



Commission on Veterans' Affairs (WHCVA) Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

West Hartford Town Hall Room 407

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1. Call to Order/Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairman Knoll
Present: Commissioners Rolf Knoll, John Mele, Nicola Rubinow, Rachel Avenick, John Coss, Patrick Harrel and Matt Hart.

Karen Paquette, Town of West Hartford Veterans' Affairs Representative; Elaine Kotler, American Legion Auxiliary President; Anne Condon, guest of Commission.
Absent: Commissioners Chad Licht and Inga Bowes.
 2. Public Comment: Chairman Knoll introduced Anne Condon who addressed the Commission about removing or limiting the display of POW/MIA flag at Fairview Cemetery. She heard responses from several Commissioners who pointed out many reasons for continuing to fly the POW/ MIA flag at the cemetery.
 3. Approval Minutes of Sep 9, 2025: Motion made, seconded, and minutes were approved.
 4. Reports:
 - Wounded Warrior Project Carry Forward 5K Walk/ Run – was held on Oct 5 & raised \$1,735, with volunteer support from Hall Cross Country/ Track teams and several sponsors.
 - Veteran Stand Down – Elaine Kotler reported on the success of the Rocky Hill standdown.
 - Gold Star Families- Rolf Knoll updated the status for property tax relief for the 9 resident Gold Star families. He will be meeting again with the Town Manager.
 - Report on Nov 11 Veterans Day Events - several Commissioners attended the breakfast at Elmwood CC, the Conard HS flagpole dedication, the HallHS lunch and concert, and the Veterans Day ceremony held at Town Hall with CPT Marc Giammatteo as the speaker.
 - Veterans Memorial Access - Karen Paquette suggested that the Commission contact Duane Martin, Director of Community Development and former Town Engineer, as well as Suzanne Oslander, ODA Coordinator for the town, about the issues regarding veterans with walkers and wheelchairs.
 - Sterling Field Plaque - Patrick Harrell reported on the status of the Sterling Field project; he also discussed American Legion efforts to relocate World War II memorabilia from the former VFW post lawn to more appropriate areas in town.
 5. Business Items:
 - Suicide Prevention Project – There was discussion about a Suicide Prevention workshop for 2026 for all veterans in the area, as well as Police, Firemen and First Responders from the town. It would be co-sponsored with the American Legion. Dr. Knoll will discuss this idea with the Town Manager and Keren Paquette.

- Veterans and Military Appreciation - Rachel Avenick suggested that military appreciation events be incorporated with the Celebrate West Hartford activities in June 2026 and be directed towards veterans and their families.
- 2026 Meeting Dates Chairman Knoll distributed a 'Calendar of 2026 Commission Meetings: Mar 10, 2026, Jun 9 2026, Sep 8 2026 and Dec 8 2026.

6. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

John Mele, Secretary