

**BYLAWS**  
**ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

**ARTICLE 1 – PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Anne Arundel County Veterans Affairs Commission (hereinafter, the “Commission”) is to advocate and help to enhance the quality of life for veterans of military service and their families who live or work within Anne Arundel County by advising the County Executive and the County Council on the coordination and development of government policies, programs, services and the allocation of resources for veterans and their families.

**ARTICLE 2 – AUTHORITY**

The Commission is established pursuant to Article 3 §12A of the Anne Arundel County Code. If any inconsistencies exist between these Bylaws and the County Code, the County Code shall prevail.

**ARTICLE 3 – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Section A. Powers and Duties:** Among its powers and duties, the Commission may advocate on behalf of and represent the interest of all Anne Arundel County veterans and their families for matters concerning, but not necessarily limited to, the following, and may:

1. Establish a forum for all veterans of the County;
2. Maintain coordinated communication with County and local governments, businesses, and veterans of the County;
3. Provide assistance, guidance, and information to the business and academic communities of the County and various levels of government to ensure adequate consideration of veterans in employment, education, training, and public programs;
4. Review county, state and federal legislation that may impact veterans and their families and make recommendations regarding the legislation:
  - (a) to the County Executive and the County Council; and
  - (b) with the approval of the County Executive, to the state and federal legislatures and executive branches;
5. Advise the County Executive on the coordination of services among all public and private agencies, departments, and organizations, which provide services and programs to veterans and their families; and,

6. Identify and recommend to the County Executive sources of private and public financial assistance available to expand or improve services and programs for veterans and their families.

**Section B. Reports:** On or before January 31st of each year, the Commission shall submit a report to the County Executive and the County Council setting forth its accomplishments for the preceding year and its goals for the forthcoming year.

## **ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A. Composition:**

1. Number and type of members. The Commission consists of seventeen (17) members appointed by the County Executive. Of the members:

(a) Thirteen (13) shall be voting members, each of whom shall have separated from active military service under honorable conditions. The Commission shall endeavor to have members from all branches of the military, and to be a diverse body. Of the 13 voting members:

(1) two shall be qualified veterans pursuant to the guidelines of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) one shall be the owner or operator of a local business or an employee of a local business, selected in consultation with the Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce;

(3) one shall be an educator or educational administrator selected in consultation with Anne Arundel Community College;

(4) nine shall be selected by the voting members of the Commission from any of the following organizations:

- (i) Veterans of Foreign Wars;
- (ii) American Legion;
- (iii) AMVETS;
- (iv) Disabled American Veterans;
- (v) Military Order of the Purple Heart;
- (vi) Fleet Reserve Association;
- (vii) Vietnam Veterans of America;
- (viii) Korean War Veterans Association;
- (ix) a women's veterans organization;
- (x) Military Officers Association of America;
- (xi) National Association of County Veterans Service Officers;
- (xii) Non-Commissioned Officers Association of America;

- (xiii) Reserve Officers Association;
- (xiv) Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America;
- (xv) Student Veterans of America;
- (xvi) Wounded Warrior Project;
- (xvii) Paralyzed Veterans of America;
- (xviii) National Association of Black Veterans: or,
- (xix) Other similar organizations that support veterans and their

families.

(b) Four (4) shall be non-voting members. The four non-voting members are not required to have served as a member of the military service but should have demonstrated their active support of veterans and their families within Anne Arundel County. The non-voting members shall be members of the community appointed by the County Executive based on the recommendations of the voting members.

2. Residency. Each member shall be a resident of Anne Arundel County.

#### **Section B. Appointments and Terms:**

1. Appointment of Members. The Commission consists of thirteen (13) Voting Members and four (4) Non-voting Members.

2. Term of Members.

(a) General: In order to provide for both continuity of Commission operations and for an opportunity for new members to become part of the Commission, the terms of the voting members shall be arranged in staggered three-year terms. Effective February 12, 2021, the terms of newly appointed voting members shall be staggered so that four members shall serve initial terms of one year, four members shall serve initial terms of two years, and five members shall serve initial terms of three years. And, after the expiration of the initial terms, voting members shall serve three year terms.

