

**VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING**  
**THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026– 1 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Pam Sawyer, Bob Morra, John Hambrook, Paul Toomey, and Carol Franco

**Members Absent:** Linda Rudolph and Alternate - Anna Spencer

**Staff Present:** Kara Fishman, Town Assessor

**Members of the Public:** Rachel Clark and Barry Stearns (Former Veterans Commission member)

**1. Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Pam Sawyer, acting chair.

**2. Introduction of members present.**

The present members of the veteran's commission introduced themselves.

**3. Nominations and Election of a Chairman.**

**Motion:** Pam Sawyer moved to nominate Bob Morra as Chair of the Veterans Commission.

**2<sup>nd</sup>** - John Hambrook | **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:** Pam Sawyer moved to nominate John Hambrook as Vice Chair.

**2<sup>nd</sup>** - Bob Morra | **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously.

**4. Public Comments.**

Barry Stearns, former commission member, addressed the Commission regarding unfinished initiatives from prior terms.

**a. Veterans Property Tax Exemption**

- Reviewed the current veterans' exemption and noted it has not been increased in decades.
- Explained that exemptions reduce the grand list and do not result in direct town expenditures.
- Encouraged the Commission to consider future review of exemption amounts.

**b. Veterans Memorial Expansion**

- Proposed adding recognition for conflicts not currently represented on the Town Green memorial, including early American wars and the Civil War.
- Discussed prior research, design considerations, and possible funding sources.

**5. Communications: Letter from Rachel Clark dated 12/30/2025.**

Rachel Clark addressed the Commission regarding Public Act 25-168, which allows municipalities to adopt a local option providing a property tax exemption to surviving spouses of service members killed in action. Ms. Clark shared personal context and encouraged the Commission to support adoption of the exemption at the local level.

**6. New Business:**

**Discussion and possible action regarding CT Public Act 25-168 to include sections 233, 240 & 241.**

Kara Fishman, Town Assessor, provided clarification regarding implementation of the exemption, including:

- The exemption is a local option and requires approval by the Board of Selectmen.
- The expected number of eligible applicants would be minimal.
- Adoption would reduce the grand list rather than require direct expenditure.
- Timing considerations related to the budget cycle.

**Motion:** Pam Sawyer moved that the Veterans Commission recommend to the Board of Selectmen approval of the property tax exemption for the surviving spouse of a service member killed in action while performing active military duty, as authorized under Public Act 25-168, and that the matter be placed on a future Board of Selectmen agenda. **2nd:** Paul Toomey **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously.

**a. Meeting dates for 2026.**

The Commission discussed meeting dates for the month and voted to hold meetings on the third Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m., except in July and August.

**b. General discussion of priorities for the Commission**

Pam Sawyer requested that two items be added to a future agenda.

**Item 1:** Consideration of establishing a retired flag repository at the transfer station to allow for proper flag disposal without requiring the purchase of a ticket. This could be done in partnership with the Boy Scouts.

**Item 2:** Pam Sawyer proposed that the Veterans Commission sponsor a presentation by Kevin Thompson in collaboration with the Historical Society. She will gather date availability and is tentatively planning for spring or fall.

**7. Adjourn.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
*Suellen Kamara*

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for corrections to these Minutes and any corrections hereto.

## **MEETINGS DATES 2026 - AT 3 P.M.**

- March 19, 2026
- April 16, 2026
- May 21, 2026
- June 18, 2026
- September 17, 2026
- October 15, 2026
- November 19, 2026
- December 17, 2026