



Commission on Veterans Affairs

November 18, 2025

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 October 2025 Minutes
- 6:10** Veteran Legislation for the General Assembly and any other County or Federal Legislation – *Lynn Nash, CAPT (RET.) USPH, Communications Director, Maryland Military Coalition*
- 6:40** Chair & Vice Chair Updates – Michael Wilson and Chris Thomas
- 6:50** FY 27 Priorities Progress - All
- 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.

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 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. ###

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 November 18, 2025 - Meeting Minutes

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 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.

Meeting Minutes Agenda Items

1. FY 27 Priorities Progress

Veterans Treatment Court: Judge Koch and staff within the Problem Solving Courts are meeting internally. Betsy noted that an officer with the Montgomery County Police Department reported at the Commission on People with Disabilities that there have been discussions about a Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) being established. Bob Norton, Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), reported there is a proposal that a portion of the taxation of the sale of legal cannabis could be used to fund VTCs throughout the state. That would require a change in policy or law. Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield who is a member of the Judiciary Committee has indicated that she plans on calling Judge Koch to discuss the VTC. Jenna Davis, Problem Solving Courts Coordinator, submitted an application for a foundational training. Grace Caulfield, Commissioner, will follow up with Jenna.

Greater Community Outreach and Education on Veteran Issues: Need to identify Commissioners to speak with veteran service organizations (VSO). Michael will look into speaking at the American Legion Germantown Post again. Chris Thomas, Vice-Chair, will continue to research VSOs and report to the Commission at the next meeting. Miguel Sapp, Commissioner, is Post Commander of Veterans Foreign Wars Post 2562 and is also a member of American Legion Post 268.

ServingTogether and Christina Williams, Veterans Benefits Specialist, Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (MDVMF) is the starting point for those seeking services and resources.

Need to provide information to veterans and their families about the Gaithersburg VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). There are approximately 5,000 veterans enrolled at the CBOC and there are over 37,000 veterans in Montgomery County.

Wayne Miller, former Chair and former Silver Spring Vet Center (SSVC) Director, reported he would refer veterans to the Steven A. Cohen Clinic at Easterseals and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). The SSVC also referred veterans to the CBOC and the DC Medical Center. Many veterans assumed the SSVC provided medical services.

Platoon 22 in Frederick County was providing a free breakfast once a month to veterans. Their contract with Goodwill Industries was terminated effective September 1 and they had to vacate their Frederick Veteran Service Center location. It is unknown if the breakfasts for veterans are still occurring.

It was asked if Mission BBQ provides monthly dinners. If an organization makes a presentation at a Mission BBQ location, then Mission BBQ will provide food for the event free of charge. Mike Subin, Commissioner, said he would reach out to Mission BBQ for clarification.

Phil Munley, Director of Service Programs, MDVMF, reported it is a struggling to get the word out across the state about services available to veterans. The Gaithersburg MDVMF Service Office is a great place to start. Christina Williams, Veterans Benefits Specialist, can connect veterans, spouses or family members with additional services and resources that they may need (christina.williams1@maryland.gov, 301-987-8412). MDVMF always refers veterans to the SSVC for mental health services. There are 15 MDVMF Service Officers located throughout the state. Phil added that it would be wonderful if Montgomery County could identify a location to provide a free breakfast to veterans and have a VBS available to talk to veterans about their needs.

Phil also reported that as of November 12, the MVA is now offering individuals to donate a \$1.00 to the Veterans Trust Fund when they renew their driver's license or tags. This is a way to partner with the MVA and to increase the amount of funds in the Veterans Trust Fund.

Wayne suggested using Ride On bus wraps to advertise the Gaithersburg VA CBOC.

