



# TOWN OF SUFFIELD

**MEETING MINUTES  
VETERANS MEMORIAL EXPANSION COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
March 14, 2022 6:00 p.m.  
IN-PERSON MEETING ONLY**

**Location: Suffield Police Station Conference Room  
911 Mountain Road Suffield, CT**

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**Meeting Name: Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee**

**By: Rebecca Sypek - Recording Secretary**

**Type of Meeting: Regular Meeting**

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## **Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee Members Present**

Dave Gauthier, Temporary Chair  
Chris Matejek  
Raymond Hartford  
Chris Nikolis  
Salvatore Covino  
William Moryto  
Kevin Goff  
Fredrick (Fritz) King  
Tom Elmore

## **Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee Members Absent**

David Shute

## **Also Present**

Lester Smith  
Paul Kulas  
Kathy Dunai - Town Clerk

Dave Gauthier called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked for a roll call identifying members present at the meeting.

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Approval of the Minutes**

Approval of the Minutes from the Special Meeting held on February 14, 2022. William Moryto motioned and Salvatore Covino seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Finances**

Chris Matejek has been to ACE meeting (to go over town finances), there is a will and interest in funding the expansion; however, the town might not be ready in the next 9-12 months. The Committee currently has roughly \$40,000-90,000 as a tentative budget but nothing is set in stone yet. There are other urgent matters within the town and schools that might end up taking president, as well as some budget cuts that need to be considered. More information will be provided going forward.

## **Review and approve application form, and press release**

**Application Form:** All previous changes suggested were incorporated. Committee members reviewed. Raymond Hartford brought up point that there's no reference to where the eligibility dates came from, this was removed because the application was getting long; however, Kevin Goff can work on re-incorporating that wording in some form if the Committee agrees. It might be beneficial to cover the Committee in case anyone has questions. Kevin can also set up the application as an online version, hopefully on the veterans page of the Town website. Chris Matejek knows an IT contact that may be able to help with that process.

It was asked where the storage of all the current names on the monument is. Town Clerk has a book and the info is in the vault. Future names that apply will probably need to go through some kind of protocol for storing them; however, the Committee will need to speak with the town further on how this should work.

**Press Release:** Suggestion for change is highlighted in red with original wording on side - should this change be kept? The Committee agreed the change already made is fine.

It was recommended to mention that copies of the application form will be able to be found at the Town Clerk's office, Library, Senior Center and VFW, as well as list the "Our Veterans" tab of the town website. The Committee won't be able to make the April print of the Suffield Observer; however, the Committee will aim for the May print as long as the website is up and running by then. It was also recommended to add the same reference to where the eligibility dates came from to the Press Release.

What should the deadline be for accepting applications for this round? If the goal is to get engraving on the monument done by Veterans Day, the Committee will want to pick a date in summer as a deadline for applicants. Chris Matejek suggested July or August 1st and, after some discussion, August 1st was agreed upon.

Motion to approve with tentative changes (reference to where to find application, reference to eligibility dates, and deadline date) made - William Moryto motioned and Salvatore Covino seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Tom Elmore asked how time consuming the approval process will be for people. Dave Gauthier said it should be pretty cut and dry in the majority of circumstances. Tom then asked who will be approving these. This will be discussed at a future meeting; however, Dave Gauthier said that two names have already been approved by him and seconded by Chris Matejek following the previously approved procedures and it was quick. Tom asked this because it might be beneficial to ask the engraver about his lead time and also let him know that our goal is to get this done by Veterans Day. It was also mentioned that the Committee can approve or deny applicants as they come at each monthly meeting in executive session to speed things along.

It was asked if it's okay for veterans who apply to black out their SSN on their DD214 form. Yes, they can for the Committee's purposes.

## **Make final decision on Character of Discharge eligibility**

After last meeting's discussion on Character of Discharge eligibility, Dave Gauthier did some research and he thinks that the only one that definitely cannot be considered for eligibility is the "dishonorable discharge" option. To back this thought up, he looked at who can be buried in a Veterans Cemetery and confirmed that "dishonorable discharge" is the only Character of Discharge that prohibits you from being buried there. The Committee agreed that if a person can't be buried in a Veterans Cemetery, they certainly shouldn't be listed on a Veterans Memorial. Dave changed the language to say "anything other than dishonorable discharge" and asked if the Committee agreed. Chris Nikolis commented that language might want to be added to give the Committee some leeway to discuss certain other types of Character of Discharge eligibilities.

Dave Gauthier motioned to update the criteria to say "service must have been anything other than dishonorable," Kevin Goff seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Applicant review status**

Dave Gauthier and Chris Matejek approved two veterans who have waited on approval for years. One was going to be added for Memorial Day; however, this name may have to wait depending on the additional cost of the scaffolding. The other name is being planned to be added in time for Memorial Day, per First Selectman request, if the engraver can make the scheduling. Dave Gauthier said he'll notify Lester Smith and ask him to be there for the engraving to take pictures for the Suffield Observer when the time comes.

Dave Gauthier has 6 names from obituaries that were sent to the First Selectman, which need to be discussed in Executive Session because they are most likely no's but Dave would like the Committee to discuss them further and research them if time permits and if necessary. Paul Kulas asked if he can get a copy of the names in case he, or others from the first Committee, may be able to give more information. Dave said he'll discuss this with him and provide him those names after the meeting.

Two names were brought to Dave Gauthier's attention that were thought to have been not included on the monument; however, after some research it was confirmed that both were included. One is spelt wrong on the monument and the other is listed under the wrong war. These can't be redone or corrected but they can at least be checked off the Committee's list. Dave will send the spreadsheet that he's currently working on to the Committee members to keep them up to date.

## **Discussion on honoring veterans who moved to Suffield after service**

Fritz King asked to discuss this but it will be tabled until next meeting.

## **Election of Officers**

William Moryto nominates Dave Gauthier as permanent chair and Raymond Hartford seconded. Dave Gauthier abstains. Motion passed unanimously.

William Moryto volunteers as vice chair, Chris Nikolis motions and Kevin Goff seconds. William Moryto abstains. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Other Business and Next Steps**

None

## **Public Comment**

Lester Smith told story about history of Suffield where one man was listed as a resident of Suffield just for mailing purposes while he was away for service, but never actually left from Suffield or returned to Suffield before or after service, and this person was nominated for the original monument's Committee. He appreciates the complexity of the decisions the Committee is making.

Kevin Goff asked if anyone has records of prior Committee's approvals. Paul Kulas says he has lots of documentation that he can share. Kevin Goff asked if it would be worth creating a list for previously received and approved names and any applicable information the Committee has for them. Dave Gauthier said this research for prior applicants might be for down the line but for now the Committee should mainly focus on the people that actually apply this time around. Paul said he appreciates the effort the Committee is putting in and anything he or Lester might be able to help with, to just let them know.

## **Executive Session to discuss personal data of applicants**

Executive Session to discuss eligibility of a candidate started at 7:24 p.m. Executive Session was ended at 7:41 p.m. with nothing agreed upon.

A Regular Meeting of the Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee will be held on Monday, April 11, 2022 at 6 p.m.

Dave Gauthier motioned to adjourn, everyone seconded at 7:41 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Sypek  
Recording Secretary