



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs  
Meeting Summary Minutes  
October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014**

**I. Call to Order & Introductions:**

Bill Gray, Acting Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Bill asked for all present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing for a moment of silence for all of those who have given their lives and those who have been wounded for our country in the different conflicts in which our country has been engaged. A POW/MIA Empty Chair is placed at all official meetings of the Commission as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

Wayne Miller, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the September, 2014 Meeting Summary Minutes. Randy Stone, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the September, 2014 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva).

**III. Overview of Refocusing of Department of Labor and Licensing Regulation Vision – Bob Pelletier, Veterans Services, MontgomeryWorks:**

Effective July, 2014 the principal duties of the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) and the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists were refocused as follows:

- LVER's principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans. LVERs will provide technical assistance to Job Center staff concerning the new refocusing of responsibilities. An LVER cannot provide any services to a veteran.
- DVOP Specialists provide intensive services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who meet the definition of an individual with a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE):
  - disabled veteran receiving compensation from the Veterans Administration;
  - homeless veteran or veteran facing eviction;
  - recently separated (36 months) – who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
  - ex-offender released within the last 12 months;
  - veteran lacking a high school diploma or GED;
  - low-income;
  - veteran between the ages of 18 to 24

The age range of 18 to 24 was added as the Department of Labor (DOL) recognizes that changes in workforce programs' service delivery strategies to veterans are needed to respond to the forecasted increase in veterans, including men and women transitioning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the civilian labor force.

Core Services Staff primary duties are to serve all veterans who do not have an SBE. All veterans and eligible spouses, whether or not they have an SBE, are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and

placement services provided under a qualified job training program. All veterans and eligible spouse must register with the DOL Maryland Workforce Exchange. DOL uses this information to keep track of the number veterans that are being served.

Bob noted that if a veteran requests a service from a Core Services Staff Member which they are not familiar with (i.e. obtaining a copy of DD-214, VA disability or other such information) the Staff Member should contact a DVOP for assistance.

Bob is based out of the MontgomeryWorks Wheaton Office located at Westfield South Office Building, 11002 Veirs Mill Road, Wheaton.

Roger (Mark) Crassweller, DOL, manages a MontgomeryWorks American Job Center Veterans Newsletter that he e-mails to his distribution list several times a week. There are approximately 1,100 individuals signed up to receive these e-mails. To be added to the distribution list please e-mail [roger.crassweller@maryland.gov](mailto:roger.crassweller@maryland.gov).

#### **IV. Video: “A Better Bottom Line”:**

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) has developed an outreach video about Project Search titled “A Better Bottom Line” (YouTube Video: [http://youtu.be/z-2A\\_PbxrqA](http://youtu.be/z-2A_PbxrqA)). This video was shown for the first time at an international convention for human resources. A number of jurisdictions across the country have inquired about the County’s program and are interested in duplicating the program.

OHR Employment Initiatives for people with disabilities, veterans and veterans with disabilities has resulted in expanding employment opportunities. As a result of these initiatives, since 2012, the County has hired the following into merit positions:

- Total hires: 119
- Non-Competitive Hires of people with severe disabilities: 11
- People with disabilities: 10
- Veterans: 94
- Veterans with disabilities: 4

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) recently launched the [Hiring Initiative Registration for Employment Database \(HIRED\)](#), which will allow for the non-competitive hiring of persons with disabilities. The OHR website has been reconfigured to allow individuals with a disability to submit a resume or a letter of interest to OHR, on a confidential basis which will enable OHR to establish a skills bank for potential vacancies. The skills bank will only be accessible to the Targeted Employment Recruitment Specialist and the manager of the staffing team. The applicant with the disability must complete all steps of the hiring process: a) background check, if applicable; b) reference checks; c) complete medical process; and d) orientation. An individual must have a letter from the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) certifying their disability.

#### **V. Chair and Vice-Chair Report:**

Jerry Godwin, Chair, reported that last Tuesday he attended the County Council Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee and presented the Commission’s top two policy issues for fiscal year 2015.

Jerry reported that the Department of Economic Development (DED) has a program for minorities, female and disabled-owned to ensure they receive a fair share of the County’s contracting opportunities. Jerry suggested that the Commission recommend this program be opened to veterans. Jerry will send information to Commissioners to review.

Dan Bullis, Vice Chair, reported that he and Wayne Miller, Commissioner, will be guests on the Montgomery County Cable show Seniors Today. They will talk about the Commission’s work, goals and mission. The show will air in November, date to be determined.

The Commission's November meeting will be held off-site at Flower Valley Elementary School. The meeting will be put on in partnership with the Flower Valley Citizens' Association and the Manor Lake Civic Association in celebration of Veterans Day 2014 and in honor of the veterans and their families. Ed Chow, Secretary, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, will discuss how his department benefits veterans.

#### **VI. Unfinished Business:**

Mike Subin, Commissioner, reported that he and Betsy Luecking, Staff, will be meeting with Mike Bruen, Cable Producer, Montgomery County Cable, later this week to further discuss the possibility of the Commission having a television show.

Mike reported that there will be a dedication of the Memorial Plaza located at the Government Complex Center Terrace in Rockville on Monday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. There will be an eternal flame that honors all active military and Veterans of Montgomery County: those who died, those still in bondage and those who have returned. The eternal flame will be very clearly visible from the street. The plaza will feature a cascading waterfall and there will be cut-outs available on the wall for plaques for all conflicts. An active duty honor guard from Fort McNair will present the colors. The County Executive and County Council President will also be issuing a joint proclamation declaring 2015 *The Year of the Veterans the Veterans Families in Montgomery County*. The U.S., State and County flags will be down for the ceremony and will be raised during the ceremony. The content and tone of the ceremony will be a "one time only" event. Once the flame is lit and the POW/MIA flag is raised, they will be neither extinguished nor taken down. There will be a closing prayer and TAPS will be played. Commissioners are asked to attend and to wear their fatigues, if possible.

The free [Tribute to America's Veterans Concert](#) will be held Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. It will be held at the Silver Spring Civic Building and focus on Vietnam era music. The concert is held in collaboration with the Commission.

#### **VII. New Business:**

The Commission will be advertising for vacancies within the next few months. Commissioners whose terms were set to expire as of November 1<sup>st</sup> are asked to continue on the Commission until the new Commissioners have been appointed.

#### **VIII. Roundtable:**

Dan announced that American Legion Post 41 in Silver Spring will be hosting a children's party this Thursday for 65 children from the National Children's Center. The event will be 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will feature a petting zoo, face painting, and a DJ. Post 41 will also be hosting a Wounded Warrior Family Appreciation Dinner this Saturday starting at 6:00 p.m.

Jessica Fuchs, Serving Together, reported that she and Betsy Luecking, Staff, are working on scheduling speakers at various high schools throughout the county for Veterans Day. If you are interested in being part of the speakers bureau you can contact Jessica at [jfuchs@mhamc.org](mailto:jfuchs@mhamc.org).

Jason Franklin, Combat2College, Montgomery College, reported that an Accenture Panel & Job Fair will be held November 7<sup>th</sup> at the Montgomery College Germantown Campus. Accenture has opened up the event to all veterans in the DC Metro area.

**Adjournment:** 7:30 p.m.

#### **Next Full Commission Meeting:**

**PLEASE NOTE Different Time and Location:** Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Flower Valley Elementary School, 4615 Sunflower Drive, Rockville, MD 20853

Respectfully submitted: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I; Betsy Luecking, Program Manager II