



# BALTIMORE COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

## Commission Meeting Minutes – August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

### **Location:**

Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture and Farm Park, 1114 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21030

**Mission:** To advocate for the veterans of Baltimore County and connect them to resources through education and outreach.

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### **6:00pm – 6:05pm Chair - Call to Order / Roll Call /Quorum present**

#### Present

District 1 Michael Eagle	Towson University Representative Dario DiBattista
District 2 George White	County At-Large Jeff Bonner
District 3 Edward Bauer	County At-Large Charles Jay
District 4 Danny Blount	County At-Large Katina Barnes
District 5 Robert Eckert	Department of Corrections Representative Jerlena Rhodes-Cadell
District 6 James Hutson	

#### Not Present

District 7 Dennis Cash  
CCBC Representative Derrick Little  
Department of Housing and Community Development Representative Terry Hickey  
Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Representative Ed Schwartz  
Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Representative Warren Squirewell  
Baltimore County Police Department Representative Joe Jamerson  
Baltimore County Veteran' Coordinator Patrick Taylor

#### Guests in attendance:

- David Marks - Baltimore County Councilman – District 5
- Erwin Burtnick – Commander, Department of Maryland, Jewish War Veterans (JWV)
- Stan Fishman – Commander, JWV Post 167 (Owings Mills/Pikesville)
- Suzanne Berger – Saratoga WarHorse

### **6:05pm – 6:45pm Chair introduced Guest Speaker – Suzanne Berger – Saratoga WarHorse**

- **Suzanne Berger Presentation**
  - Ms. Berger is an equine connection coach & equine trainer in Baltimore County.
  - Ms. Berger provided her previous work background as well explained that she has had a lifelong passion for all horses, but especially Thoroughbreds, since childhood and that her first horse was a TB mare.



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- She explained that Saratoga WarHorse operates a three day program which isn't a rehabilitation program, it isn't therapy, and not a recreational program but a chance for veterans to utilize the horses to express their anxieties and relieve stress.
- Ms. Berger went on to explain Saratoga WarHorse offers an once-in-a-lifetime experience that has the ability to help Veterans get their life back on track after trauma.
- The cost is all paid (including transportation) and veterans come in from all over the country.

### 6:45pm – 7:50pm Commission Business

- Approval of last month's meeting minutes (July 26<sup>th</sup>) – motion was provided, seconded and unanimous approval of minutes
- Old Business
  - Ex-officio member attendance - Chair requested support to get these members in attendance.
  - Commission Budget (from June appropriation) \$1,186 – still not spent – need support to execute funds
  - Commission website – need support to get website updated
  - Veterans Day Event Update
    - 12 weeks out
    - Location reserved – Towson Student Union; time 10:00am/5:00pm
    - Focusing on selecting which events and room location
    - Need help from all commission members
    - Incorporating Secretary Woods (Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs) Veteran Day planning guidance
    - Need to determine which VIPs will attend
    - Finance
      - ✓ Funding from County (\$10,000) & Towson \$2,500 noted
      - ✓ Need to find a County agency to sponsor budget
    - Marketing
      - ✓ Need to continue to word out including having some physical displays
      - ✓ May be able to get 105.7 and reaching out to WYPR
    - Suggestion to have mental health personnel onsite
    - Primary commission focus
- New Business
  - Ms. Katina Barnes announced as Commission Director of Communications; Ms. Barnes will coordinate Commission media activity i.e. Facebook, Website, printed material, etc.
  - Ms. Barnes requested commission members review other websites, media programs, etc. and provide “best practices” back to her



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- Discussion on how do we reach veterans – general consensus that the commission meetings need to have a hybrid option (preferred in person for commission members) while virtual for veterans who cannot make it to the meetings – discussions on location – Towson University was discussed as an option - need to work out parking fee details.

### **7:50pm – 8:00pm     Commission Outreach Events**

- **Reviewed last month's Veterans' Commission events**
  - Baltimore County Veteran Suicide Prevention Coalition, July 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Central Maryland Veterans Collaborative, August 9<sup>th</sup>
- **Noted upcoming Veteran's events**
  - Baltimore County Veteran Suicide Prevention Coalition, **August 24<sup>th</sup>** (1:00pm)
  - Central Maryland Veterans Collaborative Meeting, **September 13<sup>th</sup>** (9:00am)
  - An "Evening's Discussion & Program" with representatives from the Baltimore County Veteran Suicide Prevention Coalition
    - American Legion Post 130 – 8666 Silver Lake Drive, Perry Hall, MD 21128
    - **September 13<sup>th</sup>** (6:30pm)
    - Please contact [MDSquadron130@gmail.com](mailto:MDSquadron130@gmail.com) for more information
  - Baltimore County Commission on Veterans' Affairs, **September 27<sup>th</sup>** (6:00pm)

### **8:00pm - 8:05pm     Baltimore County Veterans Commission Open Forum and Discussion**

- Councilman Marks – Provided his appreciation to the commission members for their time and service to the country and now the community. Additionally mentioned he is moving forward with a veteran memorial in the Towson area.

### **8:05pm                     Adjournment**