



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Summary Minutes
November 15, 2022**

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

Call to Order

Wayne Miller, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Wayne 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.

Approval of Minutes

Due to lack of a quorum, the approval of the October 2022 Meeting Minutes has been tabled until the January 2023 meeting. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

Veterans Preference in the Montgomery County Office of Procurement - Ash Shetty, Chief, Procurement Officer and Director, and Grace Denno, Chief, Division of Business Relations and Compliance, Montgomery County Office of Procurement

Procurement Website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pro/

Minority, Female and Disabled-Owned Businesses (MFD) Program:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/PRO/DBRC/mfd.html

MFD Program Flyer:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/PRO/Resources/Files/Documents/MFD%20handout%2011-15-19.pdf

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

Please review PowerPoint slides for information.

The definition of Montgomery County's MFD business is a business that is at least 51% owned, controlled and managed daily by a minority person(s) as defined by county code and regulations to include the following categories: African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American, Disabled Persons, and Women. You must be a certified MFD business to participate in the county's MFD program. Certification is conducted by outside agencies which include the Maryland Department of Transportation, Federal Small Business Administration, Women's Business Enterprise National Council, Capital Region Minority Supplier Development Council, and City of Baltimore Minority and Women's Business Opportunity Office. On October 1st, 2021, Procurement extended their list of accepted certifications to include the "Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)" certificate approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Service-Disabled Veterans community is able to have the opportunity to contribute and participate in the County's MFD program procurement process.

Procurement oversees 2,600 unique vendor relationships with approximately \$1 billion in annual contracting opportunities. A vendor may have more than one contract with the County. Contracts typically are for a number of years so the County is actually managing \$5 billion annually. The number of requisitions put out against every contract is approximately 9,500.

In the last year over 26% of contractors were awarded through the Local Small Business Reserve Program (LSBRP) totalling in \$141 million. LSBRP ensures that County departments award 25% of their procurements to registered and certified local, small businesses. Procurement also offers local business preference program ensures local businesses receive an extra 10% preference points on proposals. The County also spent a record high of \$212 million with MFD businesses. In fiscal year 2022, 51% of contracts were awarded to first time vendors. For fiscal year 2023, procurement is working on acquiring funds from the federal government to employ a sustainability or green business staffer to work on climate change initiatives.

Ash reported the County conducts a disparity study every five years to examine and analyze the procurement policies and practices of the County and its prime contractors regarding MFD owned businesses that provide goods and services to the County, including construction. The goal of the study is to determine whether there exists a statistically significant disparity between the number of available MFDs in the Montgomery County, Maryland marketplace and the number of such firms that have actually received contract awards from the County or its prime contractors. The current goal is to have a blended average of approximately 20%. Ash reported the MFD program is consistently meeting that goal at 26% the past few years.

Laws that Procurement must follow also include the Wage Requirement Law Program which ensures workers on County funded projects receive livable wages and the Prevailing Wage Law which requires that prevailing wage be paid to workers on County financed construction contracts.

Procurement hosts a virtual monthly open house on the third Wednesday of every month at 10am. Calendar of outreach events: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pro/events/outreach.html>.

The floor was opened to questions.

Betsy asked if veterans receive a preference similar to the County's Office of Human Resources hiring preference for veterans. Ash said not at this time. The laws currently in place are set by the County Council. If this Commission wanted to discuss adding a procurement award that would give a preference to veterans without a disability it would have to be discussed with the legislative branch and enabled in law by the County Council. Ash noted that the veteran service-connected disability preference came about after a group of veterans with disabilities spoke to Procurement about this opportunity. The addition did require a policy change and did require that it be put into law. If the Commission were to move forward with a recommendation, Procurement would be available to provide data and information. Ash added that Procurement is continuing to follow the Supreme Court which is reviewing an affirmative action lawsuit involving Harvard University and Yale. The Supreme Court may decide to dismantle affirmative action at these universities and thus would end the programs that the County currently has available.

Betsy asked for an example of a contract that was awarded to a service-disabled veteran. Grace said she would have to look into it further but did report that a security card contract had been awarded the past several years to a veteran-owned business.

