



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Summary Minutes
April 19th, 2016**

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Randy Stone, Vice Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Randy asked for all present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing 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. A POW/MIA Empty Chair is placed at all official meetings of the Commission as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mike Subin, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the March 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes. Wayne Miller, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the March 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

III. Operation Second Chance – Cindy McGrew, President & Founder – www.operationsecondchance.org

Operation Second Chance (OSC) is a 501(c)3 organization that supports wounded service members during their recovery and assist them as they transition back to duty or civilian life. OSC also provides [emergency assistance and support](#) to Veterans and their family members. Items that will be considered for assistance include rent and mortgage, utility bills (electric, gas water, sewer), childcare during illness or surgery, and housing and/or airfare for a family member to assist an injured or recovering member. Donations have also been used to purchase essential items such as groceries, gas cards, gift cards, and formulas and diapers. Requests must be submitted by a service liaison, caseworker, chain of command or care provider. If the care provider is a family member they may submit requests as long as they have appropriate documentation including a DD214. Applications are processed immediately upon receipt. OSC has also assisted Walter Reed in providing accessible vehicle modifications for veterans with disabilities.

Funding comes through grants, fundraising and donations. An upcoming fundraising event – [Ride Allegheny](#) – is a 2-day bike ride from Cumberland, MD to Gaithersburg, MD or 4-day bike ride from Pittsburg, PA to Gaithersburg, MD. OSC's average overhead has been at approximately 10% over the last 12 years. OSC is comprised of Cindy and an assistant.

OSC offers two different types of [retreats](#) depending on an individual's injuries and their schedule. Short local overnight trips are available to those who need a quick getaway, but are unable to travel far from their chain of command or medical care. Week long retreats are also available. Retreats offer many different activities for individuals to choose from, as well as give wounded warriors and their families the opportunity to rest, relax and complete activities on their own. All OSC retreats are all-inclusive and have no cost to the recovering service members and their families. Trips are tailored towards individualized injured service members, couples, families, women veterans, and caregivers. Day trips and special events are also offered for service members and their families who are at Walter Reed and Fort Belvoir.

[Operation No Person Left Behind](#) (NPLB) aids in the recovery and rehabilitation of injured service members from all eras who must endure the lifelong sacrifices made for our country. Volunteers offer their time and skills to aid in the emotional recovery of our veterans through outdoor activities with fellowship and the encouragement to overcome any disabilities. Outdoor activities include hunting and fishing.

For information on how OSC first started please visit <http://operationsecondchance.org/intro>.

OSC Public Service Announcements: <http://operationsecondchance.org/video>.

The floor was opened to questions.

Randy Stone, Vice Chair, asked how OSC interacts with other organizations. OSC works with organizations such as Operation First Response, Operation Homefront, Yellow Ribbon Fund, Semper Fi Fund, Quality of Life Foundation, and Our Military Kids. Cindy noted that Paul Davis Restoration has also donated several accessible home modifications for service members. Betsy suggested that Cindy connect with Rebuilding Together as they also provide accessible home modifications.

IV. Serving Veterans in the Mental Health Court – Raymond Crowel, Psy.D., Chief, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)

Mike had previously sent a memo to the States Attorneys Office and Judge Bair about establishing a Veterans track within the mental health court. It was not met with a good reception. Dr. Crowel is in the process of developing three diversion programs. The STEER program is for those with substance abuse that will be deflected from jail. An officer will be able to make a determination prior to arrest whether or not the individual needs to be taken in for an evaluation. Dr. Crowel said that his case managers will ask whether or not the defendant is a Veteran and if they are they will be linked up with the services they need. HHS has relationships with organizations including Serving Together and Maryland's Commitment to Veterans. VA staff are also present at the Crisis Center. Dr. Crowel explained that both the Circuit Court and the District Court have been approached to offer a mental health court. The Circuit Court handles more serious criminal cases while the District Court handles misdemeanors.

Jim Campbell, Commissioner, asked how a Veteran who has been charged with a more serious offense, such as assault and battery, would be able to take advantage of the Veterans track within the mental health court if the offense is not considered to be a mental health issue. The response was that it is a behavioral health issue. A Veterans treatment court better understands the issues that a Veteran may be struggling with, such as substance addiction and post-traumatic stress, and connects them to the appropriate resources and Veteran mentors. It was asked if intake workers ask individuals whether or not they have served in the military. HHS case workers and Montgomery County Correctional Facility staff currently do ask the question and Montgomery County Police Officers are being trained to do so as well.

V. Chair and Vice-Chair Report:

Dan Bullis, Chair, suggested that a subcommittee meet during the summer while Commission meetings are on hiatus to begin contacting family members about the proposed Vietnam Veteran memorial in Wheaton.

Randy Stone, Vice Chair, reported that he, Dan and Betsy met with the County Executive in March. Dan presented the Commission's priorities as well as gave an update on Commission accomplishments and future goals.

Randy recently attended a Serving Together Leadership Council meeting. The Council provides assessment and feedback on the direction of Serving Together with respect to policy, practice and infrastructure to create a better coordinated system of care. Randy is serving as a representative of the Commission.

VI. Old Business:

Mike Subin, Commissioner, reported that the exact location of the Vietnam Veteran memorial at the Wheaton Redevelopment Project has not been decided upon yet. David Dise, Director, Department of General Services (DGS), has indicated that it may be located within a park area. Current design plans for the memorial include a smaller scale eternal flame that mirrors the one at Memorial Plaza behind the Executive Office Building and to include the names of all 130 County Vietnam fallen heroes at the base of the flame in brick. Commissioners would like to have an opportunity to provide input on the memorial design. Dan will convene a meeting of the Vietnam Veteran memorial subcommittee to discuss and then submit recommendations to Mr. Dise.

Austin Morris, Representative of Congressman Chris Van Hollen, reported that they will be meeting with the VA on June 7th and hope to receive more information concerning the Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) at that meeting. Betsy was informed that the VA has chosen the location of the new CBOC, but the location cannot be disclosed until the Request For Proposal (RFP) process is completed. The VA has indicated that the CBOC would become operational in December 2017.

VII. Roundtable:

Jane McCarthy, Commissioner, reported that she and Wayne Miller will be on Maryland Public Television (MPT) on Thursday, April 21st at 8:00 p.m. for a two-hour live program titled "MPT's Vietnam Initiative Preview". The show will

give viewers a behind-the-scenes look at the key elements of their major, four-year project titled "[MPT Salutes Vietnam Veterans](http://vietnam.mpt.org/lzmaryland/)". It will highlight the upcoming three-hour documentary film, "Maryland Vietnam War Stories," that premieres on MPT on May 24th, 25th, and 26th before it's released nationally. The April 21st preview also sets the stage for the weekend event, "LZ Maryland," which takes place June 18th and 19th at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium. <http://vietnam.mpt.org/lzmaryland/>

On Sunday, May 1st Team River Runner will be kicking off their weekly paddling program for wounded veterans and their families at Riley's Lock in Poolesville. The program is also open for teenagers and adults with disabilities. The program will continue every Sunday until the end of October. The Washington Rockville Elks will be providing a free cookout. View flyer for more information: www.teamriverrunner.org/events/sunday-paddling-kickoff-seneca-showdown.

Jim Campbell will be the new liaison to the Commission on Aging and he will be attending his first meeting next week.

Adjournment: 7:30 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Tuesday, May 17th, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Health & Human Services, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st Floor Large Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850

Respectfully submitted:

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager