



BALTIMORE COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Meeting Minutes – July 26th, 2023

Date / Time:

July 26th, 2023 / 6:00pm-8:04pm

Location:

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

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

6:00pm – 6:05pm Call to Order / Roll Call / Quorum

Welcome by Vice Chair – George White

Introduction of new Commission member – Katrina Barnes (At-Large)

Members present:

- District 2 George White
- District 3 Edward Bauer
- District 5 Robert Eckert
- District 6 James Hutson
- At-Large Katina Barnes
- At- Large Charles Jay
- Towson University Representative Dario DiBattista
- Department of Corrections Jerlena Rhodes-Cadell
- Baltimore County Police Department Joe Jamerson
- Baltimore County Office of Outreach Patrick Taylor

Distinguished Guests in attendance:

- Baltimore County Councilman - Izzy Patoka (District 2)
- George Barnes – DAV representative
- Jamaal Ferguson – Easter Seals/The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Easterseals
- Erwin Burtnick – MD State Veterans Commission
- Jason Marshall – ServingTogether
- Suzanne Berger– Saratoga War Horse

6:05pm – 7:00pm Introduction and Remarks by Guest

- **Patrick Smithwick**
 - Patrick a noted educator and author who has written multiple books about Horseracing (*Racing Time, Flying Change, and Racing My Father*) discussed how his life took a sudden change when his son his son Andrew returned back from Iraq with severe symptoms of PTSD and has lived as a wandering



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homeless man for most of the years since. Patrick discussed his personally intensive journey to reconnect with his son (still ongoing) and his book *War's Over, Come Home – A father's search for his Son, two tour Marine Veteran of the Iraq War*.

7:00pm – 7:18pm Commission Business

- Approval of Last Meeting Minutes - approved
- Old Business
 - Media
 - Discussed County's Media Guidelines and the commission will institute a "checks & balance" approach media releases
 - Commission Facebook Page – please post as appropriate – will be reviewed and the posted
 - Commission Website – Patrick working with County IT team to upgrade.
 - Veterans Day Event Update
 - Approval received for Nov 12th joint event with Towson University
 - Time will be 10:00 a.m./5:00 p.m.
 - County will provide Commission a grant \$10,000
- New Business
 - Next Meeting: August 23rd at 6:00pm

7:18pm – 7:34pm Commission Outreach Events

- **Review of Last Month's Veterans' Commission Events**
 - Central Maryland Veterans Coalition, June 12th – **Jason provided an in depth of all the resources his organization provided – yeah wow**
 - **July 4th Parades** – Commission participated in the following parades – attendees felt it was very positive for the Commission to participate
 - Dundalk
 - Towson
 - Catsonville
 - Jerlena was thanked for attending all three
- **Upcoming Veteran's Commission Events**
 - North Point-Edgemere VFD Parade on Friday, July 28th
 - Baltimore County Veteran Suicide Prevention Coalition, July 27th
 - Central Maryland Veterans Coalition Meeting, August 9th



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7:34pm - 8:04pm Baltimore County Veterans Open Forum and Discussion

- Remarks by Baltimore County 2nd District Councilman Izzy Patoka
 - Thanked the speaker and members of the Commission for all they are doing to support veterans and their families
 - Learned more about Veterans tonight – well worth the attendance
 - Recommended that Commission members attend the next round of the County Executives budget town hall(s) to garner support
- George Barnes – DAV representative gave a brief overview of how the DAV supports Baltimore County veterans – offered to be a speaker at a future Commission meeting.
- Jamaal Ferguson – Easter Seals/The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Easterseals introduced himself and multitude of services his organization can provide to veterans.
- Erwin Burtnick – MD State Veterans Commission – reminded all in attendance about getting out the “message” regarding the PACT Act initial cut-off date
- Jason Marshall – ServingTogether – reminded members about the Central Maryland Veterans Collaborative and the Baltimore County Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Suzanne Berger – Saratoga War Horse – gave a quick overview of activities at the Agriculture Center and offered to be a presenter at a future meeting.
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8:04pm Adjournment