



Town of West Hartford
Commission on Veterans' Affairs
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
West Hartford Town Hall Room 407
Minutes

1. Call to Order/Roll Call – Dr. Knoll, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Present: Inga Bowes, Patrick Harrell, Rolf Knoll, John Mele, John Coss, Chad Licht, Rachel Avenick and Nicola Rubinow

Guests: Heidie-Anne Mooney, Post 96 American Legion Commander and Keren Paquette, Veterans' Service Representative for West Hartford

2. Public Comment: None
3. Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting on January 14, 2025: A motion was made, seconded and the minutes were approved.
4. Reports

Report on Mission Statement of the Commission - Ms. Rubinow

Ms. Rubinow summarized the CT General Statute 27-135 and the West Hartford Ordinance enacted (2007) governing the establishment of the Commission on Veterans Affairs. Ms. Rubinow solicited input from the members on their views of the vision and the purpose of the Commission. She will draft a Vision Statement to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Report on Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star families – Dr. Knoll

Dr. Knoll reviewed his conversations with Derek Slap, State Senator, and Rick Ledwith, Town Manager, regarding the extension of property tax exemption to Gold Star families. Dr. Knoll and Mr. Coss attended a legislative public forum on Feb 13th regarding Senate Bill 1276. Dr. Knoll expressed optimism that the State will exempt Gold Star families from property taxes during this session. Mr. Ledwith said the town of West Hartford would comply once the law was ratified.

Report on West Hartford Veterans Web Page and Facebook Page – Ms. Paquette

Keren Paquette reviewed the changes made to the WH Veterans Affairs web page recommended by members Coss, Licht, Knoll and Mele. Multiple modifications had been made to the web page: to improve access to minutes and agendas of Commission meetings; to add critical content; and to ease navigation. More changes were discussed.

Jonathan Coss is now the manager of the West Hartford Veterans Facebook Page. He has posted a number of events related to veterans over the past month, and as a result, visits to the site have increased markedly. More posts will be forthcoming.

Report on Visit to Veterans Committee Chairman of New London – Mr. Mele

Dr. Knoll and Mr. Mele visited the New London town hall and received a briefing from Mr. Steven Ricard, Chair of the Veterans Committee and Veterans Representative for the town.

Some of the topics discussed were: the Committee's \$2,000 budget allocated by the town council; updating the database of veterans in town; tracking of services provided to veterans; annual Military Appreciation Day at Ocean Beach Park; outreach programs for veterans; coordination with VA assets in the area; additional funding sources for events; and many other topics.



Town of West Hartford
Commission on Veterans' Affairs
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
West Hartford Town Hall Room 407
Minutes

5. Business Items

CWO Patrick Nelligan, Chairman of the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs Board of Trustees was unable to attend and will be invited to a future Commission meeting.

Improved access to the West Hartford Veterans' Memorial on Farmington Avenue was discussed again. Ms. Paquette will have the town official in charge of planning and improvements contact Dr. Knoll to review the issue.

There has been no further progress on the Sterling Field Memorial Marker.

The Commission discussed a proposed mailing to West Hartford veterans later this year to publicize our Web Page and Facebook Page, to inform veterans of events planned for the year, and to obtain better contact information (email addresses) from veterans in town.

6. Correspondence/Handouts

List of proposed Legislature Bills on the Feb 13, 2025 Public Hearing Agenda

Letter to Town Managers from Lt Governor Bysiewicz regarding WWII veterans

7. Adjournment at 8:15 p.m.

John Mele, Secretary

Anyone requiring auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or modifications of policies or procedures to participate in a meeting, service, program or activity of the Town of West Hartford, can contact Suzanne Oslander, ADA Coordinator, at (860) 561-7580 or suzanneo@westhartfordct.gov or, as soon as possible, preferably seven days beforehand.