



## **Commission on Veterans Affairs**

**January 20, 2026**

**6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

Michael Wilson, Chair  
Chris Thomas, Vice-Chair

**Virtual Meeting Via Zoom**

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

**Join by telephone:** *If you want to call into the meeting, call 301-715-8592, use Meeting ID 739 001 7153 followed by #. Those calling into the meeting can press \*6 to mute and unmute their phone. If an attendee would like to speak during the meeting, they must use the “hand raise” function. If connecting via a smart phone, tablet or computer, please click on the Zoom link to be able to access all functions, including raising your hand. If you are calling by phone, press \*9 to raise your hand.*

### **Agenda**

- 6:00 Call to Order, Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence & POW/MIA, Approval of December 2025 Minutes – Michael Wilson, Chair**
- 6:10 Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families and Discussion of Shared Priorities – Jimmy Anderson, Deputy Secretary of VA Operations**
- 6:40 Chair & Vice Chair Updates – Michael Wilson and Chris Thomas**  
Next Steps on Veteran Homelessness in the County
- 6:50 FY 27 Priorities Progress – Updates on Veterans Treatment Court, Community Outreach and Education Plan, etc.**
- 7:05 Staff Report**
- 7:10 Public Comments**
- 7:20 Other Business**
- 7:25 Next Meeting Update**
- 7:30 Adjournment**

**ADA Meeting Accessibility Notice:** 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 three (3) full business days before the meeting/event. In all situations, a good faith effort (up until the time of the event) will be made to provide accommodations. To request the above or any other reasonable accommodation, please contact Carly Clem at 202- 853-1109 (V) or via MD Relay at 711 or send a request to [Carly.Clem@MontgomeryCountymd.gov](mailto:Carly.Clem@MontgomeryCountymd.gov).

**See Next Page for FY 27 Priorities**

## **Commission on Veterans Affairs**

Meeting with HHS Committee of County Council on Priorities for FY27

Michael Wilson, Chair - Chris Thomas, Vice-Chair

October 22, 2025

### **1) Communication and Outreach Planning to Promote Programs and Services that Benefit Veterans and Their Families**

**Greater Community Outreach and Education on Veteran Issues** - The Commission will develop a plan to increase communication with the public and other organizations that serve Veterans. There is a need for more face-to-face and real-time and non-real-time virtual interaction. Commission members will be encouraged to visit veteran service organizations such as local American Legions (AL), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans to share information about the work of the Commission and learn from these organizations about what they believe are unmet needs of Veterans and their families.

**Provide Support to the Office of Problem Solving Courts as they Plan and Implement a Veterans Treatment Court in Montgomery County** The Commission is working in collaboration with the Maryland Military Coalition and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) to provide support as requested from Judge Koch and the Office of Problem-Solving Courts to establish a Veterans Treatment Court in Montgomery County. We would greatly appreciate the Council's support for this important initiative.

### **Permanent Supportive Housing Vouchers for Homeless Veterans Including those with Families -**

We recommend the County make greater investment in permanent supportive housing which includes case management for homeless Veterans. This includes seeking additional HUD-VASH vouchers from the federal government. HUD-VASH is a collaborative program which pairs HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance with VA case management and supportive services for homeless Veterans. Veterans who have case management along with a voucher have greater success with permanent housing in the community. At this time, there are an estimated 50 homeless Veterans in the county and too often they are placed in emergency shelters. We recommend less investment in emergency shelter response. We ask the Council to continue needed funding for vouchers for Veterans not eligible for Veterans Administration benefits including HUD-VASH vouchers.

### **2) Commission was Established to Recognize the Service of Veterans**

**Planning for Operation Green Light / Veterans Day and Memorial Day**—Commission will plan and participate in Veterans Day and Memorial Day recognition events.

**Websites and Digital Displays to Honor Veterans** On [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/veterans](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/veterans) there are websites created by staff honoring County Veterans for Hometown Fallen Heroes going back to World War I, Vietnam Era Veterans, Women Veterans, Recognition for Veterans for Black History Month, and Thank You to County Veterans for Veterans Day.

**Speakers Bureau** Commission will develop a speaker's bureau to volunteer to speak at schools about Veteran issues and the meaning of Veterans Day and Memorial Day. The Commission publishes an annual report that includes information on the Commission's work and includes extensive data on Veterans. Go to [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva).

Lastly, it is critical for Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC) to have commissioners appointed in a timely manner so that they can be most effective and also respect the volunteer service of community members who serve. We ask that the County ensure proper staffing for the County Executive's Office for timely recruitment and appointment of BCC members.



**Commission on Veterans Affairs  
Meeting Minutes  
January 20, 2026**

**Meeting Location**

Meeting held virtually via Zoom.

**Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence & POW/MIA Remembrance**

Michael Wilson, 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 spoke of 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.

**Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the December 2025 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the December 2025 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva).

**Meeting Minutes Agenda Items**

**1. FY27 Priorities Progress**

• **Veterans Treatment Court**

Grace Caulfield, Commissioner, reported the All Rise Foundational Training for treatment courts has been scheduled for May 27 to May 29. Judge Koch has asked that Grace and Bob Norton, Military Officers Association of America, to attend. Montgomery County Council is behind the initiative. Funding for ad hoc positions still needs to be determined. Dr. Jameelah Johnson, Commissioner, volunteered to attend the training as well, if needed.

• **Renaming of Commission**

The [Committee Evaluation and Review Board's \(CERB\) final report](#) has been released. The report recommends that the Commission consider expanding the scope of its duties to include military families and rename the Commission to reflect this change. Betsy Luecking, Staff, reported that the Commission has a non-voting liaison from the Commission on People with Disabilities but the Commissioner who held that position wanted to be able to vote. The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission also has a liaison from the Commission on People with Disabilities and that liaison has voting rights. There should be continuity between all Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC). There also needs to be realistic time expectations for individuals who volunteer for BCCs and to make the experience meaningful to them. The Commission may want to consider writing a letter to the County Executive (CE) about this issue. Betsy recommended to CE staff that the next CERB include staff from BCCs who understand the issues. It was suggested that the Commission have a discussion on the renaming at next month's meeting and vote on the issue.

Betsy will share the minutes from the Commission's December 2024 meeting when Brandon Temple, Calvert County Commission for Veterans and Military Families discussed how their Commission went through their name change.

Betsy and Carly Clem, Staff Support, provide part-time staff support to this Commission and part-time staff support to the Commission on People with Disabilities. If this Commission were to change the name to include Military Families, the Commission may want to request that full-time staff be assigned given that it would increase the population served. The Commission will also need to discuss where it should be housed. It is currently under the Department of Health and Human Services, Aging & Disability Services, but it may be better housed under the County Executive where it may have increased visibility.

- **Community Outreach and Education Plan**

Chris Thomas, Vice-Chair, continues to work on identifying veteran service organizations in Montgomery County. It was suggested that Commissioners talk to American Legions and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts once or twice a year. Chris Thomas and Commissioner Mike Subin were asked to develop an outreach plan.

## **2. Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (MDVMF) and Discussion of Shared Priorities – Jimmy Anderson, Deputy Secretary of VA Operations**

Visit the [Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families \(MDVMF\) website](#)

[Read Deputy Secretary Jimmy Anderson's bio](#)

Acting Secretary Ed Rothstein envisions MDVMF as an integrator with a no wrong door approach whether they are a military service member, a transitioning service member, a veteran or a family member.

The Maryland General Assembly legislative session began on January 14. MDVMF is working with the Veterans Caucus and the nominating committee to have Acting Secretary confirmed soon. Other legislation introduced is [House Bill 0270 Military Family Inclusion Act](#) which would alter the membership of the Maryland Trust Fund Board of Trustees (MTFBT), the Maryland Veterans Commission (MVC), the Maryland Commission on Caregiving (MCC), and the Maryland Youth Advisory Council (MYAC). The bill makes technical changes to the MTFBT, adds one family caregiver of a service-disabled veteran as a member of the MCC, updates member organizations to the MVC, and adds one youth who has an immediate family member who is a service member to the MYAC. Deputy Secretary Anderson will share MDVMF's legislative agenda with the Commission. MDVMF wants to be proactive with sharing information with Veterans Commissions across the state as well as integrate working with Maryland's Commitment to Veterans (MCV) and the Maryland Department of Commerce Office of Military & Federal Affairs.

MDVMF also wants to connect with the 360,000 veterans in Maryland and the estimated 100,000 military family population. The estimate for military families is for the entire state and is not available by County. It is not known how the U.S. Census counts active duty military. It was noted that active duty military would be included in the census for their home state and not where they were living during their active duty status. There is potential for them to be double counted as well. It was also noted that while an active duty member may be stationed in Montgomery County, it does not mean that they live in Montgomery County. Deputy Secretary Anderson said MDVMF is working to address these issues with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Local VA Medical Centers may also have data.

It was asked how National Guardsmen are being included. There are two categories of active duty National Guard – Title 10 (serving full-time under federal law) and Title 32 (serving full-time under state command but with federal funding and benefits). Deputy Secretary Anderson said he has been working with his peer within the Maryland National Guard about sharing data and providing outreach. He will also inquire about Title 10 and Title 32 National Guardsmen.

