

Board Agenda Item
March 19, 2024

CONSIDERATION – 1

Approval of Resolution and Bylaws Stating the Purposes, Membership, and Procedures for the Veterans and Military Families Commission

ISSUE:

Staff has drafted a proposed Resolution and Bylaws for the Veterans and Military Families Commission setting forth the purposes, membership, and initial procedures of this new BAC.

TIMING:

Board action is requested on March 19, 2024, in time for appointments to be made on April 30, 2024, so the Veterans and Military Families Commission can begin meeting this summer.

BACKGROUND:

At the January 24, 2024, Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Walkinshaw presented a Board matter and motion activating the Veterans and Military Families Commission. The motion was approved by the Board. Staff is now presenting a draft Resolution to set forth the purpose, membership, and fundamental procedures of the Veterans and Military Families Commission, as well as draft Bylaws that establish standard, additional procedures for this BAC.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

Attachment 1: Veterans and Military Families Commission Resolution
Attachment 2: Veterans and Military Families Commission Bylaws
Attachment 3: Supervisor Walkinshaw's January 24, 2024, Board Matter

STAFF:

Christopher Leonard, Deputy County Executive
Lloyd Tucker, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services
Patricia E. Arriaza, Neighborhood and Community Services
Christopher Pulley, Neighborhood and Community Services
Vance S. Zavela, Fort Belvoir Liaison, Department of Economic Initiatives

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ASSIGNED COUNSEL:
Martin R. Desjardins, Assistant County Attorney

**RESOLUTION
STATING THE PURPOSES, MEMBERSHIP, AND PROCEDURES OF THE
VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES COMMISSION**

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia ("Board"), held in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center at 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax, Virginia, on March 19, 2024, the following resolution was adopted:

WHEREAS, per the 2020 census, an estimated 79,000 veterans and an estimated 13,500 military-connected children and families reside in Fairfax County, and

WHEREAS, there is no previous or current Fairfax County Board, Authority, or Commission specifically addressing veterans and their families, or working to identify the unique issues and challenges faced by veterans and their families in Fairfax County, and

WHEREAS, the Board approved a motion calling for the establishment of the Veterans and Military Families Commission ("Commission") during its January 24, 2024, Board Meeting, and

WHEREAS, the Board has authority to establish the Commission under Virginia Code § 15.2-1411, and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for the Board to adopt a resolution stating the purposes, membership, and procedures of the Commission,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission is authorized to function under the following **provisions**:

§ 1. PURPOSES. The purpose of the Commission, as coordinated through the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, is to identify the unique issues and challenges faced by Fairfax County veterans, military retirees, and their families to connect them with services and supports, address gaps in services and opportunities, improve access to service systems, and enhance the institutional structures across the continuum of care for the military community. In pursuance of this purpose, the Commission shall:

(A) Consult with relevant County staff, and the Chairman and other members of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate, to understand the most pertinent issues or challenges in the County which may benefit from the Commission's perspective.

(B) Determine the topics to focus on and the process or means to present veterans and their families experiences, knowledge, and solutions to the Board and appropriate agencies of County Government.

(C) Consider issues including but not limited to affordable housing, food insecurity, affordable childcare, military veteran and spousal employment, mental health and medical treatment, justice-related issues, homelessness, military-connected educational challenges, and other matters as they pertain to veterans and their families living and working in Fairfax County.

§ 2. MEMBERSHIP. The membership of the Commission shall conform to the following:

(A) There shall be 20 members of the Commission who shall be appointed by the Board for three-year terms. The membership of the Commission shall include:

- Six at-large members nominated by the Chairman of the Board;
- One member nominated by George Mason University;
- One member nominated by Northern Virginia Community College;
- One member nominated by Fairfax County Public Schools;
- One member nominated Fort Belvoir Army Base Installation;
- One member nominated by The American Legion;
- One member nominated by the Fairfax County Community Services Board Veterans Treatment Docket;
- One member nominated by the Department of Family Services;
- One member nominated by DC VA Medical Center;
- One member nominated by the Fairfax Department of Economic Initiatives;
- One member nominated by the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development;
- One member nominated by the Fairfax County Health Department;
- One member nominated by the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness;
- One member nominated by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission; and,
- One member nominated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

(B) All nominations are subject to approval by the Board.

