



**Commission on Veterans Affairs  
Meeting Agenda**

**May 20, 2025  
6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

**Michael Wilson, Chair  
Vice-Chair appointment in process**

**Join the meeting via Zoom**

<https://montgomerycountymd-gov.zoom.us/j/7390017153?omn=87388338242>

**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 April 2025 Minutes – Michael Wilson, Chair**

**6:10 Veteran Benefit Services of the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families – Phil Munley, Director, Veteran Service and Benefits Program.**  
*The DVMF Service and Benefits Program provides assistance to the men and women who served in the Armed and Uniformed Services of the United States, their dependents, and survivors in obtaining benefits such as VA Aide and Attendance Benefits from the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Dept. of Defense, State of Maryland and other programs for veterans and their families*

**6:45 Chair Updates – Michael Wilson**

**7:20 Updates from Commissioners**  
*MCPS Education about Veterans - Mike Subin*  
*Veterans Treatment Court Planning – Grace Caulfield*

**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  
May 20, 2025**

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

**Call to Order - 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 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 April 2025 Meeting Minutes**

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

**Veteran Benefit Services of the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families – Phil Munley, Director, Veteran Service and Benefits Program**

PowerPoint Presentation: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/Minutes/MDVMF-Benefit-Presentation.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/Minutes/MDVMF-Benefit-Presentation.pdf)

Phil reviewed information provided in the PowerPoint presentation. Please view slides.

Additional information:

- A second veterans home will be built in Carroll County. The land was gifted to MDVMF by the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, on the grounds of the State's Police and Correctional Training Academy in Sykesville.
- Identified goals focused on improving and modernizing outreach and improving customer service.
- Due to the overwhelming support from the State lottery and casinos, the Veterans Trust Fund will soon begin granting funds to organizations that serve veterans.
- All state cemeteries are full. The only cemetery with openings is Arlington National Cemetery and Baltimore National Cemetery.
- MDVMF programs do not expect to be impacted due to the budget.
- This year the Maryland tax return allowed residents to opt into donating \$1.00 to the Veterans Trust Fund.
- The Service and Benefits Program is looking to move into two additional Motor Vehicle Administration offices in Annapolis and Waldorf.

The floor was opened to questions.

- **Does one benefit earned through a federal VA administration affect benefits earned through another federal VA administration?** Yes, one earned benefit through one administration can affect eligibility from another administration. For example, the national poverty level is used as an income guideline. If MDVMF files a claim for a veteran who has a service-connected disability, their income will become a factor for their eligibility for VA health care.

- **Do the Maryland cemeteries offer the ability for veterans to be buried and turned into trees?** Phil does not know the answer to the question but will reach out to the burial director for more information.
- **What is the state doing to assist veterans losing their employment due to federal government downsizing?** MDVMF is partnering with the Maryland Department of Labor and will be attending all hiring events to assist veterans with benefits. It was reported that the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has indicated that a reorganization may take place at the federal level with a goal of reducing staffing to 2019 levels. A study is currently being conducted and should be available in June.
- **Who is the Acting Secretary for MDVMF since Secretary Woods resigned?** Ross Cohen, U.S. Army Veteran, is Acting Secretary. He previously served as the DVMF's Deputy Secretary. A national search is being conducted for a new Secretary.
- **Do staff help veterans with the Aid & Attendance program and with allowances for clothing or renovations for cars and homes?** Yes. Aid & Attendance is part of the non-service connected pension program.

#### **Additional handouts:**

- [Diseases Associated with Exposure to Certain Herbicide Agents \(Agent Orange\)](#)
- [Presumptive Conditions for Agent Orange Exposure](#)
- [Additional Benefits for VA Service Connected Veterans](#)
- [Burn Pits - Gulf War Era and Post-9/11 Veteran Eligibility](#)
- [Camp Lejeune Presumptive Diseases](#)
- [Tinnitus and Hearing Loss - Acoustic Trauma in Military Service](#)

#### **Chair Updates – Michael Wilson**

Michael attended the State of the County address held by County Executive Marc Elrich. He would like to send written communication to County Executive Elrich thanking him for his continued support and reiterating the Commission's priorities that were shared with the County Council in April. Betsy Luecking, Staff, reported any correspondence should be sent via her and on official letterhead.

The Commission had previously discussed developing a community outreach strategy. After speaking at the American Legion in Germantown, Michael became a member.

Commissioners discussed having a retreat to establish goals and priorities. A motion was made that the Commission have an in-person retreat with virtual capabilities. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made for the Commission to move forward with having in-person meetings with virtual capabilities. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken. Of the seven voting members in attendance, six approved and one did not. The motion passed. It was suggested that the Commission plan to begin meeting in September.

#### **Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Education about Veterans - Mike Subin**

Mike spoke with the head of curriculum who spoke with the social studies coordinator regarding programming for veterans day. There is programming scheduled for middle and high schools.

Mike also reported that he attended an orchestra event at an elementary school. The national anthem was played by a student and no one in the attendance stood. He suggested writing a letter to MCPS retiring the importance of showing respect. Betsy reported that the Commission has no authority to advise MCPS. The role of this Commission is to advise the County Council and the County Executive.

## **Treatment Court Planning – Grace Caulfield**

Grace has invited a court liaison with the District Court who is affiliated with special programming to speak at the next Commission meeting. Jameelah Johnson, Commissioner, offered to ask the Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation about data regarding incarcerated veterans.

## **Updates**

American Legion Post 268, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2562 and Jewish War Veterans Post 360 will be hosting a Memorial Day event on Monday May 26 at Veterans Park in Wheaton. Featured speaker will be Stan Seidel, Maryland Director for Veterans' Employment and Training.

Jewish War Veterans Post 360 will be hosting a Dining Out event on August 25, 2025. Ross Cohen, Active Secretary, MDVMF, will be attending. An invitation has also been sent to Governor Wes Moore.

Wayne Miller, Silver Spring Vet Center, will be officially retired as of September 30, 2025. He accepted the federal Deferred Resignation Program through the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority and will not be working at SSVC effective July 1.

## **Adjourn**

7:30 p.m.

## **Attendance**

**Commissioners Present:** Grace Caulfield; Jameelah Johnson; Miguel Sapp; Scott Schlesinger; Joanna Starling; Michael Subin; Christopher Thomas; Michael Wilson, Chair

**Commissioners Absent:** Bernard Chesman; Drew Garza; Elwood Gray; 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:** Phillip Munley, Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families; Donny Williams, ServingTogether; Wayne Miller, Silver Spring Vet Center; Michael Theard; Max Tzentis