(b) Expiration: A member whose term has expired shall hold over and continue to serve until a successor is appointed. A member may serve up to three consecutive full terms, and, after a one-year lapse in service, a member is eligible to be reappointed.

(c) Resignations: Any member may resign for any reason at any time by providing a written notification and effective date addressed to the County Executive, with a copy provided to the Chair. If no effective date is specified in the written notification, then such resignation shall be effective upon receipt by the County Executive and the Chair.

(d) Removal:

(i) Members may be removed by the County Executive for just cause, upon written notification.

(ii) The Chair may recommend that members be removed by the County Executive for just cause. The Chair may recommend to the County Executive removal of a member who misses more than 25% of the scheduled meetings and hearings held during a twelve-month period.

(iii) It shall be within the discretion of the Chair to determine that an absence should be excused. A two-thirds majority of the then-serving voting members may reverse the Chair's finding of an unexcused absence. Written notice of the intent to remove shall be given to such member and to all of the other members at least seven days prior to the meeting at which the vote shall be taken. A member who has been removed in accordance with this Section shall be notified in writing within three days after the vote to remove, but failure to notify such removed member shall not invalidate the vote to remove.

(e) Newly appointed Non-voting Members shall serve initial terms of three (3) years, and may be reappointed for a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms. Non-voting Members may be removed for just cause.

(f) Vacancies: The County Executive shall fill a vacancy for the remainder of an unexpired term of any member. The Commission shall follow its standard procedures for recommending members to fill vacancies.

**Section C. Ethics:** The Commission shall abide by the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Anne Arundel County Code, the Maryland Open Meetings Act, and any other applicable law or regulation.

1. Prior to release, correspondence and other public information, positions, or statements (hereinafter, "Public Information") by the Commission shall be brought before a full Commission meeting or the Executive Committee, either of which can approve the request by a simple majority vote. Prior to release, Public Information must comply with applicable Anne Arundel County procedures.

2. No Commission member shall portray his or her personal opinion as that of the Commission. Individual requests to speak on behalf of the Commission may be brought before a full Commission meeting, or the Executive Committee, either of which can approve the request by a simple majority vote.

## ARTICLE 5 – OFFICERS

**Section A. Titles and Numbers of Officers:** Officers of the Commission shall be as follows: Officers must have at least one (1) year of membership on the Commission and

only voting members may serve as officers. Officers shall be appointed for a two (2) year term unless appointed to serve out a remainder of a vacated term. Unless otherwise provided herein, officers may not serve more than two full consecutive terms in the same office. Subsequent terms in a different office are allowed.

**1. Chair and Vice-Chair.** The Commission shall have a Chair appointed by the County Executive. Following the rules established herein, the Commission shall recommend a Chair for appointment to the County Executive. Following the rules established herein, the Commission shall recommend a Vice-Chair to the Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall respectively have the authority and responsibility customarily conferred on the presiding officers of an organization.

**2. Duties and responsibilities.**

(a) Responsibilities of the Chair: Preside at and conduct all meetings of the Commission; meet regularly with the County Executive or their representative; regularly provide information to the Commission in a timely manner; represent the Commission at related meetings or functions of other organizations and agencies; approve ongoing programs or special projects; ensure that there is annual planning and goals established; prepare annual report; ensure that all commission members follow the Bylaws; appoint liaisons with other agencies or groups. The Chair must obtain Commission members' approval for commitment to new projects.

(b) Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair: Act in place of the Chair; interact with Committee chairs to ensure goals are being met and ensure that the Bylaws are followed by Commission Members. If the member serving as Chair leaves or resigns from that position, the Vice-Chair serves as Chair until the County Executive appoints a replacement.