Veterans Day Updates

County Executive Marc Elrich, County Council President Gabe Albornoz and Councilmember Craig Rice made touching and eloquent remarks when presenting a joint proclamation for Montgomery County Operation Green Light and Veterans Day to Wayne on November 1. Wayne is a Vietnam Veteran and also made some very moving remarks about how Veterans are welcomed to the County and what it means to him to live here: <https://youtu.be/OZKO8vuWKbE?t=666>

Wayne was featured in a Channel 5 video about free car washes for military members in honor of Veterans Day weekend: <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/dmv-locations-offer-free-car-washes-to-military-members-in-honor-of-veterans-day-weekend>

Scott Schlesinger, Commissioner, reported the Jewish War Veterans hosted a dining out at the synagogue. This annual event is held every Veterans Day. Major General Scott Bruce was the guest speaker. Also in attendance was a 99 year old World War II veteran.

Christa Burton, Representative of Congressman Jamie Raskin, reported Congressman Raskin convened a forum of leading VA officials to share information about new coverage available to veterans because of the PACT Act, which expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. Congressman Raskin advocated and voted to pass this landmark legislation earlier this year, and President Biden signed it into law in August. Congressman Raskin invited Antione Waller, Director of the Baltimore Regional Office of the U.S. Veterans Benefits Administration, and Michael Heimall, Director of the Washington D.C. VA Medical Center, to provide veterans with an update on how the PACT Act affects their benefits and to offer them advice on how to apply for the new health care options. Watch the forum: <https://youtu.be/1dPPyScK1FQ>. Bob Koffman, Vice-Chair, suggested posting this information on the Commission's website.

Jason Marshall, ServingTogether, reported he has transferring to ServingTogether's Central Maryland Program Manager position. The Central Maryland office serves Baltimore City and Baltimore, Harford, Howard and Anne Arundel Counties. Destiny Nettles has been hired to take over the Western Maryland office. She served in the Army as a Captain.

Anneke Vandenbroek, Commissioner, reported the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic celebrated five years of providing behavioral health care to veterans, active duty service members, and their families and caregivers on November 5. She also reported that the Clinic has clinicians available to speak to groups about mental health, stress management or challenges with transition.

Elwood Gray, Commissioner, reported the American Minority Veterans Research Project, hosted an informational forum at the Silver Spring Civic Building on November 14. Secretary George Owings, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) was the keynote speaker.

Chair and Vice Chair Report

A motion was made to cancel the December meeting. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved. The Commission will meet next on January 17, 2023.

Presentation suggestions for future meetings include homelessness, the HUD VASH voucher program, and the County's veterans hiring preference.

Updates / Announcements

Adjournment: 7:13pm

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

Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs Attendance Report

December 2021 – November 2022

VOTING MEMBERS			DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	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	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	A	A	3
2. Gray, Elwood	Veteran	1 st term expires 10/31/2021	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	1
3. Johnson, Jameelah	Director Designee – Dept. of Health & Human Services	1 st term expires 10/31/2021	A	C	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	A	3
4. Koffman, Robert	Veteran	2 nd term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	0
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	A	C	C	C	1
7. Mitchell, Reggie	Veteran	1 st term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	A	2
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	E	C	0
10. Schuster, Lisa	Public - RESIGNED	Partial term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	A	C	A	C	A	A	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	A	C	C	A	C	A	A	A	A	6
13. Vandenbroek, Anneke	Veteran	Partial term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	1
14. Webman, Susan	General Public	1 st term expires 10/31/2021	C	A	A	A	C	C	C	A	A	C	5
15. Willis, Steven	Veteran - RESIGNED	1 st term expires 10/31/2023	A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
16. Wilson, Michael	Veteran	Partial term expires 10/31/2022	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	A	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			A	A	A	A	A	C*	C*	A	A	C	
1. Burton, Christa – Office of U.S. Congressman Jamie Raskin Eyong, Joseph - Alternate			A	A	A	A	A	C*	C*	A	A	C	7
2. Garcia, Vikki – Office of U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes			A	C	C	C	A	A	A	A	A	A	7
3. Morris, Austin – Office of U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen Hendricks, Karen – Alternate / Samuels, Jeff - Alternate			C	A	A	A	A	C	C	C	A	C	5
4. Reichard, Ken – Office of U.S. Senator Ben Cardin			A	A	C	C	A	C	C	A	A	C	5