



**Commission on Veterans Affairs  
Meeting Agenda**

**June 17, 2025  
6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

**Michael Wilson, Chair**

**Chris Thomas, Vice-Chair**

**Join the meeting via Zoom**

<https://montgomerycountymd-gov.zoom.us/j/7390017153?omn=82324645609>

**If you want to call into the meeting**, call 301-715-8592, use Meeting ID 739 001 7153 followed by #.

**If a Commissioner would like to speak during the meeting**, they can raise their hand if on video and Chair will recognize you or you can use the “hand raise” function under the reactions tab at bottom of page. If connecting via a smart phone, tablet or computer, please click on the middle of the page and the functions will be at the bottom of the page. Use the Zoom app to be able to access all functions, including raising your hand. If you are calling by phone, press \*9 to raise your hand. Those calling into the meeting can press \*6 to mute or unmute their phone.

**6:00 Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence & POW/MIA Remembrance, Approval of May 2025 Minutes** – *Michael Wilson, Chair*

**6:10 Veterans Treatment Court Planning** – *Commissioner Grace Caulfield, LCPC, LPC (DC & VA), CAC-AD, Director, The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic and Vice President at Easterseals DC/MD/VA*

**6:40 Establish Priorities for Commission on Veterans Affairs FY 27 County Operating Budget** – *Commissioners please come prepared with what you think should be a priority for the Commission to advocate for the meeting with the County Council HHS Committee in October*

**7:05 Chair & Vice-Chair Updates** – *Michael Wilson and Chris Thomas*

**7:20 Updates from Commissioners**

**7:30 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](mailto:carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov) or call 202-853-1109. In all situations, a good faith effort will be made to provide accommodations. For any additional questions or concerns, please contact Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison at [betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov) or please call 240-418-4865, MD Relay 711.



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs  
Meeting Minutes  
June 17, 2025**

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

**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.

**Approval of May 2025 Meeting Minutes**

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

**Veterans Treatment Court Planning – Commissioner Grace Caulfield, LCPC, LPC (DC & VA), CAC-AD, Director, The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic and Vice President at Easterseals DC/MD/VA**

Grace has been meeting with Bob Norton, Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) to discuss establishing a Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) in Montgomery County. Jenna Davis from the Montgomery County District Court will be attending a subcommittee meeting next week. Bob has drafted a letter of support for a VTC that Commissioners reviewed prior to the meeting. Data regarding the Annapolis Office of Problem Solving Courts included the letter is from a special report that Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield requested last year. Bob recommended that this Commission endorse the letter and communicate with County leadership endorsing establishment of a VTC in Montgomery County.

The floor was opened to questions and comments.

- **Would the VTC include a military case navigator?** Yes. The veteran would voluntarily enter into a contract agreement with the Judge to participate in the program. All manner of representatives would be available to provide services including the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, and County related services. There is a case manager component as well to identify needed supports and services. Other VTCs across Maryland offer veteran peer mentors as well.
- **Is this a framework that the veteran can take towards any case?** There is a dedicated Judge and a dedicated docket with a program specifically for veterans that agree to the contract.
- **How sustainable is the program?** Judge Sherri Koch, District Administrative Judge, has been identified and has an interest in veterans issues. She is tough but emphatic and understands how diversion programs are helpful in situations such as these. If a judge retires, another judge would have to agree to step in and take over the docket and case load, but the court system would already be established so it would not be as comprehensive effort to continue moving forward with another judge, if and when needed. Judge Weinstein from the Central Maryland Regional VTC is a good resource. Judge Weinstein, a U.S. Army veteran, founded VTC in October of 2015 as a comprehensive, court-supervised, and voluntary treatment-based program for veterans charged with misdemeanor and concurrent jurisdiction felonies in the District Court.

- **To date, there are 21 veterans incarcerated in Montgomery County.** 3 veterans are located at the Pre-Release Center and 18 are located in the Correctional Facility in Boyds. Jameelah Johnson, Commissioner, has submitted a FOIA requesting demographic data for the incarcerated veterans, including age, gender and zip codes.

No conversations with the State's Attorney's Office (SAO) has occurred yet as MMC wanted to do their due diligence and make sure this Commission is on board. Perhaps if the Commission sends the letter, Judge Koch would be able to sit down with the SAO to express her interest in applying. A motion was made for the Commission to adopt the letter as written and to send it to County officials. The motion was seconded. A vote was made and the motion was unanimously approved.

It was asked if a Commissioner could send a letter to the County Executive. Betsy Luecking, Staff, said Commissioners can send letters as private citizens and suggested the letters be copied to Dr. Bridgers, Department of Health and Human Services, as a matter of protocol.