**Section B. Secretary:** The Chair shall appoint a Secretary, who shall serve a one-year term. The Secretary shall keep accurate records and minutes of all meetings of the Commission that comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act and relevant provisions of the County Code; make available minutes of the previous meeting and distribute them to the Commission members and to the County's Director of Boards and Commissions in advance of each meeting; cause to be delivered all notices of meetings to the Commission members and to the County Director of Boards and Commissions; maintain the minutes and a current listing, with contact information, of the members of the Commission; and serve as the records custodian for the Commission under the provisions of the Maryland Public Information Act. The Secretary may be reappointed annually without limitation.

**Section C. Treasurer:** It is not anticipated that the Commission will have any independent funds. Consequently, there is no provision in the Bylaws for the election of a Treasurer from within the membership.

**Section D. Other Officers:** The Commission may have other officers, if they and the method of their selection are first provided by amendment to the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE 6 – COMMITTEES**

**Section A. Standing Committees:** The Commission shall have as Standing Committees an Executive Committee, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee and such other Committees as determined by the Commission. Any member who wishes to be considered for a position on the Executive, Membership or Nominating Committee may make a request to the Commission Chair. Such other Committees may include (but are not limited to):

1. Education and Employment Committee
2. Legal and Legislation Committee
3. Outreach Committee
4. Quality of Life Committee
5. VSCC Committee

**Section B. Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee will act for the Commission during any interval between meetings of the Commission, with the goal of continuing the functions of the Commission as necessary between meetings. It shall be accountable to the Commission for its actions, and any action taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Commission before or at the next meeting of the full Commission.

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of:
  - (a) The Chair of the Commission, who shall serve as the Chair of the Executive Committee,
  - (b) The Vice-Chair of the Commission,
  - (c) The Secretary, and
  - (d) Two (2) Commission members elected by the Commission as an Executive Committee of the Commission to assist the Chair of the Commission with the Commission's activities. The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for one (1) year terms. The duties of the Executive Committee members will be:

- (i) Meet with the Chair on an as-needed basis;
- (ii) Conduct strategic planning and advise the Chair on Commission matters;
- (iii) Act as a steering committee for the full Commission;
- (iv) Act on behalf of the Chair and the Committee when authorized to do so;
- (v) Prioritize issues for the full Commission to address;
- (vi) Ensure the establishment and evaluation of best practices for Commission operations;

2. The Executive Committee shall meet monthly, or as requested by three (3) members of the Executive Committee, or as otherwise scheduled by the Chair.

**Section C. Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three voting members appointed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Chair. It will present a written slate of officers to the Commission members in November of any year whose number is an even number. At that time, other nominations may be made from the floor. The Commission will vote on the nominees for officers if a quorum is present. The name of the recommended Chair will be presented in writing to the County Executive for consideration. Officers will take office in January of the odd numbered year.

**Section D. Membership Committee.** The Membership Committee shall consist of at least three voting members appointed by the Chair. The purpose of the Membership Committee is to:

1. Maintain a copy of all members' appointment letters, identify when a member's term is expiring, and whether the member is eligible for reappointment;
2. Discuss with the member whether they will seek reappointment, and assist with necessary paperwork as needed;
3. Identify available membership positions and recruit and nominate new Commission members to the Chair, for subsequent consideration by the Commission members; and
4. Draft the nomination letter from the Chair to the County Executive.

**Section E. Other Committees.** The Commission may establish, or the Chair may appoint, other committees, as needed, to provide specific support for Commission work. The Commission has the discretion to amend, propose or abolish any committee, including Standing Committees with the exception of the Executive Committee.

**Section F. Committee Membership.** Each member, voting or non-voting, of the Commission is required to actively participate on a minimum of one committee.

1. Committee members: Commission members may choose the committee(s) on which they will participate, with approval of the Chair of the Commission. All Committees, except the Executive, Membership and Nominating Committees, shall be open to anyone who wants to join. Any voting member who wants to be appointed to the Nominating Committee may make such a request to the Executive Committee.