(C) The composition of the Commission will reflect a variety of racial/ethnic, religious, age, gender identity, disability, and other diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the At-Large members will be representative of the veteran's community in the county, including the different branches of the armed forces, different ranks and areas of service, including officers and enlisted members, and spouses and relatives of veterans.

(D) Each At-Large member may serve multiple three-year terms, with at least three-years between terms. All other members may serve multiple, consecutive or nonconsecutive terms.

§ 3. PROCEDURES. The Commission shall determine its own rules of procedure subject to the following:

(A) The Commission shall have bylaws. All bylaws of the Commission are subject to the approval of the Board.

(B) The Commission shall comply with all Virginia laws, including, but not limited to, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Va. Code § 2.2-3700, *et. seq.*, as amended ("VFOIA"), and the Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, Virginia Code § 2.2-3100,

et seq., as amended, with all County ordinances, and with all County policies concerning the activities of its boards, authorities, and commissions.

(C) The Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services shall provide support to the Commission, including a staff coordinator. The staff coordinator shall ensure compliance with the notice, meetings, and recordkeeping requirements of the VFOIA.

GIVEN under my hand this ____ day of _____, 2024.

Jill G. Cooper
Clerk for the Board of Supervisors
Department of Clerk Services

1 **BYLAWS OF THE VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES COMMISSION**

2
3 **Draft of February 21, 2024**

4
5 **ARTICLE I – NAME**

6
7 The name of this organization is the Veterans and Military Families Commission,
8 hereinafter referred to as the “Commission.”

9
10 **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

11
12 The Commission has been established by the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County,
13 Virginia (“Board of Supervisors”), pursuant to Virginia law for the purpose of identifying
14 the unique issues and challenges faced by Fairfax County veterans, military retirees, and
15 their families to connect them with services and supports, address gaps in services and
16 opportunities, improve access to service systems, and enhance the institutional structures
17 across the continuum of care for the military community. These bylaws are effective as of
18 March 19, 2024.

19
20 **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP AND TERM OF OFFICE**

21
22 Appointments. Membership and appointments to the Commission shall be made by the
23 Board of Supervisors, and members shall serve for such term or terms as established by
24 the Board of Supervisors.

25
26 Resignations and Vacancies. In the event a member cannot serve or resigns from office,
27 then the Chairperson, the Secretary, or the County staff coordinator shall advise the Clerk
28 for the Board of Supervisors of the vacancy in writing.

29
30 Holdovers. In the event a member completes his or her term of office, remains qualified
31 to serve as a member, and the Board of Supervisors has not appointed a successor
32 member, then that person may continue to serve until such time as a successor member is
33 appointed.

34
35 **ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES**

36
37 Elections. The Commission shall be served by three officers: a Chairperson, a Vice-
38 Chairperson, and a Secretary. The Chairperson shall be elected in accordance with the
39 voting provisions of Article V by the Commission members annually and such an
40 election shall be scheduled at the first meeting of each calendar year. Two months prior
41 to the election meeting, a slate of candidates shall be nominated during a meeting held
42 pursuant to Article V. After nomination, each candidate shall be polled on his or her
43 willingness and ability to serve as Chairperson of the Commission. At the election
44 meeting, the Chairperson shall be elected from among the willing nominees in
45 accordance with the voting provisions of Article V. At the meeting immediately
46 following the election of the Chairperson, the Chairperson shall nominate the Vice

47 Chairperson and Secretary. After nomination, each candidate shall be polled on his or her
 48 willingness and ability to serve as an officer of the Commission. The Vice Chairperson
 49 and Secretary shall then be elected from among the willing nominees in accordance with
 50 the voting provisions of Article V.