[Maryland Joins Forces](#) (MJF) unites public and private partners to find innovative solutions to challenges facing our military connected community. Through regular collaboration, MJF's empower veterans, service members, and their families with the support they deserve, building a community where no one is left behind. There are currently 33 strategic partnerships with various groups and organizations. MDVMF has the capacity to financially support these partnerships through grants up to \$10,000.

It was asked if MDVMF partners with military installations to provide assistance to transitioning military servicemembers. Deputy Secretary Anderson said most members transitioning depend on the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which is run differently across units and installations. MDVMF is looking to partner with Garrison Commanders at Fort Meade and Joint Base Andrews to provide resources and connect with veterans in our communities as they transition. Dana Burl, Deputy Secretary, Military Family Policy and Programs, has been leading the MJF initiative. She has had conversations with TAP about how to partner with them and help veterans transition with employment, housing, community and belonging.

Miguel Sapp, Commissioner, reported the Veterans of Foreign Wars at the national level has staff assigned to different bases so they can be involved with TAP.

Deputy Secretary Anderson gave an overview of [MDVMF's Service and Benefits Program](#). Program assists veterans, service members, and their families in understanding and applying for the benefits they have earned. MDVMF has 26 accredited officers located throughout the state in Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration offices to help veterans and eligible dependents process claims.

MDVMF operates a Medicare/Medicaid certified [assisted living and skilled nursing facility at Charlotte Hall](#). The Home offers a continuum of care including a 126-bed assisted living program, a 318-bed skilled nursing program, and memory care in secure units. The skilled nursing program has a 16-bed Women's Unit. It was recently upgraded to a four-star facility.

MDVMF offers [five fully operational veteran cemeteries](#).

It was asked if changes at the VA have been made regarding ratings for sleep apnea, hearing loss, back pain and ankles. Miguel reported that changes to eligibility for tinnitus have been made nationwide. Deputy Secretary Anderson will take this question back to Phil Munley, Director of Veterans Services and Benefits Program.

Michael asked if there will be legislation this year regarding claim predators that would prohibit companies from charging veterans for claims unless the business is accredited by the VA. Deputy Secretary Anderson said it is unlikely that legislation will be included in this year's legislative session. There was not enough support for it last year. MDVMF is focused on providing the resources available and ensuring veterans and their families know about them. There has been discussion on making some services available digitally. Deputy Secretary Anderson encouraged Commissioners to notify his office about any interactions with claim predators.

It was asked if the MDVMF facilitates engagement with other Commissions statewide. MDVMF has facilitated a few meetings to bring Commission staff together over the years. It was suggested that MDVMF host monthly meetings for staff to discuss projects and share information.

### **3. Next Steps on Veteran Homelessness in the County**

After last month's meeting, Dale Tibbitts, Special Assistant to County Executive Marc Elrich has been in contact with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and the City of Rockville to ensure there is organization and that applications are submitted every year. Public housing authorities in Montgomery County did not apply for HUD-VASH vouchers this year. The current administration is considering ending HUD-VASH vouchers and taking away vouchers that have already been given out. Public housing authorities need to prove that there is a demand.

### **4. Staff Report**

Betsy asked Commissioners to provide feedback on the County's recommended FY27 capital budget and pedestrian safety plan including floating bus stops and bike lanes. Betsy sent out information via email to Commissioners. Testimony can be submitted for a public hearing being held on February 9.

Betsy reported interviews have been completed for new members. The recommendation letter has been sent to the County Executive's Office for review and their final approval. Three new public members and three new veteran members will be appointed. She noted that all 96 BCCs are behind in advertising and appointing new members. This Commission may want to comment on this issue in their letter to the CE about the CERB report as additional staff may be needed.

### **5. Other Business**

Dr. Macri will be a Workhouse Military in the Arts Initiative artist in residence where she will be teaching classes on frameworcking glass art at the Workhouse Arts Center.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on February 17, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

### **Attendance**

#### **Voting Members Present**

- Bernard Chesman
- Grace Caulfield
- Drew Garza
- Elwood Gray
- Jameelah Johnson
- Miguel Sapp
- Michael Subin
- Christopher Thomas, Vice-Chair
- Michael Wilson, Chair

#### **Voting Members Absent**

- Veronica Pei
- Scott Schlesinger
- Joanna Starling

**Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Present**

- Joseph Eyong – Representative of U.S. Congressman Jamie Raskin

**Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Not Present**

- Charlise Richardson – Representative of U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen

**Commission Staff Present**

- Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison, Community Outreach Manager
- Carly Clem, Staff Support, Program Specialist II

**Other County Staff Present**

- Mansi Gosalia, Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council

**Public Attendees**

- Wayne Miller, former Chair
- Bill Gray, former Chair
- Dr. Cynthia Macri, former Commissioner
- Ken Reichard, former Commissioner
- Jevina Lindsay, Maryland's Commitment to Veterans