2. Committee Chair: Every committee shall have a Chair who shall be appointed by the Chair of the Commission. No member shall serve as chair or co-chair of more than two committees at the same time. Non-voting members may be appointed as Co-Chair of a committee with a voting member.

3. Committee Terms: The terms of all Chairs and members of committees shall be for two years. These positions may be reappointed consecutively.

**Section G. Liaisons:** The Commission may establish, and/or the Chair may appoint voting members to serve as liaisons to other Commissions, and any other such organizations and agencies deemed appropriate in meeting the responsibilities of the Commission.

## **ARTICLE 7 – MEETINGS, QUORUM AND PROCEDURES**

**Section A. Meetings:** The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chair, or at the request of a majority of the voting Commission members, as frequently as required to perform its duties, but no less than six (6) times a year. All meetings shall comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

1. Regular Meetings: In practice, the Commission meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month, except for the month(s) of July and August. This schedule may be changed by a majority of the membership at any Commission meeting, or in accordance with the Cancellation Policy, sub-section (3) below. Any change in the meeting date or a cancellation must be publicized.

2. Agenda: An agenda stating the topics to be discussed shall be sent to the members at least seven days prior to the next scheduled meeting. Revisions to the agenda may be made in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

3. Cancellation Policy: Regularly scheduled meetings shall be cancelled when county schools and/or county government offices are closed for inclement weather. Meetings may also be cancelled at the discretion of the Chair.

4. **Special Meetings:** Special Meetings may be called:
  - (a) At any time by the Chair, with at least seven (7) days' notice to the membership.
  - (b) Upon a vote of a majority of the voting members at a meeting of the Commission; or
  - (c) Upon petition by at least seven (7) voting members of the Commission through a signed paper document transmitted to the Chair, or an email or a combination of individually signed and sent emails.

**Section B. Open Meetings:** The Commission performs an "advisory function" within the meaning of the Maryland Open Meetings Act and is bound by its provisions. The Commission may only meet in Closed Session if it complies with all the requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

**Section C. Minutes:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, the Commission is required to have written minutes prepared as soon as practicable after its meetings. The Secretary will distribute a draft copy of the minutes for review and comment by the members when the draft is available. Ideally, the Secretary will send a revised copy of the minutes of the regularly scheduled meetings to the members at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. The minutes of the Commission meeting shall also be posted on the Commission's website after approval.

1. **Contents.** The minutes shall reflect:
  - (a) Each item considered.
  - (b) The action taken on each item; and
  - (c) Each vote that was recorded.
2. **Approval.** The minutes must be submitted to the Commission for approval at the next regular meeting. In the event of a significant gap between regularly scheduled meetings, the Commission will follow the guidelines of the Maryland Open Meetings Act regarding timely approval of the minutes.
3. **Closed Sessions.** If the Commission meets in closed session, the minutes of the next open session shall include:
  - (a) A statement of time, place, and purpose of the closed session;
  - (b) A record of the vote of each member as to closing the session;
  - (c) A citation of the authority under the Open Meetings Act which permitted the closed session; and
  - (d) A list of the topics of discussion, individuals present, and each action taken during the session.

4. Retention. One archival copy of all Agendas, minutes, and recordings shall be kept in accordance with the records retention guidelines established by Anne Arundel County.

**Section D. Quorum:** A quorum consists of a majority of the voting Commission members. An affirmative vote of a majority of those present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be sufficient for any action of the Commission.

**Section E. Telephonic and Virtual Participation:** Members may participate in meetings and vote on matters discussed therein by means of a conference telephone, computer, or similar communications equipment if all persons participating in the meeting can hear (or otherwise communicate with) each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence of the member at the meeting.