51
 52 Chairperson. The Chairperson presides over meetings of the Commission and is eligible
 53 to vote at all times. The Chairperson has the authority to delegate appropriate functions to
 54 Commission members and to request assistance from the County staff supporting the
 55 Commission.

56
 57 Vice-Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson at a meeting, the Vice-Chairperson
 58 shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chairperson. In the event that
 59 neither the Chairperson nor the Vice-Chairperson is available, the member present with
 60 the longest tenure on the Commission shall act as Chairperson.

61
 62 Secretary. The Secretary, or a duly appointed agent, shall be responsible for recording the
 63 minutes of meetings.

64
 65 Replacement Officers. If an office becomes vacant for any reason, it shall be filled by an
 66 election at the next regular meeting having a majority of members present. The newly
 67 elected officer shall complete the unexpired term of the officer succeeded. Prior to the
 68 election of any replacement officer, all members shall be provided with notice of the
 69 proposed election before the meeting at which the replacement is elected.

70
 71 **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS**

72
 73 VFOIA. All meetings shall be open to the public except as provided under the Virginia
 74 Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code § 2.2-3700 *et seq.*, as amended ("VFOIA").
 75 "Meeting" or "meetings" means the meetings including work sessions, when sitting
 76 physically, or through electronic communication means pursuant to the VFOIA or other
 77 applicable Virginia law, as a body or entity, or as an informal assemblage of (i) as many
 78 as three members or (ii) a quorum, if less than three, of the constituent membership,
 79 wherever held, with or without minutes being taken, whether or not votes are cast, of any
 80 public body. The Commission may hold public hearings and report its findings to the
 81 Board of Supervisors on Commission issues that affect the public interest.

82
 83 Notice and Agenda. Notice and the agenda of all meetings shall be provided as required
 84 under the VFOIA. All meetings shall be preceded by properly posted notice stating the
 85 date, time, and location of each meeting. Notice of a meeting shall be given at least three
 86 working days prior to the meeting. Notice of emergency meetings, reasonable under the
 87 circumstances, shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to
 88 Commission members. Notices of all meetings shall be provided to the Office of Public
 89 Affairs for posting at the Government Center and on the County Web site. All in-person
 90 and remote participation meetings shall be conducted in public places that are accessible
 91 to persons with disabilities. Public access via electronic communications must be
 92 provided for all-virtual public meetings.

93

94 Frequency. The Commission shall meet at least 6 times per year or as determined by the
95 Chairperson. Meetings shall be held at a time agreed to by a majority of the
96 Commission's members, and at a place arranged by the staff of the supporting County
97 department.

98

99 Voting. A quorum is necessary for a vote. A quorum shall be one-third (1/3) of the
100 appointed membership of the Commission. In making any recommendations, adopting
101 any plan, or approving any proposal, action shall be taken by a majority vote of
102 Commission members present and voting. Upon the request of any member, the vote of
103 each member on any issue shall be recorded in the minutes. All votes of Commission
104 members shall be taken during a public meeting, and no vote shall be taken by secret or
105 written ballot or by proxy.

106

107 Conduct. Except as otherwise provided by Virginia law or these bylaws, all meetings
108 shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, and
109 except as specifically authorized by the VFOIA, no meeting shall be conducted through
110 telephonic, video, electronic, or other communication means where the members are not
111 all physically assembled to discuss or transact public business.

112

113 Public Access. For any meeting, at least one copy of the agenda, all agenda packets, and,
114 unless exempt under the VFOIA, all materials furnished to Commission members shall
115 be made available for public inspection at the same time such documents are furnished to
116 the Commission members. Pursuant to the VFOIA, any person may photograph, film,
117 record, or otherwise reproduce any portion of a meeting required to be open, but such
118 actions may not interfere with any Commission proceedings.

