

## Carroll County Veterans Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Date: March 31, 2026

Start Time: 2:00 pm

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

Chairperson: Bob Eney

Vice-Chair: Elaine May-Stem

Topic	Discussion
<b>Mission Statement</b>	To evaluate, develop and promote new and existing programs and services for Veterans and their families within Carroll County.
<b>Vision Statement</b>	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.
<b>Attendance (Appointed VAC Members are in bold)</b>	<b>Bob Eney, Elaine May-Stem, Jack Curran, Brian Kilheffer, Marc Fisher, Nigel Forney, Mick Schmidt, Bill Nash,</b> Commissioner Kenneth Kiler, Celene Steckel, Gina Valentine, Amanda Coshun, Megan Klein, Bobbie Lawrence, Rick Pollard, Francine Hahn, Stacey Nash, Chris McLean, Jevina Lindsey, Erin Barna, Tim Reger, Mike Pennington, Lindsey Norris
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b><u>Pledge of Allegiance</u></b> led by Bob Eney</li> <li>2. <b><u>Chair's Comments with Chair/Vice</u></b> Bob Eney welcomed those attending <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner sponsored by the Freedom District Lions Club at the American Legion Post 223 in Sykesville on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Flyer has been sent out to the VAC.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <b><u>Attendee Introductions and Announcements led by Chair/Vice-Chair</u></b></li> <li>4. <b><u>Commissioner's Report</u></b> Commissioner Kenneth Kiler <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the middle of Budget for the County</li> <li>• Going to Annapolis on Wednesday weekly</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. <b><u>Public Comment</u></b> Nigel Forney <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled American Veterans</li> <li>• New GI bills scam, Job scam, Scholarship/financial aid scam, Online dating scams. If anyone is scammed, just call the VA and let them know</li> <li>• Death pension is now \$11,690 annually. If you have stocks or bonds that count as your income</li> </ul>                     Brian Kilheffer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiring about Carroll County debt consolidation for Veterans and current resources available in Carroll County</li> <li>• Celene suggested collaboration with HSP (pilot program), Carroll County, and University of Maryland Extension office as no programs currently exist</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Old Business</b>	<p><b><u>Approval of Minutes</u></b> – Quorum established; February minutes approved.</p> <p><b><u>Monthly Program Reports:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b><u>Veteran's Program Coordinators' Report for February 2026:</u></b> (Megan Klein) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 claims submitted</li> <li>• 24 new representations</li> <li>• 41 office visits, 4 home visits</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 phone appointments</li> <li>• 3 Veteran Pensions, 1 DIC</li> <li>• 1578 Telephone &amp; Email Contacts</li> <li>• \$4,483,249 Total Recurring Monthly Payments Since Program Start</li> <li>• \$101,261,443 Total Cumulative Payments Since Program Start</li> </ul> <p>2. <b><u>Veteran’s Shuttle Report for February 2026:</u></b> – (Stacey Nash)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 Veterans</li> <li>• 29 trips</li> <li>• Total cost: \$5,019.76</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Update on Employment Initiatives for Veterans</u></b> (Reva Coussey)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No report this month, not in attendance</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Update on Veteran Services Program Grant</u></b> (Bobbie Lawrence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided emergency housing to two veterans</li> <li>• Working with several veterans on vehicle repairs</li> <li>• Noticing an increase in walk-ins and more complex situations</li> <li>• Meeting with more older adult veterans</li> <li>• Submitted the six-month report to the Kahlert Foundation</li> <li>• Met on February 28 with Secretary Rothstein to discuss the specific challenges our VSOs are experiencing</li> <li>• During that meeting, Gina Valentine emphasized the importance of building relationships with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to enable warm handoffs and connect veterans with appropriate resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>New Business</b></p>	<p>Bylaws Review – Gina Valentine</p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The county has introduced a new bylaw template.</li> <li>• The purpose of the board remains unchanged.</li> </ul> <p><b>Proposed Changes</b></p> <p><b>1. Member Orientation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New members will receive an orientation led by the DoAD. Orientation will include an overview of services and programs, including the Veteran Services Program of Carroll County.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Board Composition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board shall consist of at least nine (9) members and no more than twelve (12).</li> <li>• Recommended addition: A representative from the Catholic War Veterans.</li> </ul>

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	<p>Additional members:            One (1) Veteran Services representative from a local college.            One (1) representative from the Department of Public Works (Ex-officio).            One (1) representative from the Maryland Department of Labor (Ex-officio, optional).</p> <p><b>3. Vacancies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes to the current process for filling vacancies.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Training Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members will receive regular training on: The Open Meetings Act and procedures for closed meetings (if applicable)</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Attendance Requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council members must attend at least eight (8) meetings per year to remain active.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Bylaws Review Cycle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bylaws will be reviewed by VAC members every two (2) years.</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members are asked to submit any feedback on the bylaws within one week and we will take a vote at the April meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Announcements</b></p>	<p>Chris McLean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 1<sup>st</sup> 11:00 a.m. Spring Salute at Carroll Community College. Texas Roadhouse to serve lunch</li> </ul> <p>Celene Steckel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The 5th Annual Veterans Celebration</b> will take place on Sunday, May 3, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Carroll County Farm Museum. This year's event will honor all veterans and commemorate the 250th birthday of America.</li> <li>• <b>The Homeless Services Summit</b> will be held on May 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Carroll Community College. The event will include a panel discussion, and a flyer will be distributed within the week.</li> </ul> <p>Carroll County Veterans Independence Project            For the month of February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98 counseling hours</li> <li>• 200 claims</li> </ul> <p>Jevina Lindsey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 18<sup>th</sup> Night of Color and Community Resource Fair for 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. Montgomery County</li> </ul>

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	<p>Marc Fisher and Nigel Forney</p> <p>Memorial Day Parade: May 25, 2026, More information including entry forms can be found on the American Legion Post 31 website, Facebook page and in the lounge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bob Eney holds a moment of silence for United States service members killed in the Iran War. Bob Eney adjourns the meeting of the VAC.</li></ul>
<b>Next Meeting Date</b>	<b>Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, at 2 pm at the American Legion Post #31, 2 Sycamore Street, Westminster.</b>