

Carroll County Veterans Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Date: December 21, 2024

Start Time: 2:00 pm

Location: American Legion Post 31 (2 Sycamore Street, Westminster, MD)

Chairperson: Bill Nash

Vice-Chair: Marc Fisher

Topic	Discussion
Mission Statement	To evaluate, develop and promote new and existing programs and services for Veterans and their families within Carroll County.
Vision Statement	That Carroll County offers our Veterans quality services and programs to ensure the enrichment and enhancements of life for our men and women and their families.
Attendance (Appointed VAC Members are in bold)	Francis Hahn, Megan Klein, Bill Nash , Nigel Forney, Elaine May Stem , Gina Valentine, Marc Fisher , Steve Whisler , Bobbie Lawrence, Commissioner Rothstein, Commissioner Kiler, Rick Pollard, Kati Townsley, Chris McClean, Stacey Graham, Celene Steckel, Melissa Moore, Bob Borie
Welcome and Introductions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chair's Comments (Bill Nash) – opened the meeting by welcoming those attending. 2. Attendee Introductions and Announcements- No comment 3. Pledge of Allegiance led by Bill Nash 4. Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Kiler commented on his participation in the Wreaths Across American event and extended thanks to Babylon Vault. During his speech at the event, he promoted the VAC and the Veteran Services Program. Commissioner Rothstein also commented on Wreaths Across America and noted he stressed the importance of Veterans' taking care of their mental health and for others to be aware and if "you see something, say something."
Old Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval of Minutes – Quorum not met, unable to approve November minutes. Commissioner Kiler stressed the important of board members attending more regularly. Gina will work with Victoria and the council's chair Bill Nash in reviewing attendance and sending a follow up email if necessary. 2. Monthly Program Reports: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Veteran's Program Coordinators' Report for October 2024: (Richard Pollard) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. 19 Claims submitted. ii. 21 New Representations iii. 30 office/3 home visits iv. 14 phone appointments v. 1561 telephone/ email contacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rick Pollard also commented that VSOs assist Veterans and family members in connecting to healthcare, educational benefits, and other related services. Gina stressed the important of the program being embedded at the Bureau of Aging & Disabilities as staff can connect Veterans to other resources/services for which he or she may be eligible. • Francine reported on an annual MDVMF training which included valuable updates on VAHC, Care in the Community, issues Veterans encounter with C&P examinations, VA Trust Fund and discharge upgrades.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megan Klein was noted to have assisted 3 separate Veterans in achieving 100% disability rating status and one case being complex, requiring additional research. b. <u>Veteran’s Shuttle Report</u> – (Stacey Graham) November 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 14 Veterans were served with 21 total trips- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baltimore- 14 Veterans/ 21 trips 2. Loch Raven- 1 Veteran/ 1 trips 3. Fort Detrick- 0 veteran/ 0 trips 4. Martinsburg – 6 Veteran/ 6 Trips 5. Germantown-0 Veteran/ 0 trip 6. Fayette St. 0 Veteran/ 0 trip 7. Glen Burnie 1 Veteran/1 trip 8. Total: 20 Veterans/27 trips c. <u>Employment Initiatives for Veterans Update</u> (Alex Brown)- Not in attendance 3. <u>Update on Veteran Services Program Grant</u> (Bobbie Lawrence) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In November the grant provided emergency housing assistance to 5 Veterans. One Veteran was assisted with a utility expense and another Veteran received assistance purchasing work related attire. • Francine assisted a Veteran in submitting a Trust Fund application. Tony has been working with the Veteran very closely and assisted with negotiating a car loan pay off amount for which he had an extremely high interest rate. • Tony has been very busy delivery boxes of shelf stable meals for those experiencing food insecurity, along with directing to food pantries and distributing food gift cards when appropriate. • The VSP staff have received many thanks from Veterans toward Babylon Vault and the Thanksgiving meals which were received.
<p>New Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Year’s Luncheon will start at 12:30 on 1-21-2025 prior to the VAC meeting. • Bob Finn, Senior Advisor to Secretary Anthony Woods provided background and progress in the Veteran’s Home to be constructed in Sykesville. It is anticipated to be a 128-bed facility, with no cost to local county government. The timeline will be mostly dependent on what funds the VA will be able to contribute to the project.
<p>Announcements</p>	<p>Nigel Forney, Post Commander with the DAV had a few announcements:</p>

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Next Meeting Date	Tuesday January 21st, at 2pm at the American Legion Post #31, 2 Sycamore Street, Westminster.