



**Commission on Veterans Affairs
Strategic Planning Meeting Agenda**

August 12, 2025

5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD – 1st floor Conference Room

**Michael Wilson, Chair
Chris Thomas, Vice Chair**

5:30 Lite dinner with food from Panera

6:00 Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence & POW/MIA Remembrance, Approval of June Minutes – Michael Wilson, Chair

6:10 Developing a strategic plan - Identifying and establishing strategic goals

1) Establishment of Veterans Treatment Court – What is needed to do this?

2) Communication and Outreach Planning - Plan to Re-establish the Commission's relationship with veteran and other organizations – Who will volunteer to speak at various veteran service organization about work of the Commission. Develop organization process for this.

3) Veteran Support (Programmatic) County Executive Proclamations, County Council Testimony Announcements, Events, etc.

FY 26 Program and Budget priorities to present to County Council in October
Operation Green Light – Another Ride on Bus will be decorated in November
Observances. County Executive Proclamations, Announcements, Events, etc.

- Veterans Day – US Military 250th Anniversary
- US Navy 250th Birthday – US Navy in MoCo
- USMC 250th – any USMC in MoCo?
- Hometown Heros – Tributes on www.montgomerycountymd.gov/veterans

4) Identification of resources and Role of Serving Together. DAR Bethesda Chapter - is looking for a service project for Veterans. Is there anything in Montgomery County that they could do?

5) Veterans Support (Physical)

- Clinic Update
- Veterans Home, Housing **Veteran Homeless in the County is on the rise now at 50 or so people**

6) Legislation at the State - who will take the lead on this?

7) Establishing committees

8) Speakers for Upcoming Meetings

8:00 Adjourn

ADA Reasonable Accommodations: Sign language interpreter services and other auxiliary aids or services will be provided upon request with as much advance notice as possible, preferably at least five (5) full business days before the meeting. To request any reasonable accommodation to participate in the meeting, please contact Carly Clem in advance at carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov or call 202-853-1109. In all situations, a good faith effort will be made to provide accommodation. For any additional questions or concerns, please contact Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison at betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov or please call 240-418-4865, MD Relay 711.



Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs

Strategic Planning Meeting

**Meeting Notes
August 12, 2025**

Call to Order - Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence & POW/MIA Remembrance

Chris Thomas, 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. 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.

The purpose of this meeting is for the Commission to develop a strategic plan and identify and establish strategic goals. The Commission discussed the following items:

Establishment of Veterans Treatment Court

Grace Caulfield, Commissioner, has been meeting with Jenna Davis, Director of Problem Solving Courts, Montgomery County Circuit Court. Judge Sherri Koch has been identified as the judge that has an interest in presiding over the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC). The two main issues for starting a VTC is funding and the steps towards starting one. They have been researching grants that could be used to fund a VTC. Most would take 3 to 6 months to receive as the current federal administration has put them on hold. Funding is needed to pay court liaison/administrator as well as mentors. It is estimated that at least \$50,000 will be needed to start the VTC plus additional funds for a full-time case manager that could be up to \$150,000 in salary. Some grants have stipulations that the funds are not to be used for salaries while other grants allow it. Separate grants may be needed to fund mentors.

The goal of the VTC is to reduce recidivism and resolve their legal issues.

There is currently a meeting scheduled for September 3 with Councilmember Friedson..

ServingTogether's Four County Collaborative will be addressing VTCs in a virtual meeting on September 16. Jennifer Reese will be presenting on what Prince George's County currently has set up with their veterans court, and Teresa Weeks will present on the work she's doing to create a veterans treatment court based in Calvert County that will serve Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's County veterans.

It is estimated that 9 counties out of all 24 counties in Maryland have a VTC. Other counties have figured out how to establish a VTC and Montgomery County should be able to learn from them.

It was asked if veterans who have health insurance could be billed for the services they received. For example, bill through Medicare or Medicaid. Grace reported that the Cohen Clinic is not able to bill for case management services, but it could be possible for veterans in the VTC who are receiving wrap-around services. There is also an uninsured exception. Jen Hodge, Local Behavioral Health Authority, reported the Maryland Public Behavioral Health System has three targeted case management programs.

