

## Frederick County Veterans Advisory Council Minutes

Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
By Web Ex and Facebook Live Streaming

### Attendance

Voting Members	Present	Absent	Excused
Deb Childers	X		
Paul Hunter	X		
Sharon Jacko	X		
David Kaye	X		
Wilfred Plumley	X		
Fred Schumacher	X		
Fred Wood	X		
Ex-officio members			
Dee Harrison			X
Michelle Day	X		X
Andrea Walker			X
Michael McLane			X
County Councilman Steve McKay	X		
Delegate Carol Krimm			X
Nan Mann	X		

Guests: Jay Hessler (for Andrea Walker), Teresa Spruill, Diana Fulchiron, Leigh Adams, Marlene Young, Malcolm Furgol, Ken Oldham. Staff: Linda Bergofsky, Miles Ward, Pat Fleet, Kelly Goetz

### Welcome and Introductions

Sharon Jacko called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Establishment of a quorum: After a review of attendance, Sharon Jacko determined that a quorum of voting members was present.

Approval of Meeting Agenda: Fred Schumacher made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. David Kaye seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

### Old Business

Approval of the meeting minutes from February 17, 2020: David Kaye made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting as submitted. Paul Hunter seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Update on action items from prior meeting: Linda Bergofsky reported on the status of the action items as follows – the April agenda has been drafted; Tina Lehmann from County Parks and Recreation can't commit to hosting or co-sponsoring the Veteran Wellness and Recreation Fair until the County issues specific guidance about re-opening. This is a priority for her but she must defer any specific decision; agencies represented on the employment sub-committee are charting how Veterans enter their workflow

to determine pain points and opportunities to improve; Colleen Bernard from FCPS asked that VAC members who want to be part of the speaker's bureau should email her ([Colleen.Bernard@fcps.org](mailto:Colleen.Bernard@fcps.org)) and copy Sharon; Michael Hughes, the new DEI director for Frederick County has agreed to present at the April meeting.

**Legislative Update:** Council member McKay provided an update on the legislation he is developing to enable a two-tiered property tax credit for Veterans with disability ratings of 50-74% and 75-99%. He had intended to propose the legislation this week, but was asked to defer pending a formal assessment of the impact of the American Rescue Plan. He thanked Sharon and Fred Schumacher for their input on this legislation and will keep the VAC of apprised of any further developments.

**Chair's Comments:** Sharon Jacko noted that the VAC was very well represented at the bridge dedication ceremony for Lance Corporal Higgins last weekend. She also remarked on the value of information conveyed at the Women Veteran's Day ceremony, which was sponsored by the Women's Caucus of the Maryland General Assembly. Linda, Sharon, and Delegate Carol Krimm were in attendance. Sharon also introduced the speakers, noting that the VAC invited them so that we may gain the perspectives of the local foundations and United Way on Veterans' needs and how we might work together to better serve this population.

**Presentations:** Working with Local Foundations to Support Veteran's Needs

Diana Fulchiron is the Director of Community Impact at the Community Foundation of Frederick County, a private nonprofit organization that holds component funds for charitable purposes. Individuals donors designate the intent of the fund and the foundation helps the donors achieve those goals. There are a few ways that the Community Foundation supports Veterans, including scholarships for training technical fellowships and undergraduate and graduate degrees; one fund is specifically for Korean War Veterans and their descendants. Diana mentioned that the scholarship application is open. Additionally, impact grants can be applied for by non-profits to support their programs. Three impact grants are specifically for Veterans: the Alvin F. Tesmer and John J. Hayes Veterans Memorial Fund helps support basic needs, behavioral health services, and direct medical care; the Grove Foundation Fund provides grants to support Veterans in obtaining affordable housing, behavioral health, recreation, and job training; and the Major Dan Campbell Veteran Services Fund supports peer mentoring and peer support groups. Diana noted that a new fund is being developed, The David Smith Veterans Trust Fund, which will focus on addressing emergent needs. The details of this last fund are still being worked out. The focus of grants administered by the Community Foundation are driven by donors. However, one of the places where the community has input into the priorities is through the strategic grant process, where a smaller, unrestricted pot of money is made available. Those grants reflect the community needs assessment, which was last conducted in 2018-2019. That assessment resulted in three priority areas for strategic grants: supporting families with children, supporting individuals impacted by substance use disorders and, preparing for a growing aging population.

Leigh Adams is the Executive Director of the Ausherman Foundation. Ausherman is a place-based foundation that only serves Frederick County. The Foundation's philanthropy supports large community benefit projects, convening of networks, and educational opportunities. The areas of focus are children, youth, and families, health and human services, arts and culture, and community benefit vibrancy

projects. In the past year, the Ausherman Foundation has been focusing on enhancing collaboration and working with our different nonprofit providers to figure out the best way that to bring everyone together. Leigh highlighted one outcome of this approach which resulted in the GIS enabled application showing the location of every food bank in the county. The application was developed in collaboration with the County and is a model for this type of work going forward. Historically, Ausherman funding has been very broad in the health and human services arena and many of the providers it supports have Veterans as clients. That said, Ausherman is always talking to its nonprofit partners to identify new and emerging needs that may be more Veteran-specific. A graphic showing the Ausherman Foundation funding priorities is provided as an attachment to the minutes.

