statement | To evaluate, develop and promote new and existing programs and services for Veterans and their families within Carroll County. |
| Vision Statement | That Carroll County offers our Veterans quality services and programs to ensure the enrichment and enhancements of life for our men and women and their families. |
| Attendance (Appointed VAC Members are in bold) | Bill Nash, Jack Curran, Bob Eney, Marc Fisher, Celene Steckel, Nigel Forney, Stacey Nash, Tony Roman, Mick Schmidt, Bobbie Lawrence, Rick Pollard, Jason Martin, Chris McLean, Francine Hahn, Megan Klein, Kati Townsley, Gina Valentine, Commissioner Kenneth Kiler, Patrick Stonko, Valeree Tolios, Elaine May-Stem |
| Welcome and Introductions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Chair's Comments</u> (Bill Nash) – opened the meeting by welcoming those attending. 2. <u>Attendee Introductions and Announcements</u>- No comment 3. <u>Pledge of Allegiance</u> led by Bill Nash 4. <u>Commissioner's Report</u> – Commissioner Kiler <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed budget released on April 22nd • Opening hearing on May 6th • May 22nd the budget will be adopted • The Board of Commissioners voted to add 5.8 million in open meeting to CCPS • Cohosted a lot of solar hearings • PSEG power lines went to court today to gain access to 90 properties • Asked the group if anyone present had the power lines proposed to move through their property • Once PSEG gain access to properties they will move to stop different groups that are not involved • While working on the budget the Commissioners are looking at zoning, growth, and master plan • April 1st could submit a wavier; on Thursday, April 17th AIB decides who gets a wavier; Commissioners, delegates working towards making a wavier happen; vote is this Thursday • State has raised income taxes and that has costed Carroll County 1 million dollars • Pensions were saved to 2.5 million dollars • Schools do not have to have a 60/40 split of planning, but could keep their money • Still unsure of what will come of federal grants • Commissioner Gordon had a conflict and could not attend |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill Nash asked for public comment on Commissioner's report |
| Old Business | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Approval of Minutes</u> – Bill Nash declares a Quorum of 7 met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marc Fisher motions to approve March minutes. Nigel Forney seconds. Minutes approved without objection. • Nigel Forney has been appointed new member of the VAC 2. <u>Monthly Program Reports:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Veteran's Program Coordinators' Report for March 2025:</u> (Megan Klein) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. 28 claims submitted ii. 17 new representations iii. 28 office/home visits iv. 6 telephone appointments v. 1561 telephone and email contacts • <u>Veteran's Shuttle Report</u> – (Stacey Graham) March 2025: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. 35 Veterans took 21 trips in March ii. \$5,000 in costs iii. A trip to University hospital was a brand-new destination 3. <u>Update on Veteran Services Program Grant</u> (Bobbie Lawrence) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kahlert grant application was submitted on April 1st • 14 veterans were unhoused; 9 were emergency housing • 1 veteran received a VASH voucher • Some veterans received utility expenses and automotive repair costs • 1 veteran that had received prior assistance donated \$300 in gift cards • Charlie worked with Tony Roman and put a claim in for a traumatic brain injury; negotiated with lawyer in Seattle and got 80% funded and received \$50k in back funds • Rich Pollard stated that there have been received denied claims for not good grounds; most should have been approved without question |
| New Business | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation by Valeree Tolios – United Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees Veterans Treatment Court, serving the same population • 2 pending Carroll County cases – DUI and substance abuse • When veterans come into the program, they are assigned a case manager • Also assigned a volunteer mentor (battle buddy) – support system • Must be responsible to come to the Baltimore City Court |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This program can raise funds independent of federal grants and can also raise transportation funds• Participants are required to have in person visits to see Judge Weinstein 2 times a month• Individuals have been in the program from 12-18 months to 3 years• In order to enter the program, you must have a minimum of 6 months sobriety and paid your restitutions• Participant must set goals of housing and employment• Gina and Bobbie met with DA Allen Culver and visited the Veterans Treatment Court last month• It was an uplifting experience; Judge was supportive and encouraging• In district court you must be referred by the DA; the veteran has to agree in lieu of sentencing and is 100% voluntary• Then they have a graduation when finished with the program• The court is open to the public <p>2. Veterans Celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final meeting is today at 3:15pm• Event is Sunday, May 4th from 12noon-4pm• Two bands: Westminster Municipal Band and Midnite Run• 1pm ceremony• Bikers without Borders will have a flag line• Gaga pit and corn hole boards• 30 registered VSOs• Vietnam Veterans Wall preview <p>3 Nigel met with the legislative committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Still have bills out and unresolved• Filed 3 appeals and ended up dropping benefit rate from 90% to 60 - 70%• Taking 10 business days when you file a claim• 2 Veterans passed away• Memorial Day Parade – reach out to Adrienne• VA is not doing any more outreach <p>4 Celene Steckel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outreach from Laura Biggs• What is the policy about homeless encampments• Are sweeps done to clear out encampments |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both DeWees and Ledwell typically do not do encampment sweeps <p>5 Question was posed if there needs to be an Executive Committee for the Advisory Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Marc Fisher and Elaine May Stem see no need for one <p>6 <u>Vietnam Memorial:</u> Elaine May Stem is working on it but is not present today; Traveling wall coming to Carroll County in October 9,10,11,12 at the New Windsor carnival grounds</p> |
| Announcements | <p>Chris McLean – SALUTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2nd from 11am-12:30pm in The Great Hall at CCC 20 student veterans inducted into the honor society <p>Elaine May Stem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wants to have the Commissioners speak at the Vietnam Memorial in October <p>Bill Nash adjourns the meeting of the VAC.</p> |
| Next Meeting Date | Tuesday May 20th, at 2pm at the American Legion Post #31, 2 Sycamore Street, Westminster. |