



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2024**

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

Call to Order

Wayne Miller, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). He asked for all present to say the Pledge of Allegiance. He recognized prisoners of war and asked 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.

Property Tax Credits for Veterans (State and Local) and Other Key Veteran Legislation at Maryland General Assembly – Lynn Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN, Communications Director, Maryland Military Coalition (MMC)

Bill 45-23, Property Tax Credit – Individuals 65 and Above, Retired Military Service Members, and Disabled Military Service Members (bill begins on page 4):

https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllms/DownloadFilePage?FileName=2823_1_25390_Bill_45-2023_Introduction_20231212.pdf

Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement for Bill 45-23:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/resjis/2023/Bill45-23.pdf.

Bill 45-23 would: (1) alter the eligibility criteria for the property tax credit available to individuals 65 and above, and to retired or disabled military service members and their spouses; (2) alter the amounts of the property tax credit; and (3) generally amend the property tax credit for individuals 65 and above and for retired or disabled military service members and their spouses.

The lead sponsor of the bill is Council President Andrew Friedson. A public hearing is scheduled for January 23 at 1:30pm.

PowerPoint: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/MCCVAJan2024PropertyTaxPowerpoint.pdf

Lynn reviewed the PowerPoint presentation.

The floor was opened for discussion.

- If the individual has a service-connected disability, then there is no age requirement. Individuals, retired military servicemembers and surviving spouses have an age requirement of 65 years or more.
- Disability income received from the VA is not taxable and it is unclear if this income is considered as part of the income requirements.
- Only the income of the applicant is taken into consideration, not the household.
- Statistically, women veterans are disproportionately married to other servicemembers and typically are not married to a non-working spouse.
- Property assessments have gone up exponentially.
- The cost of healthcare is not factored into tax burden.

- The proposed legislation may be what is affordable in the budget given the current fiscal situation at the state and county level.
- Question as to why income is a factor for disabled veterans.
- Suggestion that service-connected disability rating be 70% and above.
- The Maryland General Assembly passed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) legislation in 2021. The legislation is designed to transform public education in the state into a world-class education system by increasing educational funding, enriching student experiences and accelerating student outcomes, as well as improving the quality of education for all children in Maryland. Counties are expected to fund this initiative. County Executive Marc Elrich added \$200 million in the operating budget for MCPS for this initiative.
- MMC's recommending is for the Commission lobby to amend Bill 45-23 to replace current language about disabled veterans and to incorporate the language of the enabling legislation.
- A fiscal impact statement has yet to be completed for this bill and it is expected to have real revenue impacts. Taxes may increase, more people may leave the County and County non-discretionary funds made be used to make up the difference.
- Bill does not include sustainability or gross income versus net income.
- Having a ten-year limit for the property tax credit could potentially force individuals out of their homes at the end of the ten-year period as the assessed value of the home continues to increase. Homeowners do not have control over the value of their house.
- How many people aged 65 and older are still serving in the Reserves or National Guard that do not have a disability? How many of these individuals will this bill benefit?
- The state of Maryland passed legislation in 2020 and counties are allowed to take advantage of that legislation or not. Up until this point in time, Montgomery County has not. (State legislation – Property Tax – Credit for Disabled Veterans:
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/HB0257?ys=2020RS>).

Commissioners Mike Subin and Michael Wilson, Senator Ben Cardin's Representative Ken Reichard, and Staff Liaison Betsy Luecking will meet to draft testimony which will then be sent to Commissioners for review and comment.

Chair and Vice Chair Report

The next full Commission meeting will be held Tuesday February 20.

Updates / Announcements

The County Executive received a request from a resident asking for veterans to receive a discount at golf courses. It was noted that the Montgomery County Revenue Authority sets the fee schedules for County-owned golf courses. Some courses are owned and operated by Montgomery Parks. It was suggested asking the County to allow for a 10% discount to play golf, but only for the veteran and not for the guests. Mike Subin will research neighboring jurisdictions. Betsy will respond that the Commission is researching the issue and will provide a recommendation to the Council for their operating budget. Changes in fee schedules would not occur until July 1.

The Montgomery Parks Program Access Office in conjunction with Black Hill Regional Park submitted a grant application to the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation for funding to install another accessible kayak launch at the Black Hill Regional Park boating facility area. Funding was received and that project should be completed over the next year. MP is working on providing more adaptive kayaking programs in the spring.

The Commission is honoring Black County veterans with detailed virtual tributes displayed on the County's website as it recognizes February as Black History Month. The tributes of County veterans will feature photos, background information and details of accomplishments during their military careers and afterward. Press release: www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=44591.

Ken reported that there may be a partial deal on the budget to avoid a government shutdown.

Approval of Minutes

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

Adjournment: 7:20pm

Respectfully submitted: Carly Clem, Program Specialist II; Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs Attendance Report

February 2023 – January 2024

VOTING MEMBERS			FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	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	C	A	C	A	C	A	C	A	A	A	6
2. Gray, Elwood	Veteran	2 nd term expires 10/31/2024	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	0
3. Johnson, Jameelah	Director Designee – Dept. of Health & Human Services	2 nd term expires 10/31/2024	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	1
4. Koffman, Robert	Veteran	2 nd term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	C	1
5. Macri, Cynthia	Veteran	2 nd term expires 10/31/2023	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	0
6. Miller, Wayne	Disabled American Veterans	3 rd term expires 10/31/2021	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	0
7. Mitchell, Reggie	Veteran	1 st term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	A	A	C	A	A	C	A	C	5
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	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	0
10. Schuster, Lisa	Public - RESIGNED	Partial term expires 10/31/2022	X	X	X	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	C	C	C	C	C	0
12. Subin, Michael L.	Ex-Officio Representing County Executive	4 th term expires 10/31/2020	C	C	C	A	A	C	C	A	C	C	3
13. Vandenbroek, Anneke	Veteran	1 st full term expires 10/31/2025	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	1
14. Webman, Susan	General Public	1 st term expires 10/31/2021	A	A	C	C	A	A	A	A	A	C	7
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	1 st full term expires 10/31/2025	C	C	C	C	A	C	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			A	C	C	C	C	C*	C*	C*	C*	C*	1
2. Garcia, Vikki – Office of U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes			A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	10
3. Reichard, Ken – Office of U.S. Senator Ben Cardin			A	C	C	A	C	C	C	A	C	C	3
4. Severn, Audrey – Office of U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen Eisenstat, Diana - *Alternate			X	X	X	X	X	C	C	C*	C	C	0