



Maryland Council of Chapters

Minutes of the June 13, 2020 Virtual Meeting

(Secretary's Note: Recording the salient matters from a meeting via this method was something of a novel exercise, with poor sound quality via a speakerphone and folks sometimes talking over each other, often complicating my efforts. In response, I have chosen to continue to present my record of this meeting in a different format.)

Attendees:

B. Hartzog, President...FGGM
R. Norton, 1st Vice President
D. Peterson, Secretary, MoCo
H. Kaplan, Legislative Liaison

J. Shiffrin...FGGM
D. Donahue...General Smallwood
S. Regner...Prince George's County
T. Seybold...Star Spangled Banner
R. Hansen...Susquehanna
M. Johnson...Upper Eastern Shore
H. McIlroy...Upper Potomac

There was no representative from the Annapolis chapter in attendance.

Guest attendees:

Tom Jurkowsky, National Board of Directors
Karen Ruedisuell, MOAA Director, Health Affairs
Erin Stone, MOAA Program Director, Council and Chapter Affairs

The meeting was called to order at 1132.

The pledge and invocation were led by President Hartzog.

The agenda for the meeting was generally followed and is attached to these minutes and made a part hereof.

The Minutes of the March 14, 2020 meeting were approved as prepared by the Secretary.

The president announced that he had received the 2019 Harris Award information and would hand out the banner medallions at the next in-person meeting unless a chapter requested an earlier distribution.

Our guest presenters were members of the MOAA national staff and each provided an update on current events and concerns being tracked and advocated for by the national organization.

Ms. Karen Ruedisueli covered the update on the DoD's Military Health System reform initiative. Her discussion material is attached to these minutes and made a part hereof. Of particular significance, MOAA's "ask" is for the 2021 NDAA to include provisions halting all medical billet reductions and MTF restructuring until further analysis is complete. This subject was a focus of the 2020 Virtual Storming the Hill effort.

Captain Erin Stone provided a general council and chapter update and discussed the enhancements to the chapter dues program. Her presentation is attached to these minutes and made a part hereof. Of particular note, a new Policies and Procedures Guide will be published this summer.

Legislative Director Kaplan briefly discussed the final outcome of the effort to establish a second Veterans Home in Maryland, with the MDVA choosing a Sykesville site as the preferred location. The effort to nominate Harvey's relief in this position was deferred.

Oral and written chapter reports were received as follows:

- Annapolis...nothing received
- FGGM...written report, attached
- General Smallwood...written report, attached.
- Montgomery County...written report, attached
- Prince George's County...written report,
- Star Spangled Banner...written report, attached
- Susquehanna...written report, attached
- Upper Eastern Shore...written report, attached
- Upper Potomac...written report, attached

Secretary's Report...no roster changes reported, but prospectively, Jim Shiffrin will be recommended by the Council to replace Brad Jewitt as our rep on the Maryland Veterans Commission. In her absence, the Secretary has received Annie Brock's report on her Transitioning and Networking Liaison activities, which is attached to these minutes and made a part hereof.

Treasurer's Report...deferred due to the absence of the Treasurer.

The list of vacancies in Council positions was again discussed, without progress being made on identifying volunteers to assume the duties of the Spouse and Surviving Spouse Liaison and the Legislative Liaison.

Bob Norton gave an update on the recent activities of the Maryland Military Coalition and its future plans for advocacy before the 2020 General Assembly session, which he forecast to be “a challenge.” There was further discussion concerning whether it would be useful for the MMC to hire a professional lobbyist, with the expense distributed among the member organizations.

Prospects for the 2020 Maryland Council Congressional Luncheon were again discussed. 2nd Vice President Gary Palmer was appointed to chair the planning committee for a second time. It was decided to reach out to Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Ruppertsberger to act as sponsor for our space request. The consensus was that we should begin our outreach for this event in August, assuming that it can be held under the public health emergency,

The Virtual “Storming the Hill” event was discussed, with the following division of effort: Hartzog team to see Ruppertsberger, Sarbanes, and Harris. Norton team to see Brown, Hoyer, Raskin, and Mfume. Kaplan team to see Van Hollen, Trone, and both senators.

DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS RESULTING FROM AGENDA ITEM DISCUSSIONS:

- 1. Bob Norton is to follow up on the possible use of Voter Voice (at subscription rate of \$4500/year) to improve our legislative outreach efforts.**
- 2. Bob Norton agreed to follow up by discussing the Legislative Liaison position with a MOAA member now serving on the Maryland Military Coalition.**
- 3. B.K. Hartzog will discuss the possibility of MOAA National staff member Shane Ostrom, to see if he might be available to speak at our October meeting.**

The list of dates for upcoming Council events noted in the meeting agenda remains valid for planning purposes, subject to Covid-19 – related changes that might prove necessary.

The virtual meeting was adjourned at 1415.

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Peterson

Captain David H. Peterson, NOAA (Ret)
Secretary