Permanent Supportive Housing Vouchers: Michael briefed the County Council HHS Committee on the Commission's priorities last month. The key to the County receiving HUD-VASH Vouchers in the past was due to the advocacy efforts of Senator Van Hollen and Senator Cardin. Advocacy needs to go to the federal government. Michael reported that a representative for Senator Angela Alsobrooks has requested to attend the December meeting. It was suggested inviting them as well as County Councilmember Natalie

Betsy reported at this time, there are an estimated 50 homeless Veterans in the county. The County currently spends more funding on emergency placements such as overnights in shelters with no case management than it does on permanent supportive housing vouchers. She also reported

In 2015, the Commission on Veterans Affairs met with Councilmember George Leventhal and reported that there were 13 to 15 homeless veterans who did not qualify for the HUD-VASH vouchers as they had received less than an honorable discharge. As part of the County's Fiscal Year 2016 budget, the County Council approved an appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 to provide housing and supportive services to functionally end Veteran homelessness in the County. The funding is recurring every year and is available to Veterans who have received less than an honorable discharge and are therefore not eligible for VA programs. At the time, Montgomery County was the only county in the U.S. to provide its own funding for homeless veterans.

2. Chair & Vice Chair Updates – Michael Wilson and Chris Thomas

Michael and Chris attended the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Operation Green Light Ride On Bus press conference. [View press release and photo.](#)

Michael reported that he and several other Commissioners participated in U.S. Service Academy interviews of high school applicants for Senator Alsobrooks. Members of Congress may nominate candidates for appointment to four of the five U.S. service academies - U.S.

Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

3. Veteran Legislation for the General Assembly and any other County or Federal Legislation – Lynn Nash, CAPT (RET.) USPH, Communications Director, Maryland Military Coalition

Lynn shared a PowerPoint presentation – [“Getting Ready for the 2026 Legislative Session”](#)

Additional handouts:

- [Maryland Military Coalition’s 2026 Legislative Goals](#)
- [Selected Legislative Gains 2021 - 2025](#)

Floor was opened to questions.

Betsy reported that Commissioners can contact elected officials as private citizens. If there is an action that the Commission would like to take, Betsy can notify the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR). If OIR concurs with the opinion, they will brief the whole Montgomery County delegation.

Lynn reported Commissioners can sign up to be on the MMC mailing list to receive a legislative tracker email once a week.

Bob Norton, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Maryland Council of Chapters, reported MMC recently recognized four state lawmakers as their 2025 Legislators of the Year. The recognized lawmakers for 2025 were Senator J. B. Jennings (District 7); Senator Bryan W. Simonaire (District 31); Delegate Nick Allen (District 8) and Delegate Mike Griffith (District 35A). These individuals were selected for their work on veteran-related bills and support for the military community during the recent legislative session. Bob noted that Montgomery County delegation has never been recognized by MMC for their efforts on veterans or military family issues. [View members of the Maryland Veterans Caucus](#). Delegate Crutchfield is looking at pre-counseling support for incarcerated veterans.

4. Other Business

Betsy reported the Commission has received applications for vacant positions. Betsy asked Commissioners interested in being on the Interview Selection Committee to contact her.

[The Commission’s 2025 Annual Report is now available.](#)

Elwood Gray, Commissioner, reported the American Minority Veterans Research Project (AMVRP) partnered with Glen Haven Elementary School to host a breakfast on Veterans Day for veterans and their families. GHES is a Purple Star School. He also reported AMVRP will be hosting an event on January 16 at the Silver Spring Civic Building with Manna Foord Center and other agencies. Elwood will send Betsy information to share.

Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the October 2025 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the October 2025 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 16, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment

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

Attendance

Voting Members Present

- Grace Caulfield
- Drew Garza
- Elwood Gray
- Miguel Sapp
- Scott Schlesinger
- Michael Subin
- Christopher Thomas, Vice-Chair
- Michael Wilson, Chair

Voting Members Absent

- Bernard Chesman
- Jameelah Johnson
- Veronica Pei
- Joanna Starling

Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Present

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

Non-Voting Congressional Representatives Absent

- Charlise Richardson – Representative of Office 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

- Jen Hodge, Local Behavioral Health Authority

Public Attendees

- Wayne Miller, former Chair
- Bill Gray, former Chair
- Nicholas Feemster, Easterseals
- Leslie Lyles Greene
- Roslyn Jones, MDVMF
- Ken Reichard, former Congressional Representative
- Jonathan Alfaro, former Commissioner
- Bob Norton, Military Officers Association of America
- Phil Munley, Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families

Guest Speakers

- Lynn Nash, Maryland Military Coalition