### **Establish Priorities for Commission on Veterans Affairs FY 27 County Operating Budget**

The Commission reviewed the top two policy priorities for FY26:

Priority 1: Educate Veterans and their families on how to access all federal, state, and county funded programs for Veterans and their families and advocate for any needed programs and services not funded by the federal or state government at the County level.

Priority 2: Plan and conduct education and community outreach efforts for programs and services for Veterans and their families.

A discussion was had regarding these priorities and what the Commission has done to work towards the two priorities. Both priorities could carryover to FY27.

There is not much in the way of advertising for the Commission or directing residents to the Veterans Network Directory, the Commission's website, or the Veterans website. It was noted that Montgomery County provides far more information for veterans than other counties in Maryland. It was suggested that the Commission have a more direct website that could be concise and easily marketed and shared. The Commission may need to develop more outreach materials. The bus wrap used in November to advertise Operation Green Light was a great marketing tool. Betsy Luecking, Staff, reported the County has a contract with ServingTogether to provide information assistance and resources.

The Commission had previously discussed establishing a speakers bureau to speak at veteran service organizations (VSO) but no Commissioners have signed up. The Commission will hold a planning meeting in August to discuss this initiative. It was suggested either assigning a Commission member to a VSO or invite a representative to speak at a monthly Commission meeting. Commissioners could also volunteer to speak at schools. Commissioners interested in speaking: Mike Subin, Bernard Chesman, Wayne Miller and Bill Gray.

It was suggested that Commissioner Miguel Sapp share his VA housing loan presentation at the September Commission meeting.

It was asked if the Commission's Facebook page still existed. Carly Clem, Staff, will look into this issue.

It was suggested the Commission meet in August to develop a strategic plan and identify Commissioners interested in volunteering for outreach efforts. Commission volunteers identified at the meeting: Bernard Chesman, Mike Subin, Drew Garza, Grace Caulfield, Chris Thomas, Jameelah Johnson, Joanna Starling, Wayne Miller, Bill Gray, and Donny Williams. Joanna reported there are several hundred veterans enrolled in Montgomery College.

The VTC could be identified as an FY27 priority.

## **Chair Updates – Michael Wilson**

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich has appointed Chris Thomas as Vice-Chair of the Commission.

Michael accepted a VIP invitation to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Health and Human Services to be held Tuesday July 15.

It was suggested that the Commission hold a planning meeting a week after the full Commission meeting.

## **Updates from Commissioners**

Jameelah, former Commissioner Dr. Cynthia Macri and former Commission Chair Bill Gray attended a free forest bathing event for veterans held at Nature Forward in Chevy Chase. It was suggested that the Commission consider having a forest bathing retreat.

Donny Williams, ServingTogether, reported ServingTogether is launching a new women's Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB). The Women's CVEB is a collaborative, community-driven board focused on the unique needs and strengths of women veterans across the DMV region and beyond. We bring together veterans, transitioning service members, spouses, caregivers, VSOs and community partners to connect, advocate and celebrate women veterans. The Women's CVEB launch date is scheduled for Thursday July 24 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at EveryMind Headquarters, 1000 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, MD (with a virtual option). The Women's CVEB will meet monthly to continue the conversation, build momentum and create lasting impact. [For more information or to register.](#)

Bill Gray attended an event hosted by Our Community Salutes (OCS) at the end of May. OCS is a national, non-profit organization supporting high school seniors who plan to enlist into the US Armed Services following graduation. Of the 95 students who participated in the event, at least 8 or 9 students were from Montgomery County. The majority of enlistees were joining the U.S. Marines. Schools notify OCS of students to participate.

Dr. Macri invited Commissioners to attend a free glass arts program held at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia. Classes are being held July 5 and July 26.

Wayne Miller, former Chair, invited Commissioners to attend his retirement party.

## **Adjourn**

7:24 p.m.

## **Attendance**

**Commissioners Present:** Grace Caulfield; Bernard Chesman; Drew Garza; Elwood Gray; Jameelah Johnson; Miguel Sapp; Scott Schlesinger; Joanna Starling; Michael Subin; Christopher Thomas, Vice-Chair; Michael Wilson, Chair

**Commissioners Absent:** Veronica Pei

**Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Present:** Joseph Eyong (Congressman Jamie Raskin)

**Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Absent:** Charlise Richardson (Congressman John Sarbanes)

**Non-Voting Commission Liaison Absent:** Sam Korper, Commission on People with Disabilities

**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; Bob Norton, Maryland Military Coalition; Wayne Miller; Bill Gray; Cynthia Macri; Ken Reichard