The Commission will present its budget priorities to the County Council HHS Committee in October. The County Executive releases his operating budget in March.

Michael Wilson and Chris Thomas will head the VTC initiative for the Commission and develop action items. Mike Subin, Commissioner, volunteered to coordinate with Councilmembers. Grace will continue to meet with Circuit Court staff. Bob Norton and Lynn Nash of MOAA will collaborate with the Commission on efforts to establish a Veterans Treatment Court.

Moving forward, Commissioners will review data and other information, develop a preliminary plan, and share a strategic plan with budget information.

It was suggested that the Commission include a standing agenda item moving forward to continue VTC discussions. VTC is a top priority of this Commission.

Communication and Outreach Planning- Plan to Re-Establish the Commission's Relationship with Veteran and Other Organizations

The Commission needs to increase communication to the public. The Commission does have a Facebook page. There is a need for more face-to-face interactions. Commissioners could visit veteran service organizations (VSO) such as local American Legions (AL) and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) to share information and learn from those VSOs to report back to the Commission. Betsy has an email list for Commanders at VSOs in Montgomery County and also maintains an esubscription list over approximately 8,000 individuals that have signed up to receive information on veterans resources.

Montgomery College's Combat 2 College (C2C) program will be serving approximately 200 to 250 veterans in the upcoming academic year.

The Commission needs to develop a message that would be shared when giving presentations. Also need to determine which VSOs to speak with. Montgomery County has 3 American Legion Posts and 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars posts.

Michael reported that there are many events being held across the county that the Commission could take advantage of and have a table. For example, the County's African American Health Initiative regularly holds events and the Commission could attend. He suggested creating an ad hoc committee to review this issue further.

Identification of Resources and Role of Serving Together

Website: <https://www.servingtogetherproject.org/>

ServingTogether – Affiliated with AmericaServes is a coordinated network of public, private and nonprofit organizations serving veterans, service members and their families in the Greater National Capital Region (Maryland, District of Columbia and Northern Virginia). ServingTogether uses technology and its partner network to guide veterans, service members and their families to the most appropriate services and resources available.

Donny Williams is the Regional Manager for Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Southern Maryland, and Washington, DC.

The main service that ServingTogether provides is benefits navigation and claims clinics. They also provide assistance for housing, financial assistance, mental health, public health, transportation, utilities, recreation, education, employment and more.

ServingTogether is funded by a contract with Behavioral Health service area of DHHS as well as several grants, one of which is through a VA suicide prevention program. Staff connect veterans to existing services which cuts down on costs.

Staff meet with providers to determine which services veterans might be eligible for and meets with veterans and families to determine their needs.

If ServingTogether receives a referral for a veteran that does not live in the area, they will still assist that veteran with locating resources in the state that they reside.

Contact information for Donny Williams: 240-240-9259, dwilliams@everymind.org

Veterans Homeless in the County

Betsy Luecking, Staff, reported that veterans homelessness is on the rise and noted that there are at least 50 homeless veterans in Montgomery County currently. She suggested inviting John Mendez, Bethesda Cares, to speak at an upcoming meeting about this issue.

Other Issues

It was discussed that the Commission write a letter to the County Executive regarding open vacancies on the Commission and the need for a vacancy announcement to be sent out.

The Commission will discuss at the September meeting about meeting in person moving forward.

Cynthia Macri, former Commissioner, reported that on September 20 Warrior Canine Connection will be holding a graduation ceremony for a service animal that was named after her.

Adjourn

7:53 p.m.

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Grace Caulfield; Bernard Chesman; Jameelah Johnson; Joanna Starling; Michael Subin; Christopher Thomas, Vice-Chair; Michael Wilson, Chair

Commissioners Absent: Drew Garza; Elwood Gray; Miguel Sapp; Scott Schlesinger; Veronica Pei

Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Present: None.

Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Absent: Joseph Eyong (Congressman Jamie Raskin); Charlise Richardson (Congressman John Sarbanes)

County Staff: Jen Hodge, Local Behavioral Health Authority, Department of Health and Human Services

Staff Present: Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison; Carly Clem, Program Specialist II

Public Present: Donny Williams, ServingTogether; Bill Gray; Cynthia Macri; Ken Reichard