

## Carroll County Veterans Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Date: March 16, 2021

Start Time: 2:00 pm

Location: Virtual on GoToMeeting Platform

Chairperson: Marc Fisher

Vice-Chair: Mick Schmidt

Topic	Discussion
<b>Mission Statement</b>	To evaluate, develop and promote new and existing programs and services for Veterans and their families within Carroll County.
<b>Vision Statement</b>	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.
<b>Attendance (Appointed VAC Members are in bold)</b>	Linda Bergofsky, <b>Larry Burbank</b> , <b>Jack Curran</b> , <b>Jim Duncan</b> , Bob Eney, <b>Marc Fisher</b> , Francine Hahn, Bobbie Lawrence, Kimberly Madeja, Kristen Maszarose, Keith Midberry, Mike Messina, <b>Bill Nash</b> , Stacey Nash, Rich Pollard, Commissioner Ed Rothstein, Celene Steckel, <b>Elaine May Stem</b> , <b>John Veney</b> , Leslie Wagner, Commissioner Richard Weaver, Ashley Weyer, <b>Steve Whisler</b>
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Chair's Comments</u> (Marc Fisher) – Marc opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</li> <li>2. <u>Attendee Introductions and Announcements</u> – Visitors introduced themselves.</li> <li>3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Marc Fisher.</li> <li>4. <u>Commissioner's Report</u> –               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Commissioner Rothstein reported that the Veterans home to be built in the South Carroll area continues to move forward. He recently visited the hospital and hospice and met with Garrett Hoover, CEO to discuss the hospice expansion and their veteran programs. They brainstormed a Veterans keepsake to be included in the Hospice expansion. He is proud of the work that we are doing within our community and partnerships. Vaccinations are occurring and we are challenged with the numbers. If you have the opportunity to get vaccinated then get vaccinated. The Health Department is in phase 1B and should be moving to 1C (65+) in a week or two. Hospital and pharmacies are in phase 1C and Walter Reed is vaccinating veterans. Marc noted that Lifebridge Hospital in Randallstown is also providing vaccinations. Commissioner Rothstein shared that the Board is getting ready to move into the budget season.</li> <li>b. At last month's meeting it was discussed the lack of awareness of the programs offered for Veterans in Carroll County. Commissioner Weaver would like to use his monthly WTTR podcast to interview VAC members as they promote different programs for Veterans in the county. He would also like to tape an episode that can be used if one of the Commissioners are unable to record during their scheduled time. He</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