**Section F. Procedures at Meetings:**

**1. Legal Requirement:** As an advisory body, meetings may be conducted informally.

**2. Parliamentary Procedures:** The procedures of Roberts Rules of Order govern when it is necessary to take formal actions, such as passage of motions or to decide controversial matters.

**3. Standing Rules:** The Commission may also adopt rules which will aid governance of its meetings, such as fixed time to convene its regular meetings. The Maryland Open Meetings Act shall be considered a part of the Standing Rules of the Commission.

**4. Voting:**

(a) Proxy voting is allowed by voting members as long as the proxy is executed in advance of the meeting, and signed by the absent member. The person voting the proxy must present it to the chair at the beginning of the meeting. The person voting the proxy must be another voting member. The proxy must be limited to certain issues and votes at the election of the member granting the proxy. The terms of a proxy are to be strictly construed.

(b) Electronic voting (email voting) is allowed by voting members as long as the person sending the email does so on proposals that were sent in advance of the meeting and no changes are made from the original proposal. The person voting by email is subject to verifying the vote in person or by telephone upon request of any member. This request must be made to the chair or vice-chair or by request of any member at the next meeting.

(c) Absentee voting is allowed by voting members as long as the person sending the vote does so on proposals that were sent in advance of the meeting and no changes are made from the original proposal. The person voting *in absentia* is subject to verifying the vote in person or by telephone upon the request of any member. This

request must be made to the chair or vice-chair, or by request of any member at the next meeting.

(d) A record of votes, including roll call votes as applicable, shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

## **ARTICLE 8 – COMPENSATION**

Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

## **ARTICLE 9 – OPERATIONS**

**Section A. Budget:** Upon assignment of Commission operations funds by the County Executive, if any, the Commission shall establish an annual operating budget that identifies planned funds expenditures including the expenditures' purpose and disbursement schedule. The operating budget shall be established in the following manner:

1. First, Commission members will discuss the budget and make recommendations to the Executive Committee;

2. Next, the Executive Committee will develop the budget and submit it to the Commission for review and adoption; and,

3. Finally, to be adopted, the budget requires a majority vote of the voting members present at a meeting at which there is a quorum.

**Section B. Personal Expenditures:** Commission members must gain prior approval to make such expenditures from the Chair. Commission members who make personal expenditures in consonance with Commission operations will be reimbursed from the operating budget funds of the Commission.

**Section C. Reimbursement:** Personal expenditures on behalf of the Commission by members will be reimbursed in accordance with Anne Arundel County procedures. Requests for reimbursement will first be presented to the Executive Committee for approval. Requests shall include a description of the expenditure and its purpose, along with proof of the expenditure (e.g., original receipt, bill of sale). Approved reimbursement requests require the written (electronic approval may qualify) approval of the Chair and two (2) other members of the Executive Committee and shall be forwarded to Anne Arundel County for payment, via the Anne Arundel County Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison, in accordance with the County procedures then in place.

## ARTICLE 10 – RULES AND REGULATIONS

**Section A. General:** The Commission shall adopt rules and regulations to govern its proceedings and activities.

**Section B. Procedures:** Any provision of these Bylaws that is not controlled by State or County law, State or County regulation, or County Executive Order may be amended. The Bylaws, or a proposed amendment to the Bylaws, should be submitted in writing to the members at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. The proposal shall be specifically called out as an item on the agenda in the written notice of the meeting, and shall be voted on at that meeting.

**Section C. Adoption:** To be adopted, the Bylaws and any amendments proposed to the Bylaws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting members present at a meeting at which there is a quorum.

**Section D. Review:** The Bylaws shall be formally reviewed every two (2) years.

These Bylaws are hereby adopted by the Anne Arundel County Veterans Affairs Commission by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote on March 10, 2021.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_, Chair  
John Church

I, being Secretary of the Commission, hereby certify that the above is a true, complete and accurate copy of the Bylaws adopted by the Commission.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary  
Kathy Reents