119

120 Records. The Secretary or an appointed representative shall ensure that minutes of
121 meetings are recorded as required under the VFOIA. Minutes shall include: (1) the date,
122 time, and location of each meeting; (2) the members present and absent; (3) a summary of
123 the discussion on matters proposed, deliberated, or decided; and (4) a record of any votes
124 taken. Such minutes are public records and subject to inspection and copying by citizens
125 of the Commonwealth or by members of the news media. The supporting County
126 department shall provide staff support to review and approve records and minutes of the
127 meeting.

128

129 Attorney-Client Privilege. Records containing legal advice from counsel to the
130 Commission and advice provided in closed session by legal counsel to the Commission
131 are protected by the attorney-client privilege and from disclosure under the VFOIA. Any
132 such records or advice should not be disclosed by members of the Commission to any
133 third party, or the privilege against disclosure may be waived. Questions regarding the
134 handling of records or advice subject to attorney-client privilege should be directed to the
135 Commission's legal counsel.

136

137 **ARTICLE VI - ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

138

139 Any Commission member who misses three consecutive meetings or more than half of
140 the scheduled meetings within a 12-month period, or who fails to participate in the work
141 of the Commission without good cause acceptable to a majority of the appointed
142 membership of the Commission may be subject to removal from the Commission.
143

144 **ARTICLE VII - REMOVAL**
145

146 Any Commission member(s) may be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for
147 removal from the Commission for cause, including but not limited to cause as set forth in
148 Article VI, by a two-thirds majority vote of the appointed membership of the
149 Commission. The members' authority to recommend removal under these bylaws neither
150 limits nor waives the Board of Supervisors' authority to remove members from the
151 Commission as provided by law.
152

153 **ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES**
154

155 Standing. The Chairperson may appoint standing committees and a chairperson for each
156 with the consent of a majority of the Commission members present and voting.
157

158 Special. The Chairperson may appoint special committees and a chairperson for each
159 with the consent of a majority of the Commission members present and voting.
160

161 All meetings of any such committees shall comply with the notice and other requirements
162 of the VFOIA. To the extent practicable, any such committees shall be composed of at
163 least four members. Committee meetings may be held at the call of the Chairperson or at
164 the request of two members, with notice to all members.
165

166 **ARTICLE IX – ANNUAL REPORT**
167

168 The Commission shall prepare an annual written report that describes the actions of the
169 Commission and plans for future actions and activities. This report shall be provided to
170 the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors for distribution to the members of the Board of
171 Supervisors and to the County Executive.
172

173 **ARTICLE X – COMPLIANCE WITH LAW AND COUNTY POLICY**
174

175 The Commission shall comply with all Virginia laws, including, but not limited to, the
176 VFOIA, and the Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, Virginia
177 Code § 2.2-3100 *et seq.*, as amended, with all County ordinances, and with all County
178 policies concerning the activities of its boards, authorities, and commissions. In case of a
179 conflict between a provision of these bylaws and any applicable ordinance or law, the
180 provisions of the applicable ordinance or law, as the case may be, shall control.
181

182 **ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**
183

184 These bylaws may be amended by the Commission by adopting the proposed amendment
185 or amendments and by presenting those proposed changes for approval to the Board of
186 Supervisors. Any such amendments to bylaws shall become effective upon approval by
187 the Board of Supervisors.

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189

190 These bylaws of the Veterans and Military Families Commission were approved by the
191 Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia during a regular meeting held on March
192 19, 2024.

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GIVEN under my hand this ____ day of _____, 2024.

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Jill G. Cooper
Clerk for the Board of Supervisors
Department of Clerk Services

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201

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94 Frequency. The Commission shall meet at least 6 times per year or as determined by the
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130 Commission and advice provided in closed session by legal counsel to the Commission
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132 such records or advice should not be disclosed by members of the Commission to any
133 third party, or the privilege against disclosure may be waived. Questions regarding the
134 handling of records or advice subject to attorney-client privilege should be directed to the
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137 **ARTICLE VI - ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

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