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	<p>would like his first interview to be Bill Nash and will be calling on different people to get involved. He is committed to doing this for the next six months. Jack Curran also volunteered to assist.</p> <p>5. <u>Public Comment</u> – No comment.</p>
<p><b>Old Business</b></p>	<p>1. A quorum (6 + voting members) was established with eight voting members present.</p> <p>2. <u>Approval of Minutes</u> (Marc Fisher) – Draft minutes from the February 2021 meeting was approved. Bill Nash made a motion and Elaine May Stem seconded.</p> <p>3. <u>Monthly Program Reports</u> (Mike Messina) – Mike reported that the archives are starting to operate two shifts. The VA has offered to provide a third shift but it may not be needed.</p> <p>a. <u>Veteran’s Program Coordinators’ Reports for February 2021:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 9 New representations</li> <li>ii. 31 Claims submitted</li> <li>iii. 1 Office appointment</li> <li>iv. 1 Home visit</li> <li>v. 37 Phone appointments</li> <li>vi. 1627 Telephone and email contacts</li> <li>vii. Monthly return on investment, based on known awards is approximately \$977,069 for compensation and pension. Monthly Growth Rate for the month of February 2021 was 3%.</li> <li>viii. Yearly return on investment, based on known awards is approximately \$33,684,129 since inception of the program in October 2013. Growth Rate from 12/2020 to 2/2021 is 5%.</li> </ul> <p>b. <u>Veteran’s Shuttle Report</u> (Stacey Nash) – February 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 16 veterans were served with 13 home pick-ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Baltimore – 6 veterans served with 9 trips</li> <li>2. GBMC – 1 veteran served with 1 trip</li> <li>3. Martinsburg – 6 veterans served with 6 trips</li> <li>4. Loch Raven – 2 veterans with 2 trips</li> <li>5. Glen Burnie – 1 veteran with 2 trips</li> <li>6. Caton Avenue – 1 veteran with 1 trip</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<p style="margin-left: 40px;">7. Total cost - \$2,507.00</p> <p style="margin-left: 80px;">ii. Commissioner Weaver wanted to know if we had considered providing transportation for veterans in other counties. Stacey Nash reported that they have discussed and determined it would be better if additional counties supplied a veteran shuttle first so they could share the transportation routes.</p> <p>c. <u>Employment Initiatives for Veterans Update</u> (John Veney) – There will be a Veterans Benefits Fair on April 20, 2021 with information for veterans and caregivers on all benefits that are available to them. A flyer will be forwarded to the group for help in distribution. Nationwide unemployment rate for veterans was 5.2% in February, which is up from 4.9% in January. Their goal is to decrease the veteran unemployment to 3.1% which was pre-COVID. The state added 6,800 jobs last month and they use a rough estimate of 10% for veterans. He was able to assist seven veterans find employment last month. He is still working remotely but any veteran can call and set up an appointment with BERC.</p> <p>4. <u>Update on Veteran Direct Home and Community Based Services Program Grant</u> (Francine Hahn) – Currently they are serving three veterans.</p> <p>5. <u>Update on Veteran Services Program Grant</u> (Francine Hahn) – An update on the two veterans that are in the hotel – one is a multi-generational family who will be moving to alternative housing on Thursday and the other is remaining and working on a HUD-VASH voucher. A veteran who previously received the donation of a car that was in need of some car repairs was assisted by a local veteran-owned service center. A South Carroll church is assisting a legally blind veteran with home repairs. Francine had an intake with a new homeless veteran who is not VA eligible. He was honorably discharged four months shy of two years. She is assisting him in applying for service compensation. At the last Ending Veteran Homelessness meeting they were able to identify a few veterans that were utilizing the Night-by-Night Shelter.</p>
<p><b>New Business</b></p>	<p>1. <u>Veterans View in the Carroll County Times</u> – Marc Fisher. Marc has created a rotation of four writers for the monthly Veterans View column. He submitted March with “Do you know a Veteran?”, Todd Mitchell will be writing April, Alex Whitney May and Adrian Gamboa will be June. Jim Duncan and Jack Curran have volunteered to write as well. Max of 600 words and is always due the Thursday prior to the first Tuesday of the following month. Editorial support from Gina or the Communications Team in Carroll County government is available.</p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <u>Virtual Bureau of Aging &amp; Disabilities Open House – Bobbie Lawrence.</u> We will be hosting a virtual Open House the week of April 19-23, 2021. Monday will be an overview of the Bureau’s programs and services including our Veterans Services Program and Shuttle, Tuesday will be our Caregivers Conference, Wednesday will highlight our local Senior &amp; Community Centers, Thursday will be our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Friday will cover various topics of interest for older adults. Registration will begin the end of the month. More information to follow.</li> <li>3. <u>Veterans Benefits Expo, April 20, 2021 – John Veney.</u> See Update on Employment Initiative for Veterans above.</li> </ol>
<b>Announcements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Night-by-Night Shelter.</u> Celene announced that the overnight shelter housed at St. Paul’s United Church of Christ in Westminster will be closing on March 31, 2021. The day shelter will continue at that location for several months. Anyone needing overnight shelter should contact HSP.</li> <li>2. <u>Eviction Prevention Program.</u> Celene announced that there is funding available for individuals facing eviction. Eligibility requirements vary so if you were previously not eligible you may be eligible now. Assistance can go back as far as March 2020. Contact HSP for an appointment to see if you qualify. Leslie will forward the flyer.</li> <li>3. Kim Madeja from Carroll County Veterans Independence Project introduced herself. She is attending on behalf of Jason Siddock the new Executive Director. They are preparing for a soft opening the end of April and will open their doors on May 15, 2021. They are looking forward to working with everyone.</li> <li>4. <u>Westminster Memorial Day Parade.</u> Currently there has been no plans communicated from the city of Westminster regarding the annual Memorial Day Parade. American Legion #31 will be coordinating something if there is no official event scheduled.</li> </ol>
<b>Next Meeting Date</b>	<p><b>The next meeting date is Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. Meeting and participation information will be forwarded. Call 410-386-3818 for more information.</b></p>