Marlene Young is the President of the Delaplaine Foundation and has a personal connection to Veterans through her father and father in law. The vast majority of funding – typically upwards of 75% - support impact partners and projects in Frederick County. The Foundation has six pillars of giving – the arts, education, health, historic preservation, human services, and spiritual enlightenment. Support for Veterans and active duty military falls under the human services pillar. Over the past five years, the Delaplaine Foundation has given more than \$200,000 to Veteran related programs and services. This includes grants to Goodwill Industries and Platoon 22 to develop the Veterans Service Center currently under construction, funding to Frederick Community College for the Building Bridges for Veterans Program, support for the Weinberg Center’s Veterans Night Out program, several equine therapy and therapeutic riding programs, and support for Hood College students to work with MCVETS in Baltimore. Along with the Community Foundation and the Ausherman Foundation, Delaplaine Foundation participates in the community human needs assessment. A copy of the slides Marlene used is provided as an attachment to the minutes.

Ken Oldham is the CEO and Malcolm Furgol is Director of Community Impact and Grants at the United Way of Frederick County. While United Way strives to fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in the community, United Way has focused its efforts over the past five years on understanding and supporting ALICE – Asset limited Income Constrained Employed – households. These are families that are unable to afford a basic cost of living. While Veterans are included in the ALICE data and one of six demographic priority groups for United Way, the limitations of the data mean that Veteran-specific data are not available in the ALICE report. Looking back at the non-profits funded in the past two years, 58% of grant funds went to organizations that serve Veterans in FY 2019 compared to 42% in FY 2020. Malcolm noted that this is based on grantee self-reporting. United Way prepares an annual advocacy platform; in the past few years, one of the items on the platform is to increase support of Veterans services and to improve data on Veteran needs. The programs available through the Prosperity Center are intended to be available to Veterans regardless of income. With regard to data, United Way has asked that all agencies delivering programs through the Prosperity Center and other pathways to collect data on Veteran status. A copy of the slides Ken and Malcom used is provided as an attachment to the minutes.

The VAC expressed gratitude that United Way partner agencies are screening for Veteran status and suggested that rewording the question as “Are you serving or have you ever served” may better resonate with women Veterans. The VAC also raised the possibility of collaborating to conduct a specific needs assessment of the Veteran population. All of the speakers expressed interest in continuing this discussion and investigating that topic. Finally, the VAC asked the Foundations to consider how their Veteran-

specific programs and grant opportunities are publicized to improve awareness among Veteran-serving agencies.

### **Public Comment**

No public comments were submitted through the designated public input portal. Linda introduced her colleagues Miles Ward, Pat Fleet, Kelli Goetz, and Teresa Spruill, who is a member of the Washington County Veterans Advisory Commission.

### **New Business**

Updates from VA: Linda noted that all Veterans who are age 55 and over and enrolled in VA for health care are eligible to receive the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at the medical center. The vaccines are also available to Veterans who are essential personnel. She also encouraged Veterans to keep up with their other vaccines and preventive care, which are available at the CBOC.

### **Announcements**

Sharon announced that Linda will be leaving her position effective April 23. Miles Ward and Pat Fleet have agreed to step in to support the VAC until a permanent replacement is found. The VAC thanked Linda for her contributions to Veterans in Frederick County.

Linda noted that March 29<sup>th</sup> is Vietnam War Veterans Day. Several VA medical centers including Baltimore and DC have put up displays. There are a number of virtual job fairs and benefits fairs this month. Veteran unemployment is running a little over 5%, which is still higher than it was but lower than unemployment generally. There are still many employers seeking to hire Veterans. Linda also mentioned the new Women of Color exhibit at the Military Women's Museum at Arlington National Cemetery.

The next meeting of the VAC will be held on **Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 6:30 pm**. We will be joined by Michael Hughes, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion officer for Frederick County, Dr. Xavier Bruce, president of the Western Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Black Veterans, and Ryan Trout, Housing Manager, Frederick County Department of Housing and Community Development.

### **Action Items and Adjournment**

#### Action Items:

1. Sharon will follow up with the foundations and United Way regarding a Veterans needs assessment.
2. Linda will set up a meeting with Sharon and David to finalize the April agenda.
3. Linda will add the needs assessment and Veterans wellness fair as standing agenda items.

David Kaye made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 PM. Paul Hunter seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Submitted by Linda Bergofsky

DRAFT