



COMMISSION FOR VETERANS
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES
6420 ALLENTOWN ROAD
CAMP SPRINGS, MD 20748



Prince George's County Commission for Veterans Meeting Minutes – October 7, 2019

The mission of the Commission is to evaluate the needs of county veterans and their families against the programs and services offered within Prince George's County, and to promote the development or expansion of programs and services when a need identified.

Meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence

Role Call: Present: Commissioners Martel, Dickens, Hafford, Hollis, Hendricks-Roach, Watson.

Minutes: Initially, only four commissioners were present, While we could not approve the minutes for lack of quorum, there were no recommended changes from the commissioners or the audience. It was recommended the minutes be accepted when a quorum was available. Minutes were later approved with a motion from Commissioner Hollis and seconded by Commissioner Dickens. Vote passed 6 to 0.

Excused Absences: Commissioners Jewitt, Nordhorn, Parker, Pauling and Secretary Jewitt

Veterans Affairs Officer:

Dr. James Dula reported: A good Month.

Top 5 reasons people come to his for support

1. Rental Assistance: Send to MD Trust Fund first. Then to Social Services. If not resolved then help from own veterans budget. Will exceed budget within a few months so he has requested additional funding.
2. VA Claims: Handled in his own office in addition to the two State officers in the Harriet Hunter building.
3. Womens Veterans Collaborative. To recognize women veterans. Working with Secretary Owings at MDVA and US VA and each of their committees. Prince George's County is being used as a model for Women's Veterans. Plan is to open up office for Women's Veterans within current suite and then a larger facility as the needs and programs grow.
4. Business Development: Veteran entrepreneurs looking for ways to improve, develop, or start businesses within Prince George's County. Non-profits also involved. County being used as a referral for veterans from other areas because of our unique development.
5. Employment: many looking for help and there are many resources within the County for people looking for jobs.

Events: October 19 – Resource Fair

November 2 – Stand Down

3rd Tuesday (October 15) – Serving Together

Issues: *Census 2020:* looking at it now to make sure every veteran is counted. Working with Census Committee. Discussion of how to make sure everyone is counted. This year's census will be electronic. Available info is sketchy. Discussion of how to count and "from where" to count veterans. Dr. Dula will pass along the questions that were raised. Expect over 1 million population this time.

Military Appreciation Day: County Exec wants to have Military Appreciation Day, understanding that not all H.S. students will go to college or the military. Now in stages of planning. Planning for next month at Bowie Baysox Stadium. Negotiating now. H.S. students may not know anything about military. Want to have each service represented as well as a table for veterans.

Com Dickens: Status of ROTC and JROTC in schools. Dr. Dula responded.

Com Hendricks-Roach: helps ROTC students write resumes. Suggested that be included in future programs.

Com Martel: Any new commissioners appointed? Dr. Dula: Yes but not yet confirmed by County Council.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Veterans Resource Fair: Please ensure all commissioners respond to Chairman on how and when they can help this program succeed. Get as many as possible there at 10:00 a.m. VSO personnel should be wearing hats.
- b. Veterans Stand Down: November 2. Anything to handout. Dr. Dula says we will have something by Nov 2. All were encouraged to participate.
 - a. Com Hendricks-Roach suggested a **Calendar of Events** so that we could pick activities in which to participate and plan our activities. Could then cover all events and perhaps post on web page.
- c. Com Martel had handouts for the Resource Fair and the Stand Down. Also had a handout for a job fair to happen shortly. High clearances required but could be very good for people just retiring or separating from the services.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Time for flu shots. Com Hollis noted that Walgren would provide free if you can provide proof of military involvement (retired or active).
- b. Com Hendricks-Roach noted this is normally the time to have our one day retreat. Com Martel noted that he had heard no plans for one but would inquire. Dr. Dula noted that would be a good time for an in-brief/out-brief for new members.
- c. Com Hendricks-Roach asked about the breakfast or lunch events with the County Exec. Com Martel noted that the County Exec ran partially on keeping in touch with veterans and with the commission. Also need to itemize and account for activities on Veterans Day.
- d. Com Hollis noted that his church had a census table this past weekend. Audience member commented further on the census, how it might be accomplished and how it might be integrated in the County.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. From the audience: Coalition of 160 companies to hire more than 1000 veterans by 2023. Queried if the Commission had any impact on that activity. Com Martel responded that the Commission would have no method of impacting that activity since it does not hire, employ, or refer anyone. Dr. Dula recommended that Mr. Thaxton go ahead and pursue getting more information about the coalition and how it may be integrated with the activities of the County.
- b. Com Watson: does anyone know of any gym facilities or no/low cost facilities for veterans? Dr. Dula has list of discounts available for veterans. Will look at it to see if anything qualifies. Audience member noted that VA may have a program to help where the veteran simply needs to apply for that assistance. May include access to bases/posts where functions are available.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

- a. NABVETS working with Wounded Warriors in putting a resource guide for all resources available for women veterans in all 24 counties in MD. In some cases, the resource listed is not necessarily currently available. Com Hafford as what legal resources were available. Did not have info readily available but will contact with the data.
- b. Com Hendricks-Roach noted that eye glasses could be obtained by going to VA, getting exam and glasses.
- c. Positive comments on VA from audience member. Found difficulty accessing but once in, the service was first rate. Com Hendricks-Roach added comments on VA capacity to serve.

Commissioner Martel thanked everyone for attending.

Honors to Colors.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Martel
Acting Vice Chair

Total guests: 4