



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Summary Minutes
April 18, 2023**

****MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM****

Call to Order

Bob Koffman, Vice-Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). He asked for all present to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022, or PACT Act Briefing – Antione Waller, Executive Director, Baltimore Regional Office, National Capital Region Benefits Office

Website: www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits

PowerPoint: https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/VBA_VHA_Consolidated_PACT_Presentation_April_2023.pdf

Handout: https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/Accessing_PACT_Act_Benefits_and_Services.pdf

Handout: https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/VA_PACTActDashboard_Issue4_041423_508.pdf

Antione Waller is responsible for the oversight of delivery of Compensation and Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits to over 383,790 veterans and their beneficiaries living in Maryland and the surrounding counties. In October 2016, Antione expanded his leadership responsibilities by overseeing the National Capital Region Benefits Office in Washington, DC. He served as a commissioned officer in the United States Army from February 1985 to August 1989.

Please review the PowerPoint presentation.

The floor was opened to questions and comments.

- **How can this Commission and veteran service organizations help the VA educate the public on the PACT Act?** The VA wants to get out into the community and work with advocates. The VA has brought in a team of specialized claim processors to various events and meet with individual veterans. Processors can assist with filing a claim with the PACT Act or with establishing updates on their previous claims. The VA is looking to create more opportunities to provide more outreach in the community.
- **Wayne reported that he filed a form but received a notice that he was denied due to an issue with the letter of intent form.** Antione will work with Wayne offline to address this issue. Wayne encouraged veterans to work with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) or other veterans service organizations when filing.
- **Comment that a veteran at American Legion Post 268 applied and was approved within two weeks.** Antione noted that approval times vary based on the complexity of the situation.

- **How do the presumptive conditions apply to a Gulf War veteran?** There are a list of 20 presumptive conditions listed. If a Gulf War veteran has been diagnosed with any of those conditions, served honorably in the Gulf War and are presumed to be service--connected based on that disability, then an examination will be given. As long as the diagnosis supports the current conditions, then the veteran would qualify. Antione reported that the VA will be adding three more presumptives in the list but does not know when as they have been submitted to the final registry for publication.
- **Should a service-connected Gulf War veteran apply?** Yes, as filing a new claim can increase your benefits. Phil encouraged the veteran to apply as they could have additional conditions that could be added.
- **Phil Munley, MDVA, shared a story of a surviving spouse of a Vietnam veteran who had served in Thailand that filed for DIC in 2016 and was denied.** Now that the PACT Act has added Thailand to the list of eligible locations, MDVA assisted the surviving spouse with filing a supplemental claim, which was awarded within two months with a retroactive payment of \$106,000 and \$1,800 per month moving forward.
- **Wayne spoke of a veteran that filed a claim with the PACT Act and it was approved within 3 to 4 weeks.** MDVA was able to assist the veteran with filing the claim.
- **Concern expressed by a commissioner that some veterans may not apply for the PACT Act as they are concerned the review could potentially downgrade their benefits.**
- **There are a number of veterans who have never used VA care for various reasons, including receiving care from the private sector. Should those veterans apply for the PACT Act?** It does not hurt for the veteran to apply for any benefit that their service entitles them to. Antione encouraged veterans to seek the support from veteran service organizations and other advocates for assistance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the March 2023 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the March 2023 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

Chair and Vice Chair Report

Next Commission meeting is May 16 from 6pm to 7:30pm. Secretary Anthony Woods, MDVA, is going to join us for a discussion. It was suggested that the U.S. Census Bureau be invited to the June meeting to discuss why NOAA and USPHS are not included as veterans during census counts. They only count those who served in the Armed Forces as veterans.

Updates / Announcements

Ken Reichard, Representative, Senator Ben Cardin, reported he will be retiring from his position effective April 15. He has been asked to stay on as a consultant and to work on special projects and events.

Adjournment: 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I; Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs Attendance Report

May 2022 – April 2023

VOTING MEMBERS			MAY	JUNE	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	ABSENCES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Form on File with Risk Management P = Present / A = Absence / C = Conference Call / M = Military Active Duty P* or C* = Ex-Officio Member Alternative Attended W = Waived Absences by County Executive / R = Waiver Requested													
1. Bahn, Josephine	General Public	2 nd term expires 10/31/2023	A	C	C	A	A	X	C	C	A	C	4
2. Gray, Elwood	Veteran	1 st term expires 10/31/2021	C	C	C	C	C	X	C	C	C	C	0
3. Johnson, Jameelah	Director Designee – Dept. of Health & Human Services	1 st term expires 10/31/2021	C	A	C	C	A	X	C	A	C	C	3
4. Koffman, Robert	Veteran	2 nd term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	C	C	X	C	C	C	C	0
5. Macri, Cynthia	Veteran	2 nd term expires 10/31/2023	C	C	C	C	C	X	C	C	C	C	0
6. Miller, Wayne	Disabled American Veterans	3 rd term expires 10/31/2021	C	A	C	C	C	X	C	C	C	C	1
7. Mitchell, Reggie	Veteran	1 st term expires 10/31/2022	C	A	C	C	A	X	A	C	C	A	4
8. Pollack, Susan	Public - RESIGNED	1 st term expires 10/31/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9. Schlesinger, Scott	Veteran	1 st term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	E	C	X	C	C	C	C	0
10. Schuster, Lisa	Public - RESIGNED	Partial term expires 10/31/2022	C	A	A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
11. Starling, Joanna	Ex-Officio Representing Montgomery College	2 nd term expires 10/31/2021	C	C	C	C	C	X	C	C	C	C	0
12. Subin, Michael L.	Ex-Officio Representing County Executive	4 th term expires 10/31/2020	C	A	A	A	A	X	C	C	C	C	4
13. Vandenbroek, Anneke	Veteran	Partial term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	C	C	X	A	C	C	A	2
14. Webman, Susan	General Public	1 st term expires 10/31/2021	C	C	A	A	C	X	A	A	A	C	5
15. Willis, Steven	Veteran - RESIGNED	1 st term expires 10/31/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
16. Wilson, Michael	Veteran	Partial term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	C	A	X	C	C	C	C	1

Attendance Policy: A Voting Member may miss up to 3 meetings within a one year rolling period. Voting Members who miss more than 3 meetings in that period or who miss 3 consecutive meetings will be automatically removed. Waivers may be requested for absences caused by extenuating circumstances.

Non-Voting Congressional Representatives													
1. Burton, Christa – Office of U.S. Congressman Jamie Raskin Eyong, Joseph - Alternate			C*	C*	A	A	C	X	C	A	C*	C*	3
2. Garcia, Vikki – Office of U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes			A	A	A	A	A	X	A	A	A	A	9
3. Morris, Austin – Office of U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen Hendricks, Karen – Alternate / Samuels, Jeff - Alternate			C	C	C	A	C	X	C	C	C	C	1
4. Reichard, Ken – Office of U.S. Senator Ben Cardin			C	C	A	A	C	X	C	